

Transcript – GET to YES Podcast

E11: B2B Sales Closes for the Salon Industry

Hi, Neil Osborne from The Sales Catalyst here. Did you find the last episode (E10), on closing, helpful? Have you tried re-phrasing your closes to include a question, so the client has something to say 'Yes' to? Regardless who you're selling to in the salon industry, everyone has to master closing. In this episode, we're going to dive deeper into the different types of closes that comfortably work in our industry.

Primarily, there are three styles of closes that I've found work well in our industry:

1. I call this a DIRECT close.

You'll quite often use a Direct close when there's an existing relationship.

The relationship maybe with a regular client, or a client you've known for a long time. Or maybe it's a relationship where you've already built trust. In all those situations, you can use a Direct close quite comfortably.

Examples of a Direct close, could be:

- a. Would you like me to order that?
- b. Can I book that for you?
- c. How does that sound?
- d. Could that work for you?

Direct closes are short, closed-end questions.

They're to-the-point and require an equally brief response from the buyer. They are particularly good, when you're detailing several monthly promotions during your sales call.

2. I refer to the second style of closing as the CONSULTATIVE Close

This close is very helpful if you don't like to push or apply pressure, or maybe you've just explained a complex offer that may have a few options or alternatives available. Or, if you're just not strong at closing, then this is the perfect close for you.

Here, your goal is to support your buyer, allowing them to work through their options and more importantly, for you to find out what's highest on their list of considerations.

For example, you may consider (from their reaction) that the price is too high for this client. But they may be thinking about the price differently – they could be considering how they're going to pay for it, eg On Account, using a Credit Card or asking about a payment plan... or maybe even requesting a different delivery date, to help them rearrange when the payment happens. By using this non-pressure, respectful style of close, it will provide you with all that information plus more...

The Consultative Close goes like this... "Where would you like to go from here?" then you pause and listen. Now in most cases, the client will unveil what's important to them and quite often in some sort of order of importance.

In the previous example where we used price as the issue, they may respond to the question "Where would you like to go from here?" with their own questions around training and what sort of launch or promotional support you can offer to help with the off-take and/or sell-through. Try this approach, and you'll be very pleasantly surprised as to what pops out from each client.

To master it, you'll need to adjust from using a heavy talking delivery and instead, practice asking questions with confidence and then listening.

To get this to work for you, you do however need to do one thing. At the end of the sales conversation, after you've asked... "Where would you like to go from here?" you must SHUT UP and listen.

3. The last group of closes, I term as INDIRECT closes.

These are more advanced techniques and will require some practice, however once mastered they'll deliver stellar results.

There are two types of Indirect closes that I find are very effective in the salon industry:

a. The first Indirect Close, is titled the Alternative Close

An Alternative close is where you offer the buyer choices, ie Option A or Option B

A good example of an Alternative close that we can all relate to, is when a client phones a salon or clinic for an appointment. It goes like this:

Phone rings.

You answer: "Hello Jenny's Salon, this is Sue"

Client says: "Hi Sue, this is Mary Smith. I'd like to book in for a facial this week please"

You respond: "We have some appointments on Tuesday or Thursday, which day do you prefer?"

Client says: "Thursday"

You say: "Morning or afternoon, which suits you best?"

Client says: "Afternoon"

You say: "We have a 3pm or a 4pm which one do you want"

Client says: "I'll take the 4pm"

So, who decided on this booking?

You or the client? Hmm

I'll suggest that in her mind, Mary Smith (the client) made it, by saying "I'll take the 4pm" However, you skilfully guided her to the right spot, by using alternatives. So, in your selling role how can you take the same concept to make it easy for your clients to buy?

There are a couple of steps, to follow.

Step 1: Review the portfolio of products that you're selling, or maybe it's this month's promotions you need to review. You're looking for options or choices that you can offer your clients.

Step 2: Think how you can connect them together.

Step 3: Practice offering them as an option at the close of the sale.

Step 4: Keep it simple, say it in the least amount of words possible.

Remember a confused client won't decide and they definitely won't buy.

So, it may go like this...

"With this promotion you have two options, a 6-pack at \$10 each or 12-pack at \$8 each. Which would you prefer?"

Then pause and wait for the client to respond.

Let's review that

- Firstly, you're not going to ask a direct close— because that will only deliver a YES or NO
- Instead, you're asking the client to make a choice and therefore avoiding the YES/NO option
- The Alternative is the 6-pack at \$10 each, or the 12 pack at \$8 each
- The Close is the question "Which do you prefer?"

BTW, research has proven that when presented with an alternative, a significant percentage of people will always take the second choice, so put your more attractive offering second.

Alternative Closes are a great way to offer an upsell at the close – by offering a choice, the client decides which option they prefer. The Alternative Close reduces the pressure on you to close and more importantly, allows the client to buy.

b. The second of the Indirect Closes, is called an Associated Close

This was brought to fame by Susan's (a fashion store), where their slogan was "This goes with that..."

To illustrate the Associated Close, let's assume that you're selling a monthly promotion to a salon or clinic owner. The promotion includes a counter stand for stockists to display the promotion or can be used as a tool to create an impulse purchase of your new lipstick, moisturiser or scalp treatment. You're discussing the promotion and you've detailed the offer as "Buy 24 get 4 free and it costs the salon \$495.00"

Once you've detailed the specifics of the promotion, you lead up to the close by saying "This promotion comes with a counter stand... (show an image of the stand). Where do you think would be a good spot for the stand?"

What's interesting here is that you've already detailed the offer – it's quantity, it's cost etc.– and you're now just asking (or closing) on where they could fit the counter stand. This technique makes it easy for the client to say 'Yes', because you've minimised their decision to a simple one around where to locate the counter stand. Try it, you'll be surprised how easy it is and how it reduces a lot of the pressure around the close.

There's another way to use an Associated Close to great effect. It can be used for an upsell, at the close.

Again, let's assume that you're selling a product that has a companion product, or product range. The way this option can work, is once the client has purchased the first offer, you can respond with "Now that you've purchased that offer, it entitles you to purchase this second offer at a reduced price. Would you be open to conversation around that?"

WOW, that's a great way to upsell and it works really well...

Let's reflect on the key points from our podcast:

- Industry-based closes work best with salon clients
- There are three groups of closes:
 1. The Direct Close – use it where there's an existing relationship
 2. The Consultative Close – this is a soft close, that focuses on learning the client's decision-making priorities. This close is also good when selling a complex offering or products/services with a high price tag.
Can you remember the question for this close? "Where would you like to go from here?" I urge you to remember this one, practice and own it. It will definitely pay its way.
 3. The Indirect Close – the more advanced technique.
There are two options here:
 - The Alternative Close
 - The Associated Close

Remember, to improve your closing you need to practice, practice and practice some more. Own the techniques that resonate with you, practice them and make them yours.

