

## QuickTips

We are often get asked by organizations and sales managers to help improve the 'closing ability' of their salespeople. Sometimes the skills involved in handling issues late in the sales cycle are indeed the problem, but in the vast majority of cases, it is not closing that is the issue — it is what has happened previously up to the point where the prospect should be making a decision, — the end game.



### Traditional Closing



Traditional closing appears to be a dying concept, and is being replaced by 'action commitment gains', which are best thought of as the actions that come out of a meeting. It is well understood in solution or consultative selling that a key indicator for a successful sales call is for the prospect to agree to do something, and action commitment gains are a simple extension of this.

While closing is becoming less relevant as a concept, the importance of having defined end-game strategies is becoming much more important. In a world of more complex and often inter-related decisions, the end-game, which we define as the point from which technical evaluations have been concluded, is increasingly critical, as new people get involved (or re-involved) in the decision-making group, new priorities become apparent, competitors make desperate last-minute attempts to gain advantage and business drivers for the project are re-examined.

### Old closing techniques can become new end-game strategies

While we examine a few end-game strategies here, additional end-game strategies as well as a "Death of Closing" cover story in this month's edition of Winning Edge Magazine, written by ProAct's Steve Hoyle, are [available on our website](#).

**THE ALTERNATE CLOSE** - Rather than asking for the major decision the salesperson asks for a minor choice to be made. This bears a strong similarity to the "specifications workshop", where rather than asking for a binding commitment, the next step is a workshop where vendor and customer jointly specify 'the details'.

**THE PUPPY DOG CLOSE** - is still incredibly effective if you are trying to sell anything else that has instant appeal to users. You simply ask someone to "look after the puppy" and then later go back to collect it – when of course it will be impossible to take the puppy away. In more complex businesses it is called a pilot or a 'proof of concept trial'. The approach will obviously only work if you can very quickly determine significant business benefits.



**THE WELLINGTON OR ROOSEVELT CLOSE** - depending on which side of the Atlantic you are) is where you ask the customer to list the advantages of your solution against the advantages of others and/or doing nothing. This is now often replaced with the total cost of ownership (TCO) approach where you get the customer to look at the total costs involved, direct and indirect, of the various alternatives.

**THE DIRECT CLOSE** - appears to have survived intact and is doing as good a job as it has ever done. It is of course the beautifully simple direct close. Simply asking for commitment that the customer perceives as important has proven many times to be effective at the end of meetings and at the end of the campaign. When used at its best it is normally preceded by a summary of agreed real business value, and timing is important to get maximum receptivity.

For more end-game strategies, [click here](#).

For other ProAct Quick Tips, Articles or White Papers, [simply click here](#).

*QuickTips are produced by ProAct Business Development as an additional tool for existing and potential clients. The QuickTips address only very limited topics, and need to be read against the context of our overall approach. Further QuickTips are available from our website, where we are constantly adding more materials to support you in your continuing development.*