



**SHANE DECKER ON SALES STRATEGIES**

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# HOW TO SELL PROFILE-CORRECT

LEARN TO SAY WHAT COMES NATURALLY TO YOU

**D**o you feel uncomfortable when it comes time to close the sale? Have you ever sensed that you connected with a customer but then lost the connection when you tried to close? You may not be selling profile-correct.

Profile-correct salesmanship means playing to your own personality and being able to say what comes naturally to close the sale. Too many salespeople think they have to be direct or a little aggressive to close. For some, this style works, but for others, who are more suited to building a relationship before making the sale, switching suddenly to a direct style can come across to the customer as pushy.

Before you can know the closes best suited to you, you have to determine which selling profile you fit. There are three types of selling profiles. In brief, they are:

**SERPENTINE** → Usually a Type-B personality, this salesperson uses a familial touch, allowing the customer to get to know him or her before he buys. The serpent's definition of a close is "helping the customer make a decision." Seventy percent of salespeople are serpentes.

**MISSILE** → A Type-A personality who wants to get right down to



*A.J. SAYS: "7% of store owners avoid the sales floor." (2009 Big Survey)*



business, the missile romances the jewelry (instead of wandering off-topic) and is more direct. The missile's definition of a close is "timing and how you say it." Twenty percent of salespeople are missiles.

**SNEAK** → This salesperson is a chameleon, taking on the attributes of the serpentine or missile as it suits the customer. The sneak's definition of a close is "designed and engineered for the personality." Ten percent of salespeople are sneaks.

When a serpentine tries to sell like a missile, he tries to use direct closes, which are not profile-correct. The closes come out sounding pushy, threatening or insincere.

When a missile tries to sell like a serpentine and use compliment closes, it comes out sounding hokey. Missile presenters can use direct closes all the way through

their presentation and it won't sound pushy to the client because it's their natural selling style. Same with the serpentine using compliment closes: It's just natural. Clients love compliments when they are genuine.

Unfortunately, what happens is that a salesperson hears a close that works for another salesperson and tries to use it, but it comes out wrong because it doesn't fit his own selling profile. Anytime clients think a salesperson is pushy, it makes them extremely uncomfortable. Likewise, if the salesperson doesn't close at all (because they don't know how or are afraid to try), the client will still leave unhappy. The client came in to be closed by a professional.

So how can you learn how to sell profile-correct without being pushy? Do what I did. I promised myself every night for one full year that before I went to bed, I would sit down at the kitchen table and write out 10 closes. It took about 15 minutes. I wouldn't write any closes that I would not use, and I tried not to duplicate any.

In one year, I wrote out 3,650 closes. You can do the same thing if you want to improve. The ones I liked the best, I cut out and put on my refrigerator door and bathroom mirror where I saw them two times a day, and I started memorizing them.

My closing ratio went from 20 to 25 percent to more than 60 percent. If you want to be the best closer in your store ... if you want to preserve client loyalty and improve your closing ratio ... always sell profile-correct.

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## FRESH IDEAS TO BETTER YOUR BUSINESS

### TIPS SALES

#### → SMALL THINGS

The late great Woody Justice once told us how he struck up what was to become an important relationship with an Indian diamond supplier at a trade show after noticing how adept the young sales rep was with a pair of tweezers. If you're headed to the SMART Show or Vegas and have yet to master the small instruments, put some time in practicing. It's a small thing, but old hands can't help noticing. (And of course, don't use your bare hands. Diamond dealers don't like fingers because skin oil is hard to clean.)

#### → SPEAK LIKE THEM



Careful mimicry has long been among the tools used by the best sales pros.

Here's more advice

on how to do it: Whether the customer speaks with a slow Southern drawl or a fast East Coast patter, match the pace and rhythm that a customer uses. That's because people who talk at the same rate find each other more attractive than if one person speaks more slowly than the other, according to a study at the University of Maryland. But just because you're following their conversation speed doesn't mean you should try to mimic their accent. That's likely to annoy them.

#### → TAILOR-MADE

When Cathy Grad, owner of Caffray Jewellers in Hinsdale, IL, moved to computerize her operation last year, her small store's limited sales floor meant there was no space for computer stations. The solution? A tablet-based system tailored by her system provider, Guild Jewelers. "We take our tablets to the customers, write up the job, take a picture, print it out and the customers love it," she explained.