

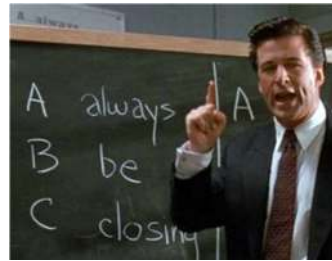
Close the Sale with Assumptive Selling

(Note: this pdf makes more sense if you have first read the pdf **“THE MEET AND GREET”** found in the FREE RESOURCES section of www.PhilsForum.com)

You’ve properly met and greeted your customer. You’ve asked the right kinds of questions. You’ve curated the selection.

The next thing to do is **Close the Sale.**

Too often we think of Closing the Sale as using gimmicks to trick customers into buying. Tricking only works in the short run. The goal of this book is to show you techniques that help your customers turn from shoppers into buyers based on one simple truth ...



The customer walked into your store hoping to buy something today.

If you sell high-end luxury goods, that percentage might not be 100%, but for the vast majority of retailers, your customers walked in hoping to find a solution they fall in love with and want to take home **now.**

Your job is to help them fall in love with your solution.

THREE MINDS OF SHOPPING

Customers typically have three different mindsets they take while shopping: Survival, Analytical, and Visualization.

SURVIVAL

This is the customer who has a quick need, knows exactly what it is, and just needs to get it and get back on her way. This is the way we treat gas stations, convenience store trips, and fast food restaurants.



If you are not one of those stores, read on ...

ANALYTICAL



This is the stage most shoppers are in when they enter your store.

The analytical mindset is one of gathering information. This is the customer who doesn't yet know what she wants or doesn't yet know all the possible solutions. She is researching.

When you ask a customer in analytical mindset what she wants, she often talks in terms of features by giving you answers such as ...

“I want a product that does this ...”

Instinctively we start showing customers products with those features without first asking her why she wants those features. You have to know the Benefit she seeks to best solve her problem.

Features tell what a product does. Benefits are why that feature is important.

“This stroller has a one-hand fold mechanism that allows you to fold it easily to put away while holding the baby in your other arm. That way you can put the stroller away without it rolling away while you’re dealing with baby.”



Features are a dime-a-dozen. Most customers already know the features of the products you sell because they have done their research online.

The analytical customer, however, is still researching features, either to confirm what she has already learned or to see if any features have gone previously unmentioned.

Benefits are the key to taking your customer out of Analytical mode and into the mindset you want—Visualization

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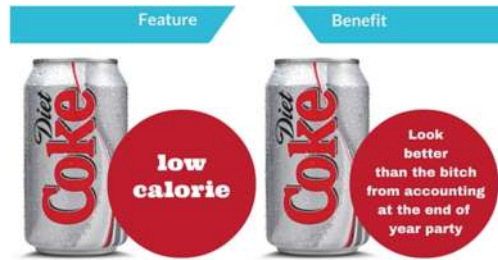
VISUALIZATION

Analytical is the shopping mindset.
Visualization is the buying mindset.

Visualization is the customer already seeing herself using the product. Visualization is the customer seeing her new life because of the product. When you can explain the benefits of a product to a customer in terms of how her life will be better, you move her out of analytical to Visualization.



FEATURE—It does this ...



BENEFIT—So that you ...

The better the benefit, the more likely the sale.

(Note: in **THE MEET AND GREET** we discuss the Qualifying Questions that lead to better understanding of the benefits she hopes to gain.)

Another simple way to get your customer into Visualization is to ask the questions,:

- **“How do you plan to use this?”**
- **“Where do you plan to use this?”**

Both of these questions get her to visualize the product already being in her possession. If she can't answer those questions, you haven't shown her the right product (or given her the right benefits).

Realtors have been using this technique for years by asking you where you would put your couch in the living room of the house they are showing you. They know once you've started mentally placing furniture you're only a step away from writing an offer.



ASSUMED PURCHASE

Words have power. When you change simple words in your approach with customers, it has a huge effect on the outcome.

I used to sell convertible baby cribs, the kind that turned into toddler beds, day beds, and eventually full-sized beds. The crib came with the parts for the crib and day bed, but there were two pieces sold separately—the conversion kits for the toddler and full-sized beds.



As we were selling these convertible cribs with the benefit of never having to buy another bed again until the child went off to college, we wanted to make sure the customer also bought the full bed kit.

This simple statement helped ...

“You'll need to get the full-sized bed kit today to guarantee you get the most long-term value out of this bed. Do you want to get the toddler bed kit, too, or just the full-bed kit?”

Note we didn't ask if the customer wanted *either* item. We made the assumption that since she was buying the convertible crib she wanted the full value of the conversions. Then we put into her mind the assumption that she was going to buy the one kit for sure.

It seems tricky, but in many ways we were offering her a service. We had several customers early on who didn't buy the kit, only to find out it wasn't available five years down the road when they wanted it.

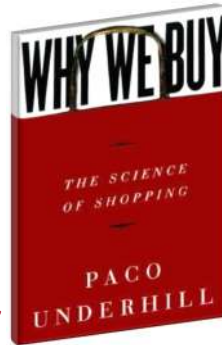
By using the assumption that she was buying the full bed kit already, we increased our sales of the kits over 100%!

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SOCIAL CONTRACT

In the ground-breaking book **WHY WE BUY** by Paco Underhill he makes a profound statement on page 52.

“The physical fact most shoppers have two hands is fairly well known. But the implication of that fact go unimagined, undetected, unconsidered, unaccompanied, unacknowledged. Ignored.”



He then explains the need for shopping baskets and carts in key locations where customers can grab one when their hands get full.



We all instinctively understand that if a customer's hands are full, she is done shopping.

While having baskets and carts in areas where customers start grabbing multiple small items is a great idea, there is an even more powerful way to help a customer whose hands are full.

“Here, let me take those items up front for you.”

This statement serves two purposes. First, it frees up her hands to continue shopping. Second, it becomes a social contract. Once she agrees to let you take those items up front, she has mentally decided she is buying those items.

She has *agreed* to buy those items. Sure, she may swap out an item or two at the register for something she found better, but for the most part you have already closed the sale on those items.



You have taken her from analytical mode (*gathering information*) to the visualization of buying these items at your cashwrap.

COMPLETING THE SALE

Every sales trainer in the world can show you how profitable add-on sales become. The math is solid. There is one set of add-on products, however, that if you don't add-on to the sale will actually cost you in the long run.

For most items you sell, you also sell complimentary items that a customer might need. For instance, if you are selling a flat of annuals in a garden center, the customer may also need pots, potting soil, weed-killer, tools, fertilizer, a new hose, and even a new garden cart.



If you don't offer all of those items to her, and your customer gets home only to find she does need potting soil and some new garden tools, two things will happen ...

First, she will be angry with you and your store for not *“solving her problem.”* Second, she will likely get those items at the most convenient place (*which won't be your store*).



It is your **DUTY** to ask her about all the other items she might need to Complete the Sale. This is also a Visualization technique as it gets the

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customer seeing herself using the product while also getting her to take inventory of all the other items she might need.

Often a customer forgets all that will go into using the product once she gets home. When you go through the checklist with her, you help close the sale, get the add-on, and most importantly of all, solve the customer's problem to her complete satisfaction.

CLOSING THE SALE FOR GOOD

Once the customer has made her decision and is ready to buy, here are two things you should do to make that sale stay closed for good.

TIPS AND HACKS

You are the expert on the products you sell.

Once she chooses an item, offer her some simple tips or hacks for best using that product. Show her a hack or two that will not only make her use of the product more enjoyable, but will also make her feel smarter about the product.



You can also use tips to help nip problems that might surface down the road.



For instance, stroller wheels would often begin to squeak after a few months of use so we showed each customer how to remove the wheels, clean them, and properly lubricate them when the wheels got noisy.

Not only did it make the customer feel smarter, it kept her from becoming unhappy at us or the product when it started squeaking down the road. She expected it and already knew how to deal with it.

PRAISE THE PURCHASE

The second thing you can do to close a sale for good is to Praise the Purchase. When the customer chooses an item, tell them why it is such a good choice.



“You’re going to love that item! You said you were looking for [insert feature]. This item will [insert benefit]!”

People love to feel smart about their purchases (*especially men*). When you praise the purchase you make your customer feel smart, you get to throw in or repeat one more benefit, and you get the customer leaving on a happy note.

Closing the sale starts with Visualization—the assumption in the customer's mind that she already owns and is using the product. It isn't a gimmick or a trick. It is simply leading the customer to see that you have the best solution to the problem she is trying to solve.

Phil Wrzesinski is the former owner of Toy House and Baby Too, at one time the largest independent, family-owned toy store in America.

*Toy House was named “One of the 25 Best Independent Stores in America” in the book **RETAIL SUPERSTARS** by famed retail consultant George Whalin (Penguin 2009).*

Phil takes what he has learned in a lifetime of high-level independent retail and helps other indie retailers and small businesses find their success.

*You can learn more about Phil and his programs, including links to other **FREE RESOURCES** at www.PhilsForum.com.*

