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is often at about the three or four month mark. A lot of bosses will let it drag on past that, but it's really in everyone's interest for both parties to pursue new opportunities.

**What should I do if I think my store is being "cased"?**

► There are several immediate steps that can reduce the likelihood of a robbery or burglary. Jewelers Mutual offers the following advice. First, alert your employees by using a pre-established code word or phrase. When that happens, your employees should take the following steps:

1. Have an employee with a cellphone leave the store to observe from a safe distance.
2. Make more employees visible on the sales floor.
3. Write down the description of any suspicious people and, if possible, their license plate number.
4. Make sure cabinets, showcases and safes are locked.
5. Greet the individuals and attempt to engage them in conversation. If they are robbers, your attention will be unwanted and they will leave.
6. Call the police and ask them to visit your store as soon as possible. Explain that you think your store is being cased for a potential robbery or burglary.



7. Store customers' merchandise in a safe place out of sight.
8. Review procedures to follow should a robbery occur — stay calm, do not resist, obey the robber's orders, do not say or do anything unless you are told to do so.

**Morale is bad and moaning seems to be part of our culture. Any ideas on how to turn it around?**

► Bring an upbeat attitude to the store every morning and make it clear you expect the same positivity from your charges. In this new era, it's expected your employees will take responsibility for their own happiness and effectiveness. For truly disgruntled staff, there's not much a manager can do except to make it known they are on the wrong bus. (And it's often a couple of bad seeds that will set the toxic tone for a store.) A jewelry store is no place for people who throw their hands up in the air and declare, "This place sucks!" at every setback.

# HAPPIEST WHEN CLOSED

When you let the customer leave without buying, you've actually let them down.



Shane Decker  
On Sales

**T**oday's clients don't have time to shop tomorrow. They buy the day they shop; you do the same thing. Millennials shop online before they decide to come to your store. Older generations might go from store to store to find what they want, but they too buy the day they shop. Most of us start with the store where we want to leave our money.

Clients want you to close the sale. In part, they are paying you to make a professional decision for them and trusting you to do it. Sixty to 70 percent of your clients cannot make up their own minds. That's why you should never say, "Can I wrap it up for you?" They will walk because you're asking them to make a decision.

Moreover, approximately 90 percent of all clients who say I'll be back never come back; 7 percent do. And, around 80 percent of all clients who say "I'll be back" buy elsewhere within the first one to two hours after leaving your location.

The No. 1 reason clients leave empty-handed is not inventory or price. It's that they were not closed. Too many salespeople do show-and-tell presentations rather than show-and-sell presentations. Independently owned stores' closing ratios are between 27-33 percent, yet 80 percent of shoppers buy the day they shop. If you shop today, do you have time to shop tomorrow? Didn't think so.

Never believe the client is coming back. This is the time for a team-sell or

a T.O. When they say "I'll be back," that means they are leaving to shop somewhere else.

When you let the client leave empty-handed, you're giving money to one of your competitors.

The best way to preserve client loyalty is to close the sale. A client is successful when they leave with a bag, give you money and they're glad they came in — not when they have to leave and start the process somewhere else.

One of your most successful opportunities should be your referral clients, but remember, they have high expectations. Someone bragged about how awesome you or your team was. If the expectations are met, closing ratio with referrals are

usually over 80 percent. Interestingly, this is a higher percentage than even clients who come in two-three times per year. Another type of presentation that should have a high closing ratio (80 percent) is the appointment.

The more money the item costs, the easier it is to close it. A \$500 item is harder to close than a

\$5,000 item and so on. Why? Because the client can. Never decide for the client how much they can spend. Let them decide that. Do not do price presentations.

Owners, track clients coming in with a door counter and see how many sales slips are written up. This will tell you your closing ratio, which is the most important number in your entire company. You'll also learn what your team is doing. Ultimately, your store's closing ratio should be 50 percent or more.

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Read columnist bio on Page 56

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