Michael Angelo Caruso’s

22 Sales Closes That Work

An e-book to support the FastLearnerAudio CD of the same name
22 Sales Closes That Work

By Michael Angelo Caruso

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I’ll add your contribution to the next edition. Thanks for reading. And writing.

--Michael Angelo Caruso
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Introduction

Hello, everyone and welcome! My name is Michael Angelo Caruso and I help people be more successful. I teach people how to solve problems before they happen and in this e-book on creating success habits will help do less of what’s holding you back and more of what will improve your life.

Allow me to offer my credentials.

So far, I’ve been successful in three distinct careers. In my 20’s, I toured the country in a rock band with my brothers. In my 30’s, I worked in the telecommunications business as a commissioned sales person. Now, I became a professional speaker and accomplished author. I work with clients in a number of industries including health care, education, manufacturing, finance, government and non-profits. My niche programs involve the improvement of communication through marketing, customer service and sales. I also consult with a number of companies to help them with strategic planning.

I deliver about 95 presentations a year at conferences, keynotes and seminars. I am also author of the *5 Cool Ideas* LINK book series and a 6-CD audio program titled, *Effective Coaching* and the FastLearnerAudio series.

Audio is a great way to learn and the FastLearnerAudio series offers 16 topics recorded in one-hour formats. Listen during your work commute, on the treadmill and even while doing things around the house.

The content in this e-book supports my FastLearnerAudio3 series, which includes four topics:

How to Network Like a Pro
Negotiating For Fun & Profit
Selling More, Better, Faster
And this program—22 Sales Closes That Work

It’s important for professional sellers to be educated on a wide variety of closes. I’ll include a detailed description of each close and when each close works best. Also, you can expect at least one success story or real-life application for each closing technique.

This content is solid and road tested. I’m so confident that this material will help you become more successful, I’m asking you to send me a success story within 48 hours of digesting this information.

Multiple listens will help reinforce the content, but something good will happen for you almost immediately if you just apply the ideas that I am about to share. Please send your success story to me at Success Story@EdisonHouse.com.

Michael Angelo Caruso
Royal Oak, Michigan

5 Cool Ideas for Closing Sales

I’ve been a commissioned sales person my entire adult life. Early in my sales career, I learned that superior closing techniques put bread on the table. Here are 5 Cool Ideas for closing more sales.

1. When closing, nothing rewards like persistence.
Calvin Coolidge could have been speaking about sales people when he said that persistence is more important than genius, education and even talent.
2. **Smart salespeople share the workload.**
Prospects often make unreasonable demands on sales people. They might ask the seller for repeated visits or insist that she submit multiple quotations.

3. **Selling is a time/value occupation.**
It’s true that the selling process can’t be rushed, but it’s also true that shorter selling cycles will likely increase income. Knowing 22 sales closes will certainly help you close more deals faster.

4. **Positive thinking is contagious.**
Attitude is an important component to closing. Reading and listening to self-help books will be very helpful, especially if you’re not getting enough encouragement at home or at the office. The trick is to get the positive thinking started.

5. **Everyone likes a good compliment.**
Give yourself a break once in a while. The sales industry is full of hard knocks. Learn to see the best in every situation and get in the habit of giving yourself compliments.

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**How Closing Really Works**

The close is perhaps the most important component of the selling process. All of the other components – prospecting, pre-qualifying, cold-calling and presenting – are key ingredients to a successful sale, but money doesn’t change hands until there is a close.

A close can occur without one or more of the aforementioned components. Low-price products and impulse purchases seemingly close themselves, but research shows that sellers who can close in a multitude of ways have a distinct advantage over sellers who always try to close in the same manner.

That’s why I’ve researched 22 sales closes that work. The closes are grouped into three categories: Textbook, Situational and Personality.
Textbook closes are the standard, tried and true techniques that can be used anytime and anywhere. They include The Trial Close, The Natural Close, The Invitation Close, The ABC Close, The Alternate Choice Close, The Endorsement Close, The Re-Direct Close and The Up-Sell Close.


Personality closes will help you interface with different types of buyers. Prospects come in a wide array of personalities. The Personality Closes include The Compliment Close, The Challenge Close and The Impending Doom Close.

If you’ve prospected well and qualified the customer . . . If you’ve listened to the prospect and identified his problem . . . If you’ve linked the problem’s solution to your product or service . . . It’s time to issue a call to action, also known as the close.

Textbook Closes—Use Them Anytime, Anywhere

Every sales person should have these standard closes his or her repertoire. The Textbook closes include The Trial Close, The Natural Close, The Invitation Close, The ABC Close, the Alternate Choice Close, The Endorsement Close, The Redirect Close and The Up-Sell Close.

The Trial Close

Let’s say you’re giving a sales presentation and things are going well. It’s too early to close, but you feel the need to get some feedback from your prospect. You need The Trial Close.
The Trial Close is often done part way through the presentation to help the sales person feel like he or she is connecting with the prospect. The Trial Close is perhaps the least aggressive close because the seller merely poses a casual question to see how the prospect is feeling. The inquiry is non-specific, non-binding and therefore non-threatening.

Sample trial close questions are:

“If you go with this model, which accessories would you use with it?”

“Do you like what you’re hearing so far?”

“What, if anything, would keep you from making the purchase today?”

“Does a price range of $3,000 to $4,000 fit into your budget?”

“What, if anything, would keep us from entering into an agreement today?”

Success story using The Trial Close

I’ve suggested that The Trial Close be posed as a single question, but sometimes a combination of two questions can get the job done even better. Consider these two innocent questions and the meaning behind the prospect’s answers:

**Seller:** Who else do we need to talk to about this?
**Prospect:** Why, no one. I will decide whether to purchase.

**Seller:** How does this offer sound to you?
**Prospect:** Oh, pretty good, so far.

This beautiful and simple exchange has cleared the way for a sale because the prospect has claimed full responsibility for the purchase. It is not likely that he will “have to talk to the boss” later in the selling process.

Also, the seller has gained the prospect’s approval, which can be trotted out later if there should be any objections. Such is the beauty of The Trial Close.
The Natural Close

Earlier, I suggested that most sales do not close automatically. The Natural Close (aka The Organic Close) is the next best thing because the prospect actually closes himself. If the seller qualifies the prospect, identifies the need and links the value statement to the prospect’s problem, nature takes its course and the prospect is likely to authorize the sale without further encouragement.

If your company conducts strong marketing and advertising campaigns your product or service is being pre-sold, which is a perfect set-up for The Natural Close. Pre-selling has played a role if your company enjoys a fabulous reputation, if you are selling a hot product or the prospect has been referred to you.

During The Natural Close, everything feels right, personalities just click and before you know it, the deal is done.

The Natural Close works best for large, established companies and old brands that are still strong. It also works well with hot, must-have products and in small, rural markets where there aren’t a lot of suppliers.

Success story using The Natural Close

I’ve been fortunate to own a growing business. Now that I’ve been speaking and writing for a while, my reputation has grown as has my consulting fee. Usually, high-ticket items require a more careful, protracted closing process.

A medical clinic in Houston was referred to me by one of their high-ranking employees who heard me speak at a seminar event. During the call, I launched into selling mode when the caller interrupted to say, “You don’t need to say anything else. I’m sold.”

The lady who referred the caller to me had done such a good job pre-selling me that the sale practically closed itself. Very nice. Very natural.
The Invitational Close

I learned The Invitational Close from Brian Tracy many years ago. Since then, I’ve recognized hundreds of variations in many different scenarios. The Invitational Close is low-key and classy, just like Mr. Tracy.

To use this close, simply invite the prospect to purchase by saying something like, “Why not give us a try?” If you’ve created a personal bond of trust in the relationship, you might say, “Why don’t you give me a try?” This close often works best with low-price, low-risk products and services.

Critics of the Invitational Close complain that it uses a “negative question.” The question, “Why not give us a try?” for example, is literally asking the prospect to give all the reasons not to purchase.

Of course, in the current vernacular, “Why not?” questions like this are not taken literally. Instead, they are interpreted as a sincere form of encouragement.

The quintessential Invitational Close works well with informal selling scenarios where there is little pressure or pretense. Restaurant servers and street vendors use this close to great effect, but sometimes the Invitational Close can be just the sort of disarming appeal that moves the sale forward for big-ticket items.

Success story using The Invitational Close

The restaurant service was fabulous. The meal now finished, the server brought over a tray filled with awesome desserts. One dessert in particular elicited oohs and aahs from the young couple dining. It was the Double Chocolate Molten Ice Cream Cake With Sinful Syrup.

There was a slight silence as the individual diners debated whether they would be the first to give in to temptation.

“Oh, come on,” the server said. “Why not give it a taste?”

“Okay!” both people answered.
The ABC (Always Be Closing) Close

Often, certain closes work better for you because of your circumstances or because of your personality. If you are an assertive seller, The ABC Close, also known as The Persistent Close, may work well for you.

The idea is to push the sale along by saying things like, “We can handle the travel arrangements after you sign the contract.” This approach can save a lot of time as it breezes the prospect past predictable speed bumps like detail and protocol. Busy, productive sales people often use the ABC Close because they don’t feel the need to work with someone who isn’t willing to move through the buying process quickly.

The persistent close works when prospects get caught up in the excitement of a purchase. Professional speakers use this close to sell books and audio programs at live gigs. Infomercials also use The ABC Close as they persistently encourage the viewer to “act now.”

The ABC Close works best in one-visit sale calls such as retail environments, seminars and the selling of time shares. Here’s how the conversation might flow as you are being sold a time share:

Okay, so you’ve enjoyed vacationing in the area and you’d love to come back and I’m offering you a tremendous deal on a time share that you can enjoy when you do come back and you are coming back and we just fed you a fantastic meal and you are very grateful and clearly I have your best interest in mind and you have the use of our limousine for the rest of the evening and we only have three units left and we’re treating you so well and you do love it here and would you like another beverage?

Of course, things aren’t moving quite that fast, but The ABC Close works best when the seller can generate excitement and the prospect gets emotionally caught up in the presentation.

Warning: The ABC Close can quickly wear out its welcome so you must work fast.
Success story using The ABC Close

Businesses that operate in tourist destinations like New Orleans and the Riverwalk in San Antonio depend on The ABC Close to function. Restaurants in these places, for example, often post an employee outside the front door to attract pedestrian traffic. People need to be encouraged to stop in so these workers aren’t shy about asking. The danger of The ABC Close is that you might seem too eager for customers so don’t over do this technique.

The Alternate Choice Close

The Information Age has helped people become very worldly. Prospects and customers are sensitive to high-pressure selling tactics and they don’t like being manipulated or controlled.

So how can a seller maintain a modicum of control without offending the prospect? The best way is to offer choices. The Alternate Choice Close is effective because it gives the prospect control over the outcome of the sale.

Here are several examples of how to offer the prospect a choice:

Do you prefer the ocean view or the garden view?

Do you want the sandwich or the combo?

Would you like to meet Tuesday or is Thursday better for you?

Will that be cash or charge?

Always offer the prospect two or three options. Choices will help the prospect understand that you are an advocate and not an adversary. Choice of colors and models and delivery times are easy options to offer.

Be sure to offer at least two price points. Never assume you know how much the prospect wants to spend. The classic pricing structure offers
something akin to bare-bones service, basic service and premium service. (Be more creative when naming these price points.) Bare-bones service is the most affordable, but the least feature-rich. Premium service is the most expensive and offers the most benefits.

Be careful not to offer too many choices. This may confuse the prospect or otherwise muck up the sales process.

**Success story using The Alternate Choice Close**

Consider how many times the Hilton Hotel corporation offers an alternate choice when you book a room with them.

“Would you like to stay in a Hilton hotel or one of our Hampton Inns”

“Would you like a view of the pool or the city?”

“Would you prefer a smoking room or not?”

“Would you like a king size bed or a room with double beds?”

“Would you like a breakfast package (or not)?”

**The Endorsement Close**

Even under the best conditions, salespeople are perceived as subjective, where as a third-party is perceived as objective. That’s why a referral can be so helpful when selling. The biggest impediment to using The Endorsement Close is getting in the habit of collecting them.

Endorsements can be collected as audio sound bytes, chunks of printed text or short video testimonials. Of course, the sales person can simply relay an endorsement in his or her own words during the sale.

Testimonials can come from local or long-distance experts (“four out of five dentists”), celebrities, common folk (“over one-million subscribers”) and even the competition. The seller might say, “Your largest competitor
certainly likes the yellow. She bought 4 cases last week.” Be careful. Some prospects don’t want to share vendors with the competition.

All endorsements are not created equal so it’s best to have a collection of them. The Endorsement Close is so effective because many prospects require what Robert Cialdini, author of *Influence—The Psychology of Persuasion*, refers to as “social proof.”

**Success story using The Endorsement Close**

I was shopping for health insurance a few years ago. A friend referred me to his provider and raved about the coverage and the price. My friend’s endorsement convinced me before I called for a quotation.

Don’t be stingy with your referrals and recommendations when selling. You get what you give in the sales industry. Sellers who give endorsements tend to get endorsements. Sellers who give referrals tend to receive referrals.

**The Redirect Close**

A lot of things happen at the end of the selling process, especially if the prospect raises objections. If the prospect does not immediately agree to purchase, the chronology looks like this:

- Attempt to close (fails)
- Uncover objection(s) (if any)
- Deal With Objection(s)
- Execute the Redirect Close

**The Redirect Close** is a special technique that can only occur after the salesperson deals with any and all objections. Amateur sellers perceive an objection as a problem, but experienced sellers recognize an objection as a gift. An objection allows the selling process to continue because it gives the seller a foothold for conversation.
In general, it’s a good idea to empathize with the objection and then use the objection as the very reason to proceed. Empathize first to allow the prospect to share his concerns and trepidation. If every problem has a solution, then every objection can be eventually satisfied, even if the objection involves price.

Here are your sales manager’s three ways favorite ways to deal with price objections in order of her preference:

1) Identify the objection, address it, re-establish value, use a redirect close
2) Trade concessions for dollars
3) Give a price concession

If you must concede on price, be sure to trade benefits for dollars. This is not the same as lowering your price. Anyone can close by lowering the price. Maintain your professional standards and commission rate by not conceding on price.

The trick to a good Redirect Close is the ability to uncover the objection and deal with it without compromising the initial offering. The actual redirect is fairly easy.

For more in-depth discussion of objections, consult the FLA3 e-book titled, Selling More, Better, Faster.

Success story using The Redirect Close

Address an objection and you’ll earn the opportunity to apply The Redirect Close. I was trying to purchase a house early in my career when I ran up against a financial stumbling block.

When I called the realtor to cancel the deal, he got resourceful and came up with creative financing that made everything work. Then he re-closed the sale and I closed on my house.
The Up-Sell Close

A strong Up-Sell Close (also known as The Add-On Close) will easily increase your income from 10-20% annually. The concept is simple. Offer prospects who agree to purchase even more value. Ideally, the additional value will compliment their first purchase.

A strategic up-sell is a fixed percentage of the primary sale, usually around 15%. A local furniture store where I live offers a series of up-sells when you purchase a piece of furniture. Buy an easy chair (or not) for $400 and the sales person will encourage you to buy an ottoman for $80. Buy the ottoman (or not) and you will be encouraged to buy the fabric cleaner for $20.

A success story using The Up-Sell Close

The classic up-sell is the question “Would you like fries with your meal?” Nearly every product and service has at least one up-sell opportunity and if you believe in what you’re selling, you are obligated to attempt an up-sell. You don’t want to deprive your customer of value, do you?

Up-sells are happening all around us. Buy a pizza, add a salad. Buy a movie ticket, add popcorn. Buy a car, add an extended warranty. Have the windows of your house cleaned, clean the screens, too. Buy a training session, add a set of books.

Situational Closes

Some closes are best used in certain situations. Sometimes the seller will know the scenario in advance and sometimes she must identify the situation as it occurs.

The Assumptive Close

The Assumptive Close is an elegant, simpler version of the ABC Close. It’s based on an obvious premise such as people like to look younger.

The seller adapts a matter-of-fact manner that conveys these sorts of messages:

“Everyone knows I have the best deal in town and soon you will, too”

“Everyone needs one of these gadgets and so do you.”

“You came into my coffee shop; therefore you are going to buy coffee.”

The message is direct, but unlike The ABC Close, The Assumptive Close is only mentioned once or twice. In fact, the Assumptive Close doesn’t have to be verbalized at all because it often goes without saying.

A sales person at a men’s clothing store, for example, assumes that if a man walks into the store and toward the men’s shirt department that the shopper needs a new shirt.

Success story using The Assumptive Close

Amateur sellers are known to approach prospects with the rather transparent, “Are you interested in saving money?” For most people, the answer is “yes,” but the answer is so obvious that the question makes some prospects suspicious.

Not long ago, a door-to-door salesperson visited my house. The young woman was selling a coupon book and began her pitch in earnest. I’ve never been a coupon guy and immediately interrupted her to say so. She said, “Well, don’t you like to save money?” I thought for a second and then said, “Apparently not.”

Warning: When you use The Assumptive Close, you are gambling that you know how the prospect thinks. Only place safe bets.
The Order Form Close

Some closes are remarkably self-contained. The Order Form Close, has the seller filling out the order form as he collects information from the prospect. The seller nonchalantly records the prospect’s name, address, phone number and other pertinent information. Then the seller writes down the prospect’s preferences with regard to the product or service that’s for sale.

When the form is filled out, the seller merely turns form around for the prospect, holds out the ink pen and says something like, “Well, that’s all the information we need. Please authorize here.”

This close works well because it’s . . . well, orderly. Of course, it’s obvious that you’re filling out the sales form, but most prospects seem to tolerate the data collection as a reasonable request. The Order Form Close doesn’t work well with impatient prospects or people who don’t like to share information.

Another advantage to the Order Form Close is a technique known as “customer involvement.” When the customer/prospect invests time and energy in the order form process, he or she isn’t likely to back out.

The movie Grilled has many scenes that demonstrate The Order Form Close. Hackneyed and sometimes heavy-handed, sellers should take care to not be too transparent like Ray Romano and Kevin James are in Grilled.

The Order Form Close works best in sit-down scenarios where the prospect must give up personal information such as his name and e-mail address in order to obtain information about the product or service.

Almost all e-commerce employs some version of The Order Form Close. Internet shoppers are often asked to fill in blanks on an order form to get the order going.
Success story using The Order Form Close

The telephone order takers at 1-800-FLOWERS do a terrific job of using The Order Form close. (This company is pretty good at everything. What other corporation arranged for their company name to be the same as its phone number and Web site? Learn more at 1800FLOWERS.com.)

When you call 1-800-FLOWERS, the person who answers the phone will take you through a sequence of questions. These people are well-trained so the conversation may seem casual and personal, but they are using the Order Form Close to perfection.

You are actually answering questions that help the seller fill out a form. You will be told of a few specials they are running and no doubt be offered a few price options. If you say you want to spend $50, the total with tax and delivery will invariably be $54 or $56, a nice up-sell for them.

The order process is quite efficient, but because it’s so thorough, you’ll be on the call for at least eight minutes. Even if you only planned on a five-minute call, you’re not likely to cancel the order after investing time and emotional energy placing the order.

That’s the wonder of the Order Form Close.

The Validation Close

Agreement always accelerates the close. The Validation Close helps the salesperson use agreement to build rapport with the prospect. Most of the time, the agreement has nothing to do with the sale. Agreement is pleasant and productive even when it involves innocuous topics like the weather.

Of course, magic things can happen if the agreement involves whatever is for sale. The seller might say something like, “You’re right, they are very beautiful. Yellow is a very popular color. Can I interest you in a dozen so that you can get the quantity discount?”
It’s easy to imagine a prospect saying, “What a beautiful house,” the salesperson agreeing and the two eventually agreeing on more things. The Validation Close gets more interesting, however, when the prospect says something like, “Boy, this house is expensive!”

The seller might not want to agree to this and says something like, “Yes, but . . .” The damage is done. Victor Davis Hanson, writer for the National Review, refers to this as “the tyranny of ‘but.’” He knows that the word ‘but’ provides cancellation, not validation. In fact, the word “but” cancels everything that precedes it.

Consider the prospect’s comment again: “Boy, this house is expensive!” Instead of using the conjunction, ‘but,” what if the seller substitutes the word ‘and”? Perhaps the seller can be more successful if he says something like: “Yes and you’ll enjoy the hardwood floors, the home theatre and the Jacuzzi.”

Success story using The Validation Close

Let’s say you sell high-end sales training. You might expect a prospect to tell you that the training is too expensive. Agreeing with her will not only validate her opinion, it could convince her to sign the dotted line.

Prospect: Boy, your sales training is expensive!
Seller: Yes it is. And it virtually pays for itself in only 90 days.

The Three Question Close

The Three Question Close is credited to the great Zig Ziglar. “Zig” is a gifted author and sales trainer who uses his southern accent and plain talk to great effect in sales scripts. The Three Question Close is direct and almost impossible to resist. You can ask the questions in your own way, but the general inquiries are:

1. Can you see where this would save you money?
2. Are you interested in saving money?
3. If you were ever going to begin saving money, when would be the best time to start?
To use the Three Question Close, be careful to anchor your sales pitch on the money-saving benefits of your product or service. The savings should be obvious and not marginal or theoretical.

If a prospect answers the first question “no,” you’ll never get to ask the other two. The third question is my favorite. It’s worded in such a way that the prospect gives himself a call to action.

Success story using The Three Question Close

Coupons are a variation of The Three Question Close. Whether printed in a magazine or distributed by mail, coupons display the precise amount of savings in large print, i.e., 50 cents off. Can you see where this would save you money?

The name of the product or store is prominently displayed on the coupon. Are you interested in saving money (with this company/location/offer)?

The dotted line around coupon is the universal signal to “get a scissors and cut out this advertisement right now” or “take this voucher to the store right now.” If you were ever going to begin saving money, when would be the best time to start?”

The Luxury Close

Prospects need to be encouraged to try new things. “Encourage” comes from the French word and literally means “to give courage.” Smart sellers encourage prospects to try new products and services and also try to convince people to treat themselves to something special.

When you encourage prospects to do this, you are appealing to what scientist Walter Sperry referred to as the emotional side of the brain. The right side or emotional side of the brain makes decisions based on feelings as opposed to rationale. Research on what has become known as “brain
dominance theory” confirms that the female gender tends to be more influenced by the emotional side of the brain.

That’s why The Luxury Close is often effective with women. Listen to how many times you hear this type of language on television commercials targeted toward females. “Why not treat yourself to a _______ today?” and “You deserve it!” One can easily imagine the viewer nodding in complete agreement.

The phrase “You deserve it” is almost always met with an approving nod. Women, in particular, know that they work hard and need to be “spoiled” once in a while by a day at the spa or a relaxing day of shopping.

Success story using The Luxury Close

An old McDonald’s jingle employed The Luxury Close.

You deserve a break today
So get up and get away
To McDonalds

In effect, the message reminds the listener that he or she has been working hard and should let McDonald’s cook you dinner tonight. Billions sold. A fast food joint used The Luxury Close.

The Ben Franklin Close

Sometimes closes work even if they are illogical. The Ben Franklin Close is simple and isn’t always rational, but it still works. Performed with a pen and a sheet of paper, the sales person creates a sort of optical illusion that can be very convincing.

Let’s say the item for sale is an expensive, unusually attractive vase. The seller draws a “T” shape on a piece of paper and labels each side of the “T” as “positive” and “negative.” He and the prospect quickly list all the
positives about the purchase. For example, the product is convenient, fun, an excellent conversation piece, etc.

On the other side of the “T,” he and the prospect list the disadvantages of owning the vase. It is pricey. The seller then asks the prospect to weigh the many benefits of purchasing the vase against the single reason not to buy. Yes, the side of the “T” with the most ink usually wins the day.

Success story using The Ben Franklin Close

I used The Ben Franklin Close on myself when I bought my first convertible. The “negatives” or disadvantages were numerous, but the single “positive” issue easily swayed my decision.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Negatives/Disadvantages</th>
<th>Positives/Advantages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>More expensive than a sedan</td>
<td>I want it!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More expensive to insure</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doesn’t handle as well as sedan</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor fidelity due to road noise</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not as safe as a sedan</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Two Bags of Cookies Close

Despite your best effort, you may have trouble identifying the sole influential decision maker in a given situation. In many cases there are two prospects and sometimes you will find yourself selling to a committee. The Two Bags of Cookies Close calls for everyone to receive a small gift such as a bag of cookies.

It’s important not to leave anyone out of the loop. If a single decision maker feels slighted, he or she might squash the deal. The Two Bags of Cookies Close is just the ticket for this type of situation.

The idea is to close each individual prospect simultaneously. The traditional selling scenario might have the seller bringing a small token of appreciation to the prospect such as an ink pen, a calendar or a refrigerator magnet. The product is usually emblazoned with the vendor’s logo and slogan to reinforce top-of-mind awareness.
Success story using The Two Bags of Cookies Close

Anyone who sells to groups of people like committees or husband-and-wife teams has been successful with the The Two Bags of Cookies Close. Even group leaders use this technique to gain cooperation from their teams. Managers and supervisors have long been known to provide doughnuts or bagels to sell the team on coming to an early morning meeting.

The Half-Nelson Close

The Half-Nelson Close, also known as “The If, Then Close,” is named after my favorite wrestling move. Imagine one wrestler laying face down on the mat and his opponent laying face down on top of him. The wrestler on the bottom needs to be flipped over if he is to be pinned.

This is easily achieved if the top wrestler can weave his right arm under the right arm of his opponent and wedge his right palm behind the neck of the wrestler on the mat. This half-nelson move makes it easy to flip the bottom wrestler. In other words, if I can weave an arm under yours and put the palm of my hand against the back of your neck for leverage, then I can flip you over.

The half-nelson is so effective; you don’t even need a full-nelson!

Let’s say the selling process boils down to a key remaining issue. The prospect won’t budge, yet the seller doesn’t want to concede unless he gets a consideration in return. So the seller initiates an “If, Then” proposition by saying something like:

“If I am able to pull some strings and arrange delivery for tomorrow, (then) would you be willing to authorize the contract right now?”

“If I can get you a 20% discount on a pallet of these window casings, (then) would you agree to delay delivery for three weeks?”
“If you agree to try my cleaning services for one month, (then) I’ll agree to shampoo your carpeting for free.”

Success story using The Half-Nelson Close

I sold lawn sprinkler systems for a couple summers when I was a young man. One day, I was giving a presentation to an older lady named Blanche. Blanche was a nice woman, but she was clearly overwhelmed with the challenges of life.

It was a real struggle getting her to focus on lawn sprinklers because she had so many issues on her mind, including grocery shopping. I’m not sure why this errand was so important to her that day, but Blanche was seriously concerned about not having a ride to the store.

She interrupted my presentation at least three times to talk about her dilemma. Finally, I came up with an idea that might help both of us. The sales presentation was nearing a close. Blanche seemed to recognize the benefits of having an underground irrigation system and she seemed to have the budget to purchase one.

But she wouldn’t sign the agreement because she was so upset about not being able to get to the store. Finally, I decided to try the If, Then Close.

“Blanche,” I said, “I understand how important it is for you to get to the store. I have a few minutes after this appointment to take you over there. Would you be willing to authorize installation if I take you to the store?”

I couldn’t believe I was saying something like this, but it worked like a charm. I’ll never forget the day I half-nelsoned an old lady.
The Take Away Close

There’s an old psychology axiom that states, “People want things they cannot have.” The **Take Away Close** is effective because the seller presents an opportunity and then suddenly that opportunity is no longer available.

When using The Take Away Close (or any close, for that matter), it’s important to never lie or mislead the prospect in any way.

Here’s how The Take Away Close works. As usual, the sales person establishes the availability of an opportunity and tries to sell it to the prospect. The prospect seems interested, but not ready to buy when the sales person is unexpectedly forced to recant. It’s important for the prospect to understand that whatever causes the “take away” is not within the seller’s control.

When the prospect realizes that he may have missed his opportunity, he suddenly desires the product or service even more. Here are a few examples of how The Take Away Close works:

**Available:** “I better call my office and make sure we can deliver in only two days.”

**Not available:** “Oh, I’m sorry. We just can’t do it.”

(Prospect shows renewed interest)

**Available again:** “Unless you can take delivery on Saturday . . .”

**Available:** “This version is more expensive, but it is so feature rich that 90% of our customers prefer it.”

**Not available:** “Upon reflection, I don’t think the feature rich version is for you.”

(Prospect shows renewed interest)

**Available again:** “Okay. I’ll sell you the feature rich version, but you have to promise me to use it every week so you get all the benefits, okay?”

**Success story using The Take Away Close**

The bride-to-be loved the reception hall. She was having a hard time gaining agreement from key family members on the date and other details. Finally, the hall manager called to inform the customer that she needed to
decide today because June was almost completely booked up. The bride blushed and then wrote a check to cover the deposit.

**The Crowded Room Close**

Occasionally, you will meet up with what’s known as a reluctant buyer. The reluctant buyer is either not interested in what you’re selling or pretending to not be interested. In either case, you can become a “reluctant seller” and begin working **The Crowded Room Close**.

The Crowded Room Close gets its name from what occurs at receptions and parties. If the room is crowded, there is always another person to talk to. If my conversation with you becomes uninteresting or unproductive, I will simply move on. No hard feelings. (Contrast the crowded room scenario with a doctor’s office that only has two people waiting. In this case, there is no one else to talk to and no one is going anywhere before they visit with the doctor. In this scenario, time moves in slow motion.)

A reluctant seller essentially plays hard-to-get, while the prospect displays a lack of interest. It’s an amusing dialogue:

**Prospect:** I’m not really interested in what you’re selling.
**Seller:** That’s okay, I’m not really interested in selling you.

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**Prospect:** We don’t need our office windows cleaned right now.
**Seller:** That’s okay, I couldn’t possibly squeegee (sorry) you in until next month.
**Prospect** (brightening): We’re having our open house next month.
**Seller:** Really, what day?

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**Prospect:** I can’t afford your consultant rates.
**Seller:** No worries. I’m booked solid until the third quarter anyway.

You’ll notice that there’s a little bit of selling to be done after using The Crowded Room Close. The point is that you don’t want to seem desperate for customers. This casual approach is oddly appealing to some prospects.
Success story using The Crowded Room Close

One popular variation on The Crowded Room Close is to have prospects think that they will lose out on what you’re selling if they don’t act quickly. In other words, your product or service is quite in demand and there is a crowd of people that is willing to buy from you.

While it’s good for prospects to think you work at a busy and popular company, I encourage sellers to never deceive prospects. Honesty is critical to good selling and yet many salespeople bend the truth and even lie when using The Crowded Room Close.

I use The Crowded Room Close to remind prospects that popular speakers get booked early, which implies:

a) That they he or she should not wait to hire me
b) That someone else will hire me soon, regardless
c) That I am a popular speaker

The Door Knob Close

This interesting close occurs after the prospect has said “No.” In fact, The Door Knob Close, also known as The Reverse Close, works best when the seller has given up and is literally saying “goodbye” to the prospect.

No one ever plans on using The Door Knob Close, but it can be very useful because it contains the element of surprise. Let’s say a sale does not go well. The prospect has not signed an agreement, nor has he been very forthcoming on reasons for not buying.

The salesperson thanks the prospect for his or her time and slowly walks to the door. The seller places her hand on the door knob and then suddenly
turns around and says, “Now that the presentation is over, may I just ask . . . why you didn’t buy from me today?”

This question is much more powerful than if asked only sixty seconds earlier because the prospect has already started to relax. As the seller walked toward the door, the prospect begins to let his guard down. After all, the worst is over.

The Door Knob Close is powerful because it catches the prospect in an unguarded moment. The question, when posed from the doorway, generates an objection from the prospect, which the seller can then use as an opportunity to reopen the discussion.

Warning: Do not be a pest. Do not reward an honest answer by re-entering the room, taking your coat off and asking for another cup of coffee. Be grateful for the honest dialogue and don’t try to force the prospect to immediately reverse his decision.

**Success story using The Door Knob Close**

As with all the closes, there are many variations. Discount Tire, one of my clients, uses what they refer to as a “second effort” to convert the sale as the prospect is walking out the door.

Discount Tire employees are smart. They know that a person who has visited their store and not made a purchase is leaving to go check out the competition. Although, Discount Tire products and services are competitively priced, the prospect may not return, so an employee tries to engage the person before they leave the premises.

Even if the second effort converts 10% of the non-customers who were leaving the store, it’s an effective close.

**Personality Closes**

Personality can play an important role in the sales process. I recommend that you study Dr. Tony Alessandra’s research on the topic. Alessandra and
other experts suggest that a sales person be able to adapt to the prospect’s personality style in order to serve him or her best.

The Personality Closes include The Compliment Close, The Challenge Close and the Impending Doom Close.

**The Compliment Close**

The Compliment Close uses what Dr. Stephen Covey calls “emotional bank deposits.” Also known as compliments, emotional bank deposits are a fantastic way to get someone’s attention. Link the compliment to what you’re selling and you can close very quickly.

Certainly, shallow compliments can do the trick. Examples of shallow compliments include:

- “I like your haircut.”
- “That sweater looks good on you.”
- “Looks like you got some sun over the weekend.”

Deep compliments, however, can be even more effective because they are less common and usually more meaningful because they are personal in nature. Here are some examples of deep compliments:

- “I really am enjoying my time with you.”
- “You have a wonderful personality.”
- “I really appreciate your honesty.”

To use The Compliment Close, the seller might insert a personal comment into the dialogue such as, “Certainly a man of your taste and good judgment recognizes the terrific value here.” It’s corny, but it works.
Success story using The Compliment Close

The Compliment Close works best when the compliment involves a particular point of pride for the prospect. People always give clues about what is important to them. If family photographs are on display, it’s a good bet the prospect likes to receive positive feedback on their family. Some sellers would say that these types of photographs are on display as a way of soliciting compliments.

Someone who is wearing an expensive outfit will probably appreciate a compliment on how she is dressed. A person with a good-sized ego might appreciate extra compliments.

Such was the case when my dentist sold me on a teeth whitening process by appealing to my ego. My dentist merely pointed out that I am a highly photographed professional whose image is critical to my success. That’s all I needed to hear. The whitening process turned out great.

The Challenge Close

Sometimes, prospects display an adversarial or competitive attitude during the selling process. It’s important to remember that you are never going to change this person. You should also know that most people display character traits that have worked for them in the past.

In other words, the reluctant buyer is usually reluctant because he finds this attitude to be a useful negotiating tool. The prospect who tells you he “has to think about it,” may have discovered that phrase is useful in getting salespeople to go away.

The best thing to do is to identify the personality you’re dealing with and play the game with him. The Challenge Close is best used on tough, disagreeable prospects. If you discover that the prospect is challenging you
at every turn, brace yourself in advance so his coarse answers have little effect. You might even challenge him before he challenges you.

Recently, I was getting a hard time from a prospect who seemed interested in beating me up on price. I quickly got him to purchase a set of my books for all 200 of his people with this question: “Are you the type of customer who just writes a check for training or do you really want the training to get good results?”

This simple challenge called him out and forced him to take a stand on how he operated as a training manager. Once he took a stand by answering, “I want good results” he couldn’t very easily ask me to lower the price by pruning back extras like collateral learning materials.

The most extreme type of prospects are known as contrarians, who not only disagree with everything you say, they take the opposite position. For this reason, contrarians can take an inordinate amount of time to sell. Consider this bit of hypothetical dialogue between an earnest seller and a contrarian prospect:

**Seller:** So those are the product’s biggest benefits. I think you’re going to be very happy with the XTZ model.

**Prospect:** I don’t like that model at all. It’s ugly and way too expensive.

When the prospect takes the contrarian approach, it forces the seller to take the defensive. When defensive, sellers work much harder to convince the prospect to buy. The harder the seller works, the more the prospect resists.

Consider what happens when the seller takes the opposing viewpoint before the prospect can establish a contrary position:

**Seller:** So those are the product’s biggest benefits, but I don’t think you’re going to be very happy with the XTZ model.

**Prospect:** Er... I... Why do you say that?
Seller: Well, I’m guessing you probably think it’s ugly and too expensive.

Prospect: Well, it’s not that ugly. And you said you said it’s on sale this week.

Notice how the seller unexpectedly tries to talk the prospect out of buying the product. The prospect, not able to reverse his old habit of disagreeing, is forced to argue the merits of a purchase. The contrarian finds himself trying to convince the salesperson that he should buy the product.

**Success story using The Challenge Close**

A prospect called me from New York City to negotiate pricing for a consulting stint at his company. His brusque East Coast manner set the tone for the call.

“Look here’s where I need to be on price. Do you want the job or not,” he said.

“Sure it sounds interesting,” Mr. Prospect. “Tell me, are you a Vice President who really wants results from this program or are you just a Vice President who is just a check writer?”

My tone caught him by surprise. After all, I was talking to him from *Michigan*. People in the Midwest aren’t supposed to talk like tough guys.

“Well, I . . . I want results, of course.”

“Excellent, Mr. Prospect, I like your style. The best way to get results from this program is to have me interview your key people by telephone before I come to town. This is an extra service that costs $X,XXX, but I promise you it will be money well spent . . .”
I knew that The Challenge Close was the right way to approach the man’s Type A personality. Don’t be afraid to challenge prospects who challenge you.

The Impending Doom Close

There are many negative, cynical, pessimists in the world and sometimes these people become prospects. As sales professionals, we can’t change them so it’s best to be honest with ourselves and dig a little deeper into our sales techniques.

The Impending Doom Close is not one of my favorite closes, but it sure does work. It’s given the dramatic name “Impending Doom” because it uses negative scenarios to convince prospects to buy. I prefer not to sell in the shadows of negativity, but as the old saying goes – If you can’t beat ‘em, join ‘em.

Everyone gets up in the morning looking for validation. Validation helps us feel good about our view of things. Positive people climb out of bed and look for signs that the world is a good place. Negative people, on the other hand, fall out of bed and look for indications that the world is a bad place.

A negative close, such as the Impending Doom Close, leverages the prospect’s negativity. Happy talk like “You’ll really enjoy this product” or “Look how well it cleans” just won’t soap with negative prospects. You don’t have to agree with the prospect’s negative perspectives to use this powerful close.

If you have to go negative, here’s some language to use:

“The price is just going to get higher.”

“You might as well get one now and get it over with.”

“I know how you feel. No one ever wants to buy insurance.”

Be careful not to use negative verbiage that will reflect badly on you or your company. Avoid talking bad about the competition, off-color language
and political incorrectness. Also, avoid an impending doom clause that shows weakness. If you tell the prospect that you only have one in stock, he or she might decide to purchase from the next salesperson that has ten in stock.

**Success story using The Impending Doom Close**

I do a fair amount of work in the area of conflict resolution. As you might guess, prospects often call me when situations are too far gone. They call to explain how bad things are and how things will only get worse if they don’t get some help. I simply agree and quote them my fee.

**Summary**

The close is not just the climax of a sale. It is the culmination of days and sometimes months of preparation.

Closes should be climactic and exciting so try to smile a little more as you wrap things up. It’s okay to show a little excitement and gratitude is someone decides to give you an order.

Sophisticated sellers learn to employ multiple closes to get the order. As you improve your selling skills, you will learn to change your approach to the close in real time.

Like most other skills, selling is an iterative process. You must try each of these 22 closes many times in order to become adept. Fortunately, life will provide you many opportunities to sell your products, services and ideas.

Now go practice.
Recommended Resources

This e-book is a summary of my *Time Management—How to Gain One Hour a Day* audio program, which is part of my *FastLearnerAudio3* series:

**FLA Series 1—Personal Development**
Time Management—How to Gain an Hour a Day
Stress Busters for Busy People
Dealing With Difficult People and Challenging Situations
Creating Success Habits

**FLA Series 2—Professional Development**
How to Do Meetings
Effective Leadership—Getting People to Do Stuff
Remarkable Customer Service NOW!
How to Give Killer Presentations

**FLA Series 3—Sales Training for People Who Mean Business**
Selling More, More Often, For More Money
Negotiating For Fun & Profit
Networking Like a Pro
22 Sales Closes That Work

**FLA Series 4—Entrepreneur Boot Camp**
How to Create and Sell Information Products
Starting a New Business
The Art and Science of Self-Promotion
How to Become a Speaker/Author
**5 Cool Ideas For Better Working Living & Feeling**  
*By Michael Angelo Caruso*

The original *5 Cool Ideas* book has valuable tips on over 60 topics, including:

- Dealing with negative people  
- Managing your time  
- Improve your listening skills, a key way to learn about other people  
- Being in control  
- Reducing stress  
- Improved writing  
- Safer travel  
- Remembering names  
- Being happy

**Effective Coaching—How to Build Better Employees and Relationships**  
*by Michael Angelo Caruso*

*Effective Coaching* audio program will help you help others. The most effective leaders have established a coaching relationship with people. If you coach more, you will boss less. This 6-CD audio program has strong, proven content. It is guaranteed to help you improve your most important relationships in 30 days or your money back. Listen to in your car or on your commute. Hear the ideas at 7:30 am and use them at 9:30 am.

**Dear Michael Angelo—A Father’s Life Letters to His Son** by Michael Angelo Caruso

Now you can learn from Michael’s mentor. Mickey Caruso sent loving letters to his eldest son on the subjects of self-esteem, happiness and success.
Other Recommended Resources

Books and Audio

_Death of a Salesman_ by Arthur Miller
What does Arthur Miller know about selling? This classic play was written by a man
who closed Marilyn Monroe.

_Dealing With Difficult People_ by Michael Angelo Caruso
Some prospects can be exceedingly difficult. This one-hour CD comes in
FastLearnerAudio Series #1.

_Sales Closing for Dummies_ by Tom Hopkins
Tom Hopkins is the recognized master of selling. He’s a bit “old-school” for some of the
young people coming into the business, but his fundamentals are sound and basics will
always be basics.

_Closing Techniques (That Really Work!)_ by Stephan Schiffman

_Influence—The Psychology of Persuasion_ by Robert B Cialdini
The “bible” for getting people to do stuff.

Seminars

_Edison House_ and Michael Angelo Caruso  248/546-9140

_National Seminars/Padgett Thompson_  800/258-7246

Tele-seminars

_Edison House_ and Michael Angelo Caruso  248/546-9140

Retreats

_Edison House_ and Michael Angelo Caruso  248/546-9140
Michael holds an annual executive retreat at his Michigan home in conjunction with the
famous Woodward Dream Cruise around the third weekend of August.
Songs and Movies Relating to Closing

**Songs**

“Who Will Buy?” by Paul Weller
I didn’t much like this traditional song when I was growing up, but the former lead singer for The Jam helps me like it more.

“Love For Sale” by Vivian Green
This old tune has fresh clothe thanks to the “Delovely” Soundtrack

“Don’t Sell to Doctors” by Wayne Shorter
This song is an instrumental so we may never know what it means. The tune was featured in “Glenngary Glen Ross,” one of the most famous sales movies of all time.

“Sell My Soul” by Midnight Oil
Oooh, now this is one sale you don’t want to close.

“For the Love of Money” by the O’Jays
This old R&B classic has new life now that it’s the theme to Donald Trump’s “The Apprentice” TV show.

“You Never Give Me Your Money” by The Beatles
Featuring a fantastic bass line courtesy of Sir Paul, who has given away a lot of money through the years. As of this writing, McCartney has never owned his song catalogue and it looks like he’s about to give a lot of green to Heather Mills.

**Movies**
About the Author

Michael Angelo Caruso

Michael Angelo Caruso has delivered over 1,500 presentations and keynote speeches on the subjects of conflict resolution, team leading and pro-active communication. He has spoken in Africa, the Middle East, the Caribbean and 49 of the 50 states.

He is founder and President of the Edison House, an international consulting firm that provides corporate and personal improvement. Edison House clients include Chase Bank, Verizon Wireless, Nortel, Citgo, Rayovac, Hallmark, the National Institutes of Health and the United States Navy.

Michael has educated and entertained audiences all over the world, drawing on a previous career in the telecommunications industry and a decade as a professional musician.

Michael is also author of the 5 Cool Ideas book series and an audio book titled, Effective Coaching. He has also published an audio book on legacy titled, Dear Michael Angelo—A Father’s Life Lessons to His Son and the popular FastLearnerAudio series.

Mr. Caruso is a 10-year member of both the Optimists and Rotary. He resides in Royal Oak, Michigan, the most unique small town in America.