

## A Surefire Sales Technique

By Mike Stewart, CSP

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**"What is the biggest challenge you are facing in this area right now?"** is a powerful question many salespeople have been trained to ask. I hope you use this question because it is one of the most effective devices available to start learning about a prospect's situation and positioning your products and services as a valuable solution.

**When the prospect answers this question it is NOT a starting signal for you to begin your presentation.** For example, if the prospect says, "It seems like our products are always backordered," and timely deliveries are one of your strong points you may feel like he just pushed your button - hard!

**Avoid the compelling impulse to start "selling,"** which is defined as the activity or process of persuading someone to buy something. In conventional terms, this translates into "talking." This is not the time for you to begin talking!

**Five reasons why you shouldn't begin talking at this point:**

- You don't know what the prospect means by what he said
- Your prospect probably isn't sure what he means, either
- You don't know how to position your products and services
- Experts say at least 90% of the buying decision is emotional and at this point your prospect isn't feeling any emotional connection to this challenge, or problem
- Most importantly, a prospect with whom you have no close relationship believes himself more than he believes you!

Sidebar: Learn why

**Your Customer is the Best Salesperson at the Table**, P.129

"Close More Sales! Persuasion Skills That Boost Your Selling Power"

By Mike Stewart

Find Book at: <http://tinyurl.com/5qwma>

**Ask Questions and follow "The Challenge Track"** to not only discover the information you need in order to make the sale, but primarily to help your prospect sell himself!

Open: "What is the biggest challenge, or problem, you are facing in this area right now?"

- 1: "Can you describe the problem for me?"
- 2: "About how often does this happen?"
- 3: "When was the last time it happened?"

- 4: “Conservatively, about how much would you say this is costing you?”
- 5: The Hook – see below\*
- 6: “How do you feel about that?”
- 7: “How does your boss feel about it?” (Optional)
- 8: The Close – see below\*\*

**The Hook\*** repeats the answer to number 4 as a question that reinforces the pain and introduces emotion. Be aware that you may have to help your prospect figure out the cost, but *don't do it for him*. Guide him through the process, then use his answer with authority and emphasis.  
Example: **"Ninety-five thousand dollars? A Year?!"**

**The Close\*\*** is a call to action. Use Closes that work best for you. For example, I like a direct question such as, "What would you like for me to do about this problem?" You may prefer an assumptive close like, "Let me show you a solution we offer that will solve this problem."

**People in business buy to solve problems and escape the pain their problems cause.** This sequence of questions allows your prospect to identify the problem, put it in perspective, recognize how much it costs, and feel the emotional pain it causes.

**Think about the next five sales calls you have scheduled** and plan to use this technique on at least two or three of them. Be confident and stay with the process.

**Follow the Challenge Track all the way to the bank!**

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