

## The Three Finger Close

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It seems like every day someone or some company comes up with new tricks, tips and "magic bullets" for selling to customers. As a result, professionals end up going about winning business the hard way. They forget about the basic, simple rules of sales and jump on the bandwagon of every new idea that comes along. In reality three things must happen in order to sell.

First, the customer has to want or be shown the **PRODUCT**.

Second, the customer needs to understand why this is the place to do **BUSINESS**.

Third, the customer has to want to buy from this **SALESPERSON**.

It's really quite simple. At APB, we call this the three finger close.

### The Product

Salespeople must change their way of thinking. They are not in the business of selling. They are in the business of helping customers find and buy the exact product or service that meets their needs, wants and desires. In the process, they must do everything they can to create a positive experience. To do this, salespeople must demonstrate a sincere interest in each individual opportunity, give information and help customers find the right product or service. Salespeople must:

Be 100% present and work with a single-minded focus for each customer.

Ask probing questions to develop an understanding of the customers' unique needs, wants and desires. It's not about what the salesperson thinks; it's all about what the customer

Listen, learn and empathize with the customers, understand problems from their point-of-view and discover essential details in order to successfully guide the selection process and find an exact fit.

Help the customers “try it on.” The salesperson should guide customers as they experience the products’ features that will satisfy their needs, wants and desires.

### **The Business**

If a customer doesn’t like a store, or has a bad experience, they can choose to leave. Most can go down the street, find the same product and purchase from the competition. Trying to keep or woo customers with the “best deal” as a last ditch effort is fruitless because generally, price is not a significant variable. It’s important for salespeople to make sure customers know that this is the place to do business, that the organization or store is behind the customer not only during the transaction, but for the long-term. This is the first step in converting customers to clients, people who return repeatedly to do business at the same place.

First impressions do matter. Be sure the business portrays a professional image. If a business doesn’t, customers will question the quality of its products and service.

Ensure staff greets every customer promptly and professionally

Remove negative first impression clutter from storage areas, if it can be seen by the public

Keep restrooms and coffee areas clean and neat – the cleaner the better

Provide amenities if there is a waiting area – WiFi , magazines, a television (the station should only show positive programming, no news) and toys for kids

Add personal touches – plants, photos, a brag wall, and other décor without overdoing it

Don’t be afraid to take customers on a tour of your business or facility. Point out any training certificates earned by the staff. Demonstrate that the business has invested in its people with tools and education. In doing so, you build value and show them that your entire organization is there to support and care for their needs. Talk about the business’ commitment to the community and ways it is involved – Little League, school teams or fundraising, events, charities, etc. Create a brag wall for plaques, photos and other mementos showing your involvement. If you support the community and don’t share it with customers, you are losing a valuable opportunity.

By bringing customers into your family, you are building value and giving them a host of reasons to trust and work with your business.

### **The Salesperson**

Consumers have a deep-seated desire to trust the salesperson they are doing business with. This trust is built on three pillars:

Sincerity – a salesperson’s ability to genuinely listen and take an interest in the customer’s needs, wants and desires

Respect – the manner in which the salesperson treats the customer and his ability to make the customer feel like he is a VIP, the most important person in the store at that particular time

Honesty – a belief that the salesperson is truly speaking the truth

It’s really all about attitude. Try this exercise. Write down ten reasons you like working in the business where you are employed, reasons you can share with your customers. Think about them, focus on the positive and share some of them with your customers. This positive focus will permeate how you work with customers and inspire trust. If you are excited about working for your employer and don’t simply come to collect a paycheck, your enthusiasm will be contagious. The customer will feel like you are passionate about your job, that you work in a fun, exciting place, and ultimately, will want to buy from you. If you don’t have ten reasons, perhaps you should be working elsewhere.

### **The Three Finger Close = \$ale**

Every successful sale requires that these three things happen – customers must want the **product**, value the opportunity to buy from your **business**, and want to buy from the **salesperson**. Salespeople must develop a friendly trust-based relationship with their customer; help customers select a product that meets their needs, wants and desires; and build value by showcasing the depth of commitment the business makes to serve its clients and community well after the sale. Remember, your job is to help customers buy, and part of this is helping them pick the three most important parts of the sale – the product, the business and the salesperson.



**Richard F. Libin** has written two acclaimed books that help people of all walks of life improve their sales skills, because as he says, “everyone is a selling something.” His most recent book, *Who Knew?* ([Who-Knew.com](http://Who-Knew.com)), was published in early 2017. His first book, “*Who Stopped the Sale?*” ([WhoStoppedTheSale.com](http://WhoStoppedTheSale.com)), is now in its second edition. As president of APB-Automotive Profit Builders, Inc., a firm with more than 48 years experience working with both sales and service professionals, he helps his clientele, through personnel development and technology, to build customer satisfaction and maximize gross profits in their businesses. Mr. Libin can be reached at [rlibin@apb.cc](mailto:rlibin@apb.cc) or 508-626-9200 or [www.apb.cc](http://www.apb.cc).