



HEALTH CLUB
UNDERGROUND
Insider Secrets Revealed

Curtis Mock's OFFICIAL "Dare to be Different" Newsletter for Renegade Health Club Owners

- June 2009 -



**“A Powerful Collection of
Sales Techniques to Help You
Overcome Objections and Close
More Sales Than Ever Before!”**



In this issue:

- 7 Strategies to Help you Sell more Memberships, More Often
- How to confidently ask for the sale, and continue asking them to buy more
- 10 Powerful closing strategies you can use to guarantee a higher closing rate
- Overcoming Objections about EFT, Price, "Thinking about it", and More!



Timid Salespeople Have Skinny Kids...

-Zig Ziglar

Dear Friend,

Most salespeople would agree that the bottom line in sales is closing the deal. If everything goes great and you do everything perfectly, yet you do not close the sale, you were unsuccessful. Nothing was really accomplished, and no money was made. On the other hand, if you do everything wrong, yet you close every sale, then from a financial and business standpoint, you are successful. That is why people who are closers are held in such high regard in the club business.

Compare this to the quarterback who comes in and throws the touchdown pass in the final seconds to win the game or to the pitcher who comes in to closeout the inning. The people who can get it done are the ones who make big money. The salesperson who can close sales is always well respected and well paid. No matter what methods you use, the goal is to close the sale.

There are many methods used by top producers, several of which will be discussed over the next 23 pages. These tips and techniques will make the difference between closing every sale and missing every sale. If you follow the advice in this Underground Letter, you will see a marked improvement in your closing percentages. Some strategies may be unorthodox, some may seem silly, and some may seem a bit overbearing, but they all have been proven to close sales

Regardless of the type of close you use, there are seven steps to closing that will always apply. Remember to practice these seven steps, because simply reading them will do nothing for you. As embarrassing and annoying as it is to practice through roleplaying, it is still the absolute best way to hone your sales skills.

Think of it like a football player who studies the playbook. He must know the playbook forward and backwards to be successful. But simply knowing the playbook is not enough. He needs to put that knowledge to work during practice and games in order to perfect his skills. He must learn to overcome, improvise, and adapt to many different situations as they happen. You are the quarterback of your career. This newsletter can serve as your playbook, but you must provide the hard work and dedication it takes for you to be successful.



**Note: If you are not pre-qualifying your guests with some type of interview or series of questions, these seven steps, and the various closing methods mentioned in later pages, will not be nearly as effective for you. ALWAYS take the time to sit down and prequalify your guests.*

The Seven Steps to Closing More Membership Sales

1. Close too often and too early rather than too seldom and too late!

You need to take advantage of any opportunity you have to gain commitment from your guest. You do not want to let the opportunity to close a sale pass you by. Closing too soon rather than too late allows you to get a peek at the person's intentions or to gauge their interest level. By using assumptive statements and mini-commitment questions, you will be able to read your prospect better, and customize your tour and presentation to match their mood and buying habits. Here are a few examples of questions you can ask prospects throughout the process to close early and often:

- "Will you be able to do your first workout this week?"
- "When did you want to set up your appointment with the trainer?"
- "Are you the type to pay things off early or pay a little at a time each month?"
- "Will you want your own reserved locker?"
- "Is your significant other joining with you?"
- "Did you want a wallet access card or a key fob?"



During the price presentation, a great way to close is to ask, "Out of these three membership options, which one are you leaning toward?" But this is where many rookie salespeople make a mistake. Most times the prospect will point to or tell the salesperson which option they prefer. The common mistake that a rookie salesperson makes is that they will not begin immediately filling out the membership agreement. They will continue talking, potentially changing the prospects mind after they have already said yes.

Do Not make this mistake!

Once commitment is gained, seal the deal. The potential member just said they were ready to buy the membership, so do not give them the option to now change their mind. Hesitating for even a moment can be the difference between a closed membership sale and a lost membership sale.



Don't act surprised when a member selects a membership option. Simply say, "That's what I would have picked for you" or "Good choice", and begin filling out the membership agreement. You want to make this part of the process as quick and as painless for them as possible.

The magic "yes" is not going to always fall out of the sky. It just doesn't happen this way, especially if you haven't set the stage for the close. But if you do a good job of gaining mini-commitments and using assumptive closes throughout the tour and price presentation, many times the prospect will simply point to the option that best fits their needs.

ALWAYS ASSUME THE SALE!!!

Gone are the days when a health club sale means a quick tour of the equipment and 30 minutes behind closed doors pressuring the person to join. Become their friend, gain mini commitments, be assumptive, and the price presentation and the close will not be a problem.

2. You Must Be Assumptive!



Being assumptive is probably the best way to make sure you close a sale. After presenting price, never ask, "Do you have any questions" or "Did you want to join today?" Keep it quick and keep it simple. From my experience, I had the best closing rate when I used the following five-word close:

"Do you have a preference?"

You're not asking if they want to join, you are assuming they ARE joining and offering them a choice of options.

That choice is not yes or no; it is option A, B, or C.

Just having an assumptive attitude and saying, "*Great, welcome to the club*" or "*That's the option most of our members choose*" makes the guest think that it is what everybody does and they will simply figure that this must be how it works. Too many times, a salesperson will accidentally give the prospect an opportunity to haggle by not closing the deal right away when they had the chance.

You can even make the choice for them many times. If they already said that price is a concern, when you show them the options, you can automatically select the one that works best for those on a budget. "*This one is our Economy Membership, and based on what you told me, this will be the best option for you. Go ahead and fill out this top part.*" Or if they mentioned they want a personal trainer, select the option that includes a personal trainer for them. This is VERY assumptive, but it works if you're a good salesperson. The worst that can happen is they can slow the process by expressing a concern. Of which you will be able to overcome with a variety of closing methods we will go over in a minute.

3. Use the Force!

There is a stronger power used by the best salespeople. You may think this sounds ridiculous; but hey, it worked for Yoda. A sale has very little to do with what you say, rather it has more to do with how you say it. And while there are certainly forces within your words, there are even more forces found in body language and facial expressions. You can insult someone with a smile and it seems like a joke; insult him or her with a frown, and it seems like an insult.



Here are some things to consider as you communicate with your prospect:

- The tone of your voice
- The speed in which you talk
- The proximity between you and your guest
- How softly or loudly you speak
- Fear or nervousness in your voice

- Your facial expressions
- Eye contact
- The ability to remain calm
- The speed in which you ask or answer questions
- The clarity of your voice
- How well you listen
- Using slang

You get the point, and now should be a newfound believer in the force. A good sales manager or club owner can watch the sales area from 30 feet away, unable to hear any verbal communications, but still be aware of what is taking place at each and every table. You do not have to hear what they are saying because you can "see" everything they are saying just fine.



The Difference Between Women & Men

4. Mirroring and Matching!

You must match the mood and actions of your guest. If they talk fast, you talk fast. If they lean in, you lean in. If they seem excited, you be excited as well. Even if you have nothing in common with the guest, they will feel the common energy shared with your body language. Subconsciously they will trust you because you are just like them. Like attracts Like. This is especially important when it comes to sales.

5. Lead with Questions!

The person asking the questions is the one in control of the conversation. When it comes down to closing a sale, your guest will ask a lot of questions that they don't really care about hearing the answers to. These are stalling tactics. They are looking for something within your answer that will give them a way out.



For instance, you are filling out the paperwork, and your prospect asks, "Who teaches your yoga class?" An inexperienced salesperson might answer, "Oh, it is Doug, he is one of our best instructors." To which the prospect says, "I don't feel comfortable doing yoga in front of a man. I think I will just wait." This exact scenario and similar scenarios happen all of the time. As you can see, if this question was deaf-eared, or answered with a question, this would have never become a problem.

6. Ask for the Sale Five Times!



One of the most effective methods in sales is to "Go ask them one more time." The reason this works is because people simply give up and give in. If you ask enough times while still maintaining the level of trust you have established with the guest, they will likely change their mind. Sixty percent of all sales that are made in the world are done so after the fifth closing objection. It is true. Count how many objections or concerns you field while you are with your next couple of guests. It is likely more than just one or two.

You get the point. Sometimes just changing the subject helps if you can tell they are going to continue the objections. Change the entire subject and try talking for a while about something unrelated to the membership, such as their family, their job, or more about their health history and related goals. If you don't remain in control of the conversation, you will never get to objection number five. Try getting up and leaving the room, then return and you may find they are more open to the sale. In even the most difficult of sales situations, I've found that number five is the magic number. It separates the men from the boys, the women from the girls.

7. After Asking Questions, Shut Up!

The reason you need to ask a lot of questions is so that you may find something in their answer that allows you to close the sale. Make sure you wait for them to answer, rather than answering for them. When you answer for them, you are not letting the guest validate for themselves the importance of joining your club and pursuing their health and fitness goals. You must be patient, ask a question, and give the guest as much time as they need to answer the question. When they answer the question, be ready with the next question so there is no delay in the conversation. Never interrupt your guest or ask another question before they answer the previous one.



The first one to talk loses the battle!



I've seen it time and time again. A salesperson asks for the sale, then because of a brief uncomfortable silence begins talking again. I don't care if there is a two minute period of silence, you DO NOT talk first. I'm not kidding about this. When you ask them a question, allow them to think about their response. Remember, selling often times is all about a prospect validating

to themselves the importance of their decision. A little introspection and uncomfortable silence is good for them!

Below is an example of a typical situation where you ask a question, wait for a response, and then be ready with another question.

"Mrs. Prospect, why did you come to the club today?" *"I want to lose weight."* "If you do not mind me asking, you look great to me, why did you want to lose weight?" *"I just saw a picture of myself, and I cannot believe how much weight I have gained."* "How did you feel when you saw that picture, Mrs. Prospect?" *"I couldn't believe it! I decided right then and there that tomorrow I was going to lose fifteen pounds."* "Wow, you're really serious about

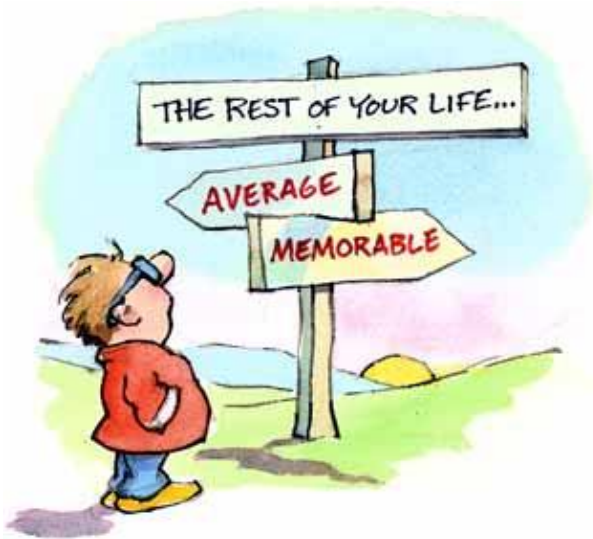
this! We'll go ahead set up your first session with the trainer later today or tomorrow. Mrs. Prospect, did you want to go ahead with the membership that included our Quick Results personal training and nutrition analysis or would you just prefer to go with our basic membership today?" *"I will take the trainer."* "Welcome to the club, you're going to do great!"

You can never ask too many questions. But don't answer the question for them. Wait for their response and immediately follow up with another question. Express true concern for their issues and become their friend. By them answering questions, it is much more powerful than if you are to tell them. Selling is not telling; Selling is listening and asking follow up questions, and allowing them to come up with their own answer.

If you follow these 7 steps, you will notice a marked improvement in your closing percentage. All of these strategies have been tested and proven time and time again.

Here are some Powerful Closes You Can Use

The Alternate Choice



This should be the close you attempt during the price presentation nearly every time. You can use any number or combination of the other closes, but this one should always be used. If you do a good enough job with assumptive closes and mini-commitments from the moment the prospect walks in the door, the alternate choice will work nearly every time. It is not a matter of if they will join, but rather which membership option they prefer. And always remember to

Be assumptive!

The alternate choice is when you show prospects the different membership options and then say, "Do you have a preference?", Or "Would you rather go with option one or would you prefer option two?", Or "Out of the different options which one is best for you?", Or "Do you want your membership with a trainer or without a trainer?", Or "Would you prefer

the platinum membership with tanning and towel service or just the traditional membership?"

The alternate choice is a simple and effective close that has been shown to work over and over in a health club setting. In sales, you will learn that if you give somebody two, maximum three, choices they are going to take one of them. "Did you want to go with cash, check or credit card?" It has been around forever and works in all types of businesses. Learn it and get used to it because you will see that you will use the alternate close more than any other.

The "No Pressure" Close

This is a great close any time the Alternate Choice close doesn't work the first time you present it. If a prospect says, "*I would rather think about it*", let them know you're not interested in pressuring them, but you would like to get to the heart of what they need to think about. Showing some empathy and a willingness to help them with the decision is much more effective than twisting their arm behind their back.

For example, when a prospect says he/she wants to think about it, say:

"Of course you can think about it, this is a very important decision. Know that I am not interested in pressuring you, but I do feel it is my responsibility to find out what exactly you need to think about and perhaps find an option that will make the most sense for you."

Or, "We do not believe in high-pressure sales, but I would love more than anything for you to become a member here. Please tell me more about what you need to think about."

Or, "I would never try to hard sell you, you're too smart for that, but I know you would love it here. What would it take for you to join today and I will do my best to accommodate".

You are indeed applying some pressure, but because you tell the guest that you're not pressuring them, it makes them feel as if you really aren't. Rather, it allows them to feel that you have genuine concern and want them to become a member. Sometimes this is what people need to hear. Especially considering the fact that the fitness industry is notorious for high-pressure sales tactics. If they hear you say you're not interested in hard selling, it sometimes breaks down those walls and allows them to really hear what you have to say.

"If I Could, Would You" Close

If the prospect wants to think about it or is trying to push you for a little more than what you have presented, I.e. a lower price or no commitment, then use this age-old trick. It is, "If I could, would you...?" This means that if I could get that for you today would you want to get started.

For Example:

"Mrs. Prospect, you've put off getting healthy for far too long and I'm going to do whatever it takes to put an end to that. If I sweeten the deal enough, will you get started today?"

She may ask, "Like what?" "Well, we had a 30-day guarantee promotion that we offered last month. If I can get you a guarantee like this, will you get started?" Or, "We had a split-pay option available last year that is a way to pay your membership off early, and at a discount. It's not in the computer, so I'll have to customize your membership, but if I can do this, will you join?" Or, "Tell me it's your birthday and I'll give you a birthday special of one free month. If I can do that, will you join? Okay, tell me it's your birthday." (Hopefully they laugh and say, "Alright, you got me".)



In many cases you will show the potential member your membership options and they will say they want to think about it. What you need to do is mention the deal that was just available, but has since expired. Then you can offer the "if I could, would you" close.

"The 30-Day Guarantee" Close



If your club does not have a 30-day guarantee, you need to create one. Keep in mind it is not suggested to offer this to everyone, although some industry "experts" suggest you should. Keep this as your "Ace in the hole" if you feel nothing else will work. It is very simple. If they suggest they don't know if they will like working out or they don't know if they will like your facility well enough to commit to a year, say something like this: "I understand this is a big decision. How about this, I am so confident that you will like it here, that I am willing to

give you a 30-day guarantee. If you don't like it here after 30 days, let me know and I will cancel the remainder of your membership. Fair enough?"

Some of you may think that every person will back out of their membership if they have this option, but it has been found that only 1-2 percent of members will opt out within 30 days. It is all in how the program is structured. During the qualifying stage or the tour, you asked them how many days per week they are going to exercise. Nearly every person will say at least 3 times per week. Tell them the only stipulation on the 30-day period is that they give it an honest try, meaning they use the club 3 times a week during this time.

If they use the facility 12 times in that first month and they're not convinced, they can cancel, no strings attached. Think about it...If a member uses your facility 12 times and you take the time to call once during this time and say hello or offer help when you see them in the club, do you really think they are going to cancel? No way! Most will not use the club 12



times during this time period and will not be eligible for the guarantee. Every once in a while you will find someone who will scan their card 12 times during the month, just to beat the system, but it is very rare. Remember, they came into your club because they wanted to be healthier. With your motivation, they will give it an honest effort.

Before you offer this guarantee, several things need to be in place. One, your club owner needs to be convinced this is a good idea. Two, if your club software program does not track attendance, you need to create a sign-in sheet specifically for this group. Keep it behind the desk and every time they check in, put an X next to the day of the month they came in. If they have 12 X's during their first month, they have the option to cancel. But remember, what person do you know who would cancel after they see the amazing effect exercise has on their body, their mind, and their energy levels?

Getting people to actually use the facility is the biggest problem with retention in most clubs. If people would really use the club a few times a month, they would never want to cancel. Sadly, over 50% of people who join a health club never use their membership a single time. The third and final thing you need is a certificate that states, "30-Day Guarantee". Have some of these printed and available to use when this close is necessary. By actually having this piece of paper in their possession, the prospect feels more comfortable about the option.



You can also offer a money back guarantee or even a "Double your money back" guarantee. You might have a couple more people who end up taking advantage of the guarantee, but you'll have exponentially more people joining because you have such a powerful guarantee in place. It shows you have confidence in your ability to help them reach their goals. You will sign up far more people due to this guarantee than you will people requesting money back.

Remember, this close is not to be used every time. But if you feel this will help alleviate the main concerns of the prospect, it is very effective in closing a sale.

The Three-Day Guarantee Close

Nearly all states allow a buyer to have three days to change their mind for any purchase requiring a commitment to utilize a service. This close is a "chicken close" and should only be utilized if a club does not allow a 30-day guarantee or if you feel the prospect will walk if you do not give them some type of guarantee. If you read through your club's membership agreement, there will likely be a section that states something similar to:

If you wish to cancel this contract, you may cancel by delivering or mailing a written notice to XYZ Fitness. The notice must say that you do not wish to be bound by the agreement and must be delivered or mailed before midnight of the third business day after you sign the agreement. This notice must be delivered or mailed to XYZ Fitness, 8402 North Muscle Lane, Anywhere, USA 55555. If you cancel within the three (3) day period outlined above, XYZ Fitness will return, within ten days of the date on which you gave notice of cancellation, any payments you made.



If a guest is hesitant, just remind them that if they change their mind, not to worry because the state protects them from buyer's remorse. Make sure to tell them that your club has never had anyone take advantage of it because everyone loves it there, but that it is available to them if they regret the decision or if their significant other strongly disapproves. Make sure you set an appointment for their first meeting with a personal trainer within those first three days so that they can experience the exhilarating feeling that exercising will give them.

Although this 3-day guarantee is available to every new member, do not mention it unless you feel it will help you close the sale. You don't want them to sign up just because they feel pressured only to find the club receives a letter of cancellation the following day. The 30-day guarantee is a much better close, but if you choose not to have this, the 3-day guarantee should allow you a way to make hesitant prospects more comfortable with the idea of becoming a member.

The Ben Franklin Close



This close involves developing a plus versus minus system, outlining the important reasons why a prospect would choose to become a member. This close is especially good for closing a personal training membership. It works very well, so do not be afraid if the process takes some time.

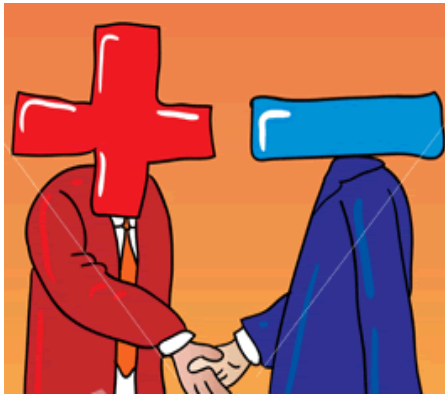
Whenever Ben Franklin had to make a difficult decision he would list the positives and the negatives of why he should make that decision. He would make a list of all the reasons why he should do it and all the reasons why he should not do it. He would then compare the lists to help him

determine if he should make the decision or wait for a while before deciding. If the positives outweighed the negatives, he would make that decision and vice versa.

For example, title one side of a piece of paper "Positives" and the other side of the paper "Negatives". Then ask the prospect, "What positives do you think will come from you becoming healthier and losing weight?" The answers will vary and include such positives as: Improved health, looking good, lower blood pressure, feeling better, stronger heart, more energy, increased stamina, better flexibility, getting off medications, and more. If they do not come up with enough positive answers, you can give them a few more so you can fill up that column completely. Be sure to include any things they had mentioned to you during pre-qualification. Do not give them too many because you want them to see their own answers on the paper.

After writing down about 10 to 12 positives, move over to the negatives. Ask the prospect, "What are some of the negatives of getting in shape and improving your health?" The funny thing about the question is that there is no acceptable answer to it. Whatever you do, do not help them fill out this side of the paper. They will have a hard time finding any

answers so do not give them any. You will receive answers such as, "I don't have the time" or "I don't have the money," two of the easiest objections to overcome. That's pretty much all you need to worry about on this one.



positives.)

You have not only showed them that the positives outweigh the negatives, you have also uncovered a couple of objections. Your next step is to read back all of the positives and then the negatives. Your closing question will be something like, "Mrs. Prospect, wouldn't you agree that sacrificing an average of one hour of your time and around \$1 a day is a small price to pay to be able to live longer, look better, have more energy, lower your blood pressure, and sleep better" (Simply read back their

You have now made it obvious that their objections have been squashed underneath the pressure of all of the positive benefits they are going to receive. You have built value within the product and shown that they need to listen to you to get what they need. The only way to get all of the positives is to enroll in the club. Once they have seen that, they find it hard to say no because it is simply not a logical answer. This close takes a little longer but it is well worth it.

The "Thinking About It" Close

This objection is at the tip of every uncertain prospect's tongue. If a guest gives you this objection, they are searching for a way out of committing, most likely to try to avoid spending money. This is called a "secondary objection" because it is often used to hide another. This is one of the more common objections you will receive, therefore this is a closing technique you should really make sure to practice as often as possible.



When the situation arises, stay calm and remember this close.

"Mr. Prospect, I can understand you want to think about it. Other people have felt the same way that you feel. What we have found is that most people have already thought of everything there is to think about. Then what ends up happening is you go home, you walk towards the door, you pick up your mail, and you start thinking about the bills you have to

pay. You go in and listen to your answering machine, turn on the TV, get busy with the dinner and kids. One thing leads to another, and all of a sudden, it is six months down the road, and you really haven't gotten back around to doing what you originally had the best intentions of doing today. Every morning we wake up and have the best intentions of doing all of the things that are going to make our life better. It just seems that at some point during the day, our mind has tricked our bodies into making the wrong decision; into procrastinating, waiting, or putting it off until tomorrow. I think you would agree, Mr. Prospect, that the time is right, and now is the time. What better place to think about it? You have all the information that you need on the table, you have an environment that is free from distraction, and you have me here to answer all of your questions. Tell me what it is that you still have to think about."



It is quite a bit to remember but it is the only close you are going to need in this situation. You will find that people will make objections, such as this one, just because they are afraid to commit to anything. When they are in a situation where they cannot find anything they truly object to, they will fall back on their old-reliable, "I want to think about it." Use this close to reach your guest at an emotional level and to uncover their true objections.

"What About This? What About That? What if I Could?" Close



Sometimes the most effective close is just offering the guest different options until you find one that works for them. Most of the time, your guest is not going to tell you the real reason they are undecided. Sometimes it's just because they haven't seen an option that best fits their needs. It has been suggested that there are really only two reasons a sale is not made. Either the salesperson never asked for the sale enough times, or they could not find an option that met the customer's needs. Many

salespeople today cannot close a sale because they do not understand the fact that the one or two options that they are offering are not appealing to the customer.

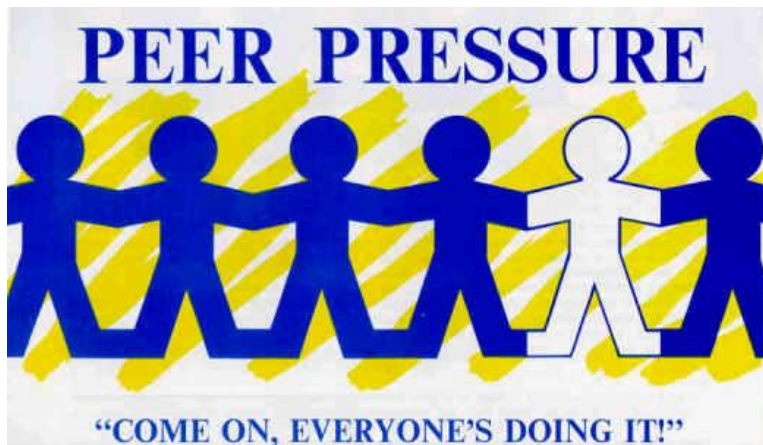
For Example:

"Mr. Prospect, this membership option includes a one time upfront investment, leaving your monthly investment at only \$25." *"I need to think about it."* "Let me ask you a question, is pre-paying your membership an option for you?" *"I still want to try it first."* "What if I could get you a short-term membership that would give you an opportunity to try the club,

as well as a little more time to see the benefits exercise will have on you?" "That sounds a little better." "I have a 90 day option for \$120 and I have 120 day option for \$200. Both of them would give you the time to see changes in your body, at the end of that time, your membership will expire. If you decide you like the club, and you are seeing results within the first 30 days, you can apply the total amount toward a regular membership. I think this will answer all of your concerns. Out of option 1 and option 2, which one would you be leaning towards?" "Option 2." "Mr. Prospect, welcome to the club. Your address? Phone number? Would you be handling your membership by cash, check or credit card?" "Credit card." "And you brought that with you today?"

The example given above shows that the guest really did want to join. The salesperson simply had to find a membership option that met his needs. This is very common in the health club industry. Many times it is not that the guest does not want to enroll, it is that the guest has not seen anything that they really feel comfortable with. Remember, they came into your club because they want to be healthier. It is a big decision and you owe it to them to help them stop procrastinating and to get their lives and health back on track. The reason most successful clubs have multiple membership options is so they can tailor to the many different needs of many different people. It is your job to find the best one for each situation.

The "Just Do It" Close



As funny as it sounds sometimes just saying the words, "Oh, come on, just do it!" will be motivation enough for some people to enroll. Peer pressure is very powerful and it works. Think of how many times this close has been used in high schools to get a friend to drink his first beer. The words, "Oh, come on, just do it!" work.

You must have a good rapport with your guest to use this. It is playful, yet effective. Many people simply need to have somebody there to give them that extra push to get them going. There will be countless times you will hear a prospect say, "You know, I really need this, I should do it", or "I wasn't expecting to make any decisions today...but..." or "Gosh, I just don't know". These people really want to join, they just need a little nudge.

Remember, you're not talking them into a vacuum cleaner, a magazine subscription, or something else they don't need. You are selling them a one-way ticket to a better, longer, and more fulfilling life. If it takes you being a little aggressive, so be it! If they cannot make the decision for themselves, make it for them! You'll be surprised at how many people really just want someone to say, "Oh, come on, just do it."

Tell a Story

It is amazing how people can relate so much better when you tell a story. People associate themselves with characters in movies and books, so why not present a story that will allow your prospect to picture themselves creating a better life or reaching their goals. In order to be effective you will need to have developed some rapport with your guest. Otherwise the story will not have the desired effect.



What story do you tell? I'm certain that if you think about your life and the lives of your friends and family, you will find a story to tell. Someone close to you who has suffered health problems from lack of exercise and poor lifestyle habits or a story about someone you know of who has overcome adversity to (fill in the blank), losing weight, beating cancer, lowering blood pressure, feeling younger, running a marathon, etc. Stories are very powerful.

If it is difficult for you to paint a picture or tell a story, it may be more difficult for the guest to follow along. But if presented well, stories are very effective. Throughout the entire story, you are working to get the guest to agree with everything you say. Once they have realized the point or the correlation between the story and their body, it becomes almost irrational for them to say no. Before attempting to utilize a story as your closing strategy, make sure you have built strong rapport with the guest or they will not follow the significance of your story and will miss the point entirely.

All of these closes have been proven to work, but they each have to be used at the right time and under the right circumstances. You will often find that you will need to utilize several closes on the same guest. Practice makes perfect! You want to develop a high level of comfort with a variety of closing methods so that when you find yourself in a difficult situation, you will always be ready.

The Membership Agreement



Many times a salesperson can lose the sale as they are filling out the membership agreement. The guest may try to stall by asking questions, hoping to find something in your answer they can use to avoid joining the club. Some people find it hard to fully commit to a financial agreement and you will find that many will agree with everything you say throughout the tour but will then try to find excuses at the end of your presentation in an attempt to find a way out of spending any money. There are a couple things you can do to not fall prey to these stalling tactics.

First, when this happens, remember the K-I-S-S rule: Keep It Simple Stupid. If you give too much information, the guest will find something in your answer that gives them a reason not to join. Always fill out the top of the membership with the personal information yourself. If you give it to the member, they will stop and hold the pen and start to ask questions. As you fill out the personal information, you want to ask a series of questions that occupy the guest's thoughts. If they are answering your questions, they cannot think of their own questions to ask.

For Example:

"It is great that you have decided to join the club today, Mrs. Prospect. Could you spell your last name for me please? And your address? And your telephone number? Did you want to take care of your membership by cash, check, or credit card? And you brought that with you today?"

Simply hold up your hand in the shape of a credit card as you continue to write, and they will almost always reach in and grab their purse or wallet. If they do not reach for their form of payment, ask the same question again, "Have you brought that with you today?"

At that point, you need to get the guest to authorize the membership. You do this by simply explaining the agreement while pointing out each area of the agreement with your pen. It is a good idea to put circles or stars next to the area that needs to be signed.

Many salespeople make this part of the process too difficult. You should simply say, "Put your initials next to these two spots for liability and authorization, and put your name at the bottom". "I'll get you a copy of this and your membership card and you're all set!" If they hesitate, simply state, "Just your initials on those two lines, and okay it at the bottom for me." Again, remember to keep asking questions until all the signatures are finished.



"Mrs. Prospect, did you want to make your first training appointment today or would tomorrow be better for you?" "Were you going to work out today?" "What other errands do you have to run today?" "Did you want to go ahead and grab a quick tan while you're here?"

The membership agreement process should be controlled by the salesperson entirely. It should be filled out quickly while asking questions. After the guest answers each question, follow immediately with another question.

One thing that should be pointed out is that it might seem that there is some deception involved in this process. That is far from the case. These guests came into your facility for a reason, to join your club and improve their health! It is your job to get them to stop procrastinating and to make a commitment. You cannot feel bad for talking them into getting a membership. If they do not begin exercising, their health is only going to get worse. If they cannot make the decision because they are uncomfortable, fearful, or lazy, you need to make the decision for them. They will thank you later when they realize all of the amazing effects of exercise they have been missing out on for so many years.

Overcoming EFT Objections

For those of you who have been living in a cave, EFT stands for Electronic Funds Transfer. Simply stated, this is a process that makes monthly dues payments more convenient for the member and for the health club. An EFT gives the club authorization to automatically deduct the amount for the member's dues from either their checking or credit card account. This helps the member by automatically making their payment and keeping their membership active without the concern of making their payment on time. It benefits the club by having secure access to a check or credit card and by decreasing the amount of time spent chasing late payments. This secure billing method is done electronically and uses little time or labor, which will save the club in the long run. It also shows company stability to potential investors and/or owners.



It is easy to find yourself nervous when asking a new member from which account they would like automatic billing. Remember, a large percentage of communication is non-verbal. If you are afraid of asking for billing information, your guest will sense it and will not be willing to use EFT as their method of payment. Many of these prospects may have had bad experiences with electronic fund transfers in the past. Perhaps you too may have had such an experience. Just remember that in the future, EFT may be the only payment method available across all industries. Computerization is changing everything and most countries outside of the United States ONLY use credit cards and debit cards. It is becoming the norm for paychecks and bills to be deposited or deducted from your bank electronically. Using this system, there is rarely a mistake. Here is a typical scenario:



"Your total today, Mr. Prospect, is \$79. How did you want to take care of that?" He might respond, "*Can I write a check?*" "Of course you can!" Have him fill out the check for \$79. When he hands you the check, say, "Is this the same account you want your monthly payments to come from?" Nine times out of ten the member will say "Yes".

He might ask, "Oh, is it automatically taken out?" or "Can't I just bring a check every month?" It might sound too simple to believe, but a firm "Yes" or "No" will often times be enough. You can say, as nonchalantly as possible, "Yup, everything is automated; you won't find any health clubs these days who take money in house. Is this account best?"

If he still objects, say "You may have had a bad experience with EFT in the past, but our process is very secure and we have never had an issue. All you are doing is giving your bank permission to send our bank a check each month for \$30, just as it states here." (Point to the monthly payment amount on the agreement) "It also protects you from ever having to pay the \$25 late fee. Does that make you feel better?" (Always smile).

If he still objects, say "Tell you what, if you ever have any problems, call me directly and I will fix it for you immediately, fair enough?"

If he STILL objects, just tell him "It's \$5 more per month and if you are ever late, you will owe the \$25 late fee, or you can simply pay for your membership in full today. Do you have a preference?"



Many clubs now refuse to take the monthly payment in house. If that is your club, and the member won't pay in full or refuse to pay \$5 more, let them know as much as you hate it, they won't be able to work out at your facility. This rarely ever happens, but sometimes you have no choice. Rules are rules and there is a reason you have systems in place.

Answer this: Would you rather give up that one membership, or would you rather have to remember each month to remind that particular member that their payment is due, process their payment manually, or walk to the bank with their check, all for one member while everyone else is on a seamless and automated system? Ugh, no way. You want to automate as much as you possibly can at your club and payment processing is no exception. Spend time on the things you do best, not on things that eat up your precious time.

Remember that an EFT membership is more convenient for the member and the club. What you as the professional must communicate to the client is that this form of payment exists for their convenience. Like anything else, if they see how the program benefits them and they trust what you say, they will be more likely to agree to it.

The bottom line, again, is how well you touched on the guest's emotions and hotspots during the tour. Beyond that, the rest is merely details. You should not find many issues with filling out the membership agreement or setting the guest up on EFT, but you will need to be prepared for those who do have concerns. You will run into the occasional problem customer, but if they are at this stage of the buying process, you really have little to worry about.

Don't be Afraid to Ask for Add-On Sales



Are you aware of the fact that McDonald's increases their sales 25 percent by simply asking one question: "Would you like fries and a coke with that?" They took it even one step further by asking people if they would like to "SuperSize" their fries and cokes. They take the sale one step further by changing their menus from having all the different foods listed on the menu to having meal deals on the menu. Instead of having to pick just the hamburger or just the french-fries, they all come together in a meal for one low price.

You can see how this story relates to the fitness industry. There are many up-sell products and services available to prospects, including: Personal training, tanning, supplements, pro shop items, massage therapy, group fitness classes, childcare, etc. You can even combine these amenities into package memberships. I.e. The Sunshine membership package includes tanning, the All-inclusive membership package includes group fitness classes, and the Results Package allows free membership if a member commits to two days per week of personal training, the Boot Camp Package, etc. There are likely several packages you can put together.

What does your club have to offer? Think about what types of package deals you can put together. Each club is different, but every club has additional services to offer. When presented confidently and timely, these additional services mean a lot to your club's bottom line.

Even more important, just make sure you always ask for additional sales. Ask the new member for referrals, ask if they would like a personal trainer, ask if they want tanning, ask if they want a healthy protein bar to eat on their way home. You lose 100% of the sales you don't ask for. Always ask.

Closing Thoughts

Selling within a health club is incredibly easy. Prospects would never come to you if they had no interest in joining. Nearly every person will join if you take the time and the appropriate steps to find out what buttons you need to push in order to close the sale.

Every person is different. Every situation is different. Therefore, every sales opportunity needs to be handled differently than the previous. Selling is about building a relationship. It is about asking questions that make the prospect think. It is about listening. And most importantly it is about Asking for the sale.

Don't be discouraged if you don't close all of your sales. Instead you should work on the areas you are weak. Don't be afraid to ask for help and don't be embarrassed to role play with your colleagues.

Hold regular meetings and trainings for your salespeople. Get involved and let them know you've got their back. You need to "Inspect what you Expect". Try to make it enjoyable for them, but make sure they realize this is going to help increase their paycheck. This is what they really want to hear.

I'd say the most important thing you can do is to make sure you reward salespeople for their efforts. I feel the salesperson position is the most underpaid in our industry. If your salesperson sells 20% more this August than what was sold last August, don't pay them a \$50 bonus. They probably just made you several thousands of dollars that you wouldn't have otherwise made. A big time bonus will lead to more big time sales.

Establish attractive commission and bonus structures for your salespeople, keeping in mind that without their efforts, you would not be making the money you currently make. Whereas your front desk is the face of your club, your salespeople are the lifeblood of your entire business. Make sure they are the best they can be and make sure they are compensated appropriately for the important role they play.

Dedicated to your Success,

Curtis Mock



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