

# What You Should Say (and Never Say) to Close the Sale

**Do not use the word “Contract.” Use “Agreement” or “Proposal.”**

“Contract” is a traditional sales word that is seen as very formal or potentially destructive to the customer. The replacement word, “agreement,” involves the customer or another person. The customer feels better because he is agreeing with you. “Proposal” implies that the consumer makes the ultimate decision.

**Do not say, “I need your signature here,” or “Sign this here.” Say, “Please okay this here,” or “Please okay this and date it.”**

You want to make the consumer feel like he has power. It is, after all, *his* decision. The latter two phrases present the task simply and with much less formality. “Signing” is often associated with “Signing away something.” “Okaying” is much more like “Agreeing.”

**Do not say, “Buy” or “Spend” when you can say, “Investment.”**

“Buy” and “spend” infer “giving something up” that may not come back. “Investment” implies a return. You can also refer to something as a “Good investment,” or “Getting a good return on this investment.”

**Do not say “Your first payment.” Say, “Initial investment.”**

Same as above. One implication is negative; the other is more positive.

**Do not say, “Our price” or “Our discount.” Speak in terms of “Your savings,” “Your payback,” or “Your discount.”**

Let these dollars become “theirs.” The inference is entirely different and far more agreeable.

**Do not say, “Five thousand, two hundred and eighty dollars.” Say, “Fifty-two eighty.”**

Dollars are too valuable, and five thousand is too many! Reduce the blow by quoting your company’s prices with a little tact. Remember, you’re selling *value*, not price. It’s an investment.

To illustrate word choice illustrations, say these two phrases out loud...

1. **“With the price I figured up, you pay us five thousand, two hundred and eighty dollars.”**
2. **“Your discounted investment is just fifty-two eighty. And you can start gaining benefits instantly.”**

Which sounds harsh? More beneficial? Words make a difference.

It all adds up to a better, more approachable, less committal tone of language. The message is much easier to your new customer.

Now try this out. Which sounds better to you?

1. **“Once you sign this contract, then we can set up our installation crews to come back.”**
2. **“Just okay this agreement, and we’ll schedule the installation at your convenience.”**

The language of sales harmony is a song when compared to the brashness of Low Performance Salespeople.

## What You Should Always Say

Need more words that have proven power? Yale University has found that the following words are the *most persuasive* in the English language:

- easy
- results
- save
- discover, reveal
- guarantee
- safety
- free
- profit, return
- health
- love
- money, cash
- investment
- proven
- you, yours
- gain, benefit
- now, new

If you haven't discovered the significance of these words, you aren't making enough sales calls! In your Sales Presentation, adopt these words for your standard vocabulary.

These words are used often in good marketing and should be implemented in your sales process. (Believe me, as a copywriter, I've seen massive differences in response by changing very few words.)

Words and language lead your prospects to draw inferences about your company and your knowledge.

The following is a list of "Dream phrases" that are more like *thoughts* you should convey to your poor, confused prospect who is just looking for a solution.

Show him you know how to make his dreams real by conveying...

- **"I know who you are."** This dream phrase lets your prospects know that you know them, their needs, their neighborhood and their demographics. You can say this by knowing a little service history, when they used your company last, who built the home or the age of their system. *This speaks to them as unique.*
- **"I know how to fix your problem."** This dream phrase demonstrates your knowledge of HVAC, plumbing or electrical systems. Your prospects put confidence in you. You say

this by fully explaining the problem and telling them how you can give value with your solutions and your company's plan. *This speaks to them as fixable.*

When you close a sale, you have moved systematically towards that close in "small incremental steps" that have gotten agreement or been acknowledged as "okay" with the prospect.

Go too fast and you lose people. Go too slow and you bore people. So, unless you're psychic, get small agreements and nods of approval en route. It's easier, faster and fully understood.

Often, these "pre-closes" are called "Trial Closes" in order to gain access to the all-important closing process.

Trial Closes gently motivate your prospect to the next step. In turn, they help you wrap up your presentation so you can move into getting the order from them. Try these out:

- **"What do we still need to do?"** In a way, you are asking your prospect what he or she wants you to do in order to close the sale. The focus is on the consumer with an open-ended question.
- **"Is there anything else I can answer for you about this?"** With this open-ended question, your prospect will tell you exactly what he wants or needs. You can leave a complication or "sticking point" knowing that it won't come up as an objection later. You're stopping the objection before it starts.
- **"Does this make sense?"** You're obviously seeking a "Yes," which is the most powerful thing they can say. You also know if you're "getting through" to them. Only explain things to them that *need to make sense to them* or are an answer to a direct question. Please do not try to explain the theory of convection to them. If they say "Yes" to this, congratulate them and move on. They'll feel understood and appreciated.
- **"How close are we to reaching an agreement?"** This will most likely get a direct answer. From your prospect's answer, you should know how you have progressed on this particular call. Your customer will inform you about what you need to do to convince him of your product or service. If they back up on you, you'll know you have more work to do. *Do not ask this* unless you're sure you're ready to close or it will turn them off.
- **"Does this sound fair?"** Seriously powerful question. It shows you're out to obtain fairness. And that, my friend, is the object of any sale.

## What You Should Never Say

Ever met an annoying salesperson? *Who hasn't?* The most annoying have a long list of the "wrong things to say."

You've doubtlessly seen the power in good word and phrase choices, but here are some things that rank very high on the annoyance meter. These cost sales every day for the Low Performance Salesperson:

- **The wrong name.** You can surely get the name right for the hour or so. Run it through your head, out of your mouth and in natural conversation whenever it fits.
- **Any fake or invented answer.** What a terrific way to break trust, set yourself up for embarrassment and get complaints to your boss. You just never know. It's better to say, "That's a great question, and I'll jot that down and find out for certain."
- **Saying "I can't" when you really mean "I won't."** If something is honestly outside your job description, then the customer will understand if you tell them *why* you're unable. Otherwise, if you refuse to be helpful due to laziness, unwillingness or because it's "different," then get out of the "helper business."
- **Use "industry jargon" without explaining what it means.** Hopefully, you explain thoroughly *the benefits and not just the features*. You're supposed to emphasize your value, not speak over someone's head for your own benefit.
- **Don't discuss irrelevant topics.** Don't discuss your problems at home, how hard you work or how you're having a mole removed next Tuesday. Your prospect's time is of the essence. Drifting off the subject for the sake of hearing yourself speak will work against you every time.

There are other important items to avoid saying, but I cannot tell them to you! (At least not directly.) What I mean is your knowledge and sensitivity to your customer will guide your mind to respond correctly. You need to keep *them* on track too if it gets out of hand.

To know what to say to a customer and how to say it, you must know a good deal about the customer before you speak to him or her. This relates directly to the "Dream Phrases" we covered earlier. It's a nightmare if you don't convey them!

*Adams Hudson is president of Hudson, Ink, a creative marketing firm for contractors. Readers can get the free report "3 Instant Closes for More Sales" by emailing a polite request and your company information to [freestuff@hudsonink.com](mailto:freestuff@hudsonink.com) or by faxing a request to 1-334-262-1115.*