

NEED TO CLOSE CHAINS

Stephen Craine

www.Provensalestraining.com

The sales training exercise that will improve your sales skills and put you in the best motivational selling state



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INTRODUCTION TO NEED TO CLOSE CHAINS

Hi, I'm Stephen Craine, salesman, sales trainer, manager of successful sales teams for over 20 years, and now presenting sales training on the website www.Provensalestraining.com. The sales training you will find here works. It was developed with the companies, teams, and individuals I've helped achieve their business and personal goals. It has been proven to increase results for individuals and in real sales training sessions with working teams and depts. Now I'm sharing this training with you, so you can use it to improve your own sales results or those of your sales team.

The main benefit from using the Need to Close Chains is the ease with which you or your team will connect the Needs of the prospect with the Features and Benefits of your products and services.

The ideas and techniques are unique, you won't find them anywhere else. Like all effective sales training, it's easy to learn, can quickly be put into action, and works towards the achievement of consistent successful sales results. If you like the training, I would really appreciate your feedback.

Take what you find here, use it, and adapt it for your sales role. You can put this sales and motivation training into practice in many different ways. There are practical applications for product knowledge training, improving sales skills, and taking control of your motivation levels to get you into a buzzing mental state where you can access and utilise all your skills and resources.

Don't be fooled by its simplicity. Too often sales training is overcomplicated and uses the latest made up buzz words and acronyms just so it can be marketed as something new.

A growing number of resources are being added to the [Provensalestraining.com](http://www.Provensalestraining.com) website. Make sure you check in regularly to see what's available.

My very best wishes for a successful sales career

Stephen

Stephen Craine

Email: Stephen@provensalestraining.com

Web: www.Provensalestraining.com

WHAT THE NEED TO CLOSE CHAINS WILL DO FOR YOU

You have in front of you is a sales training and motivation exercise that can be used in 3 different ways to enhance your sales performance or to train your sales teams. You can use the Need to Close Chains as:

- Sales skills training to improve presentations, meetings, and informal conversations.
- A motivational mood changer that moves you into a charged selling state.
- Product knowledge training for any new or existing product or service.

The Sales Training Technique

As a sales training technique the Needs to Close Chains will build connecting chains linking:

Customer Needs– Product Features – Product Benefits – Close the Sale

You'll learn a quick and effective technique for improving your sales presentation skills by addressing the needs, wants, and desires of customer with the appropriate product features and associated benefits. A final link is added to the chain to connect a linked closing question, agreement gaining or trial close.

Build these connecting chains and your sales communications and presentations will follow a pattern that influences your prospects to move forward with you along the sales process. You will close more sales.

A Motivational State Changer

First thing in a morning, on your way to meeting a prospect, before a telesales call, straight after lunch, these are all times when you need to get into a motivated selling state that will give you the best access to all your sales skills, experience, and knowledge.

Have you ever gone into a meeting with a client and only got into top gear part way through or close to the finish of your pitch? Sometimes it can be too late, you can't recover from the slow start. You look back afterwards and you can see all the things you could have done better.

Have you noticed your telesales calls get better towards mid-morning but then lose energy just after lunch? If you look at the actual hours in the day telesales people are at their most effective, you'll see that it's approximately only half of the time they are making calls.

There is a way to be at the top of your game from the very first call of the day and to remain at your peak performance level until the last call. This same technique will put you into your most resourceful state for every sales meeting you attend, whether it's early in the morning, just after lunch or towards the evening.

Using the Need to Close Chains as a mental training exercise will get you into the right mindset so you are at your best whenever you need to be. Whether you're selling over the phone or meeting face to face, when you're warmed up you find the right things to say, answers to objections flow, and your confidence is high, which all leads to more closed sales. This mental exercise prepares you and brings into focus the connecting chains of:

Need – Feature – Benefit – Close

Product Knowledge Training

How do you or your team learn the product knowledge for your sales offers? In many organisations someone involved in the development of the new product will give a detailed presentation. But is that the best way for salespeople to approach a new product?

Once you've got the technical detail and specifications, which is usually the features of the product, you can use the Need to Close Chains to quickly turn the information into sales talk; features and benefits. Learning product knowledge in this way helps you to find and remember all the benefits the product or service offers and links them to the features that deliver them.

You will match customer needs to the benefits of the product and the features that deliver them, and to appropriate closing or agreement gaining lines that move you forward.

When we get to the Product Knowledge training section of this Book, try out the technique using a product or service you currently sell and know well. Every salesperson I have done this exercise with has discovered new benefits that they can start using in their sales meetings and calls with prospects.

For Sales Managers And Trainers

The ways you can use the Need to Close Chains are endless. Even today, some 20 years after first developing the technique, I'm still finding new ways to use it while selling, coaching, and training salespeople.

Sales Training Sessions

At every stage of the selling process your team can benefit from connecting customer needs, wants, and desires, to the benefits and features of your products and services and then adding a closing or agreement gaining question. You can use the structure of the Need to Close Chains as the basis for a full training session that is interactive, thought provoking, and different to anything your team has seen before. I know this will work well for you because of the feedback I've received and the results I've witnessed.

Ice breaker and quick-fire attention grabber

Use the Chains as an ice breaker at the start of a training session, it makes you look a lot more professional and sales focused than asking the delegates, what animal would they be, or to tell the whole room something embarrassing about themselves.

At times when the attention and enthusiasm are fading, use the technique to get people thinking and responding. When you see the instructions later, on how to use the Chains in meetings and training sessions, you'll see that the technique puts just enough pressure on people to make them sit up and bring their focus back to the room.

And what you will be doing is original, not the same old ice breakers and exercises that have been doing the rounds for decades, and that will make you, as a trainer or manager, look good.

Motivational Training Sessions

You can test how effective this training is, I'll show you how to do this later. I'll give you a simple exercise on features and benefits to use before using the Need to Close Chains. You then repeat the exercise after using the Chains and you and the team will experience the difference.

A Word Of Caution

The techniques you are about to learn have many uses, some of which are presented above. What the Need to Close Chains should not be used for is as a format for presenting directly to the customer in a live sales situation.

Need to Close Chains are a training technique to give you new perspectives and new skills. The Chains are a way to discover and remember product information and connections that can be quickly recalled. The actual technique of creating a chain of connections from a customer's need, to a feature and benefit and then to a closing line, will improve your sales skills. This chain would not sound right if presented to a customer in the way that we use it for training purposes. It's a knowledge building technique, not a communication tool.

The Need to Close Chains do not build sales or telephone scripts. If you want sales training on creating your own sales process scripts or appointment tele-call scripts, I can highly recommend visiting: [Proven Sales Training](#)

HOW THE NEED TO CLOSE CHAINS CAME ABOUT

The Chain technique started out as a simple exercise to fill in some time on a sales course I was presenting. Some of the delegates were held up getting to the second day and I wanted an exercise as a time filler while we waited. Starting with a simple exercise of connecting features and benefits, I added the customer needs onto the front and then an agreement gaining questions on to the end.

Making the whole thing up on the spot, also known at the time as 'Winging it,' and trying to look as if the exercise was planned and prepared, it went really well. With a bit more work over the next few training sessions I found I had an exercise that could be used as:

- An ice breaker to warm up the group.
- A motivator to move people to a positive mental state.
- A way to test and improve product knowledge on benefits and features.
- Training on a quick pattern of linking benefits and solutions to a prospect's needs.
- A technique to get everyone involved with a small amount of pressure that grabs attention.

I used as a base an exercise from the previous day where we had linked customer's needs, wants, and desires, to the features and benefits of products and services. Previously this exercise was done at a slow pace using a flipchart and giving people time to come up with answers. Now, it was a fast response, thinking on your feet, quick fire, round the table exercise asking delegates to instantly link customer's needs with features and benefits, and follow it with a closing question.

The results were fantastic

A simple change to a sales training exercise that I had presented many times before gave me a great sales tool for many different situations and I could already see the potential for the range of applications.

The exercise quickly showed me the team's knowledge and how they currently used features and benefits. It also highlighted the limit of their product knowledge in terms of the product features and the benefits delivered to customers.

The First Major Benefit Of The New Exercise

The first major benefit I saw from the new exercise was that it highlighted how the team members had got into the lazy and unprofitable habit of selling on price instead of building value with features and benefits.

Selling on price is a bad habit salespeople fall into when they don't have support, feedback, and regular training. For salespeople working independently and without support this is something they must watch out for and become aware if they slip into doing it. Selling on price is easy, you present all the features as cost saving benefits, even though price may not be a need of the customer. The downsides are, it reduces sales revenue and margins, lowers prices in your marketplace, and can reduce commission payments. And, if your prices are not the cheapest, you're not going to close many sales.

In just a few minutes Need to Close Chains had highlighted a major problem and an opportunity, from there on I kept developing the technique, finding new ways to use it, and gaining more benefits.

THE QUICKEST WAY TO GET RESULTS FROM THIS TRAINING

To get the best and quickest results from this training read through the exercise and examples as it builds into the complete Need to Close Chain. Then apply the Needs to Close Chain to your current sales role. Consider what will have the biggest impact on your sales results or your business, and your earnings. Be selfish, you're making an investment of your time to improve your sales and motivation skills. You want the best return you can get for your commitment and investment into your own learning.

What Will Get You The Result You Want?

Which of these is most important to you:

- A great way to sell a new product or service?
- Boost the results of your sales team?
- Increase your current sales results?
- Sell more of a certain product?

Perhaps it's motivation you want, a boost to your confidence, or maybe you want to save time and move through the sales process faster.

As you start learning the Need to Close Chains technique consider your goal and what you will focus the training on after you become competent at using it. Ask yourself, if this sales training exercise could do one life changing thing for you and your career, what would it be? What would the difference be compared to your current situation?

With your answers to the above in mind, let's start the training that will make the changes and achieve your goals.

One of the greatest benefits of working in sales is that commission payments are often uncapped. That means your earnings are in your hands. The better your sales skills the more you earn, and the potential earnings in sales can be huge and life changing. The key to making the changes happen is: Taking Action. Without action nothing happens.

Actions you can take to give you the best opportunities to maximise your earnings are:

- Choose to work with a business that has a good product with a large target market.
- Make sure the reward scheme allows you to earn motivating amounts of commission.
- Invest in your own training and development so you can be the best you can be.

Let's start the Need to Close sales training and show you how to discover and recall valuable sales information to close more sales...

THE NEED TO CLOSE SALES TRAINING

Follow these simple steps to learn how to use the Need to Close Chains:

1. What Do Your Customers Want – The Needs

Let's do something different, we'll start with the customer not the product. Even if your personal goal for this training is to learn a great way to sell a specific product, start with the customer, not the product.

Choose a big, common general need, want, or desire, that your customers often have. For example, many customers, both B2B and B2C, want to make or save money. These are very general needs that may not be directly related to specific features and benefits of your products and services. This is the Need link in the Need to Close Chain. It can be a need to find a solution to a problem or a desire to improve a situation.

Need – Feature – Benefit – Close

A general Need such as wanting to save or make money is a good example to start the training with as there may be many features of your sales offers that can provide a benefit to fulfil that need, without you having to offer a discounted price. Even if the product itself is not connected to making or saving money, there may be savings or benefits that have an impact on costs or margins.

Reframing needs

A typical sales meeting or telesales call will normally follow a process, something like this:

Introduction – You introduce yourself and the company or pick up where you left off in your last interaction with the prospect.

Questions – Discovering the prospects needs, wants, and desires so you can present back to them how you can solve their problems, provide their wants, and fulfil their desires.

Presentation – Your sales proposal that will meet their requirements highlighted in the Questioning Stage.

Closing the Sale – You gain agreement to the sale or to the next step in the sales process.

The above is a simple process that has been used for decades, maybe even centuries, by salespeople in all sectors. There are numerous variations being offered by sales trainers, with many so overcomplicated and padded with nonsense that they are not practical and can't be used in real sales situations.

The Questioning Stage is where you discover what your prospect wants, the Needs link of the Need to Close Chains. Sometimes the needs they present are vague, open to interpretation, or can't be specifically connected to the features of your product, which is the next link in the Chain. For example, the need to make or save money with your product could be interpreted in many ways. When doing the Need to Close Chain exercise take the wide and vague needs that customers give you and reframe them in as many ways as you can so you can match specific needs to the features of your products.

Here are some examples of how the needs of several prospects in the manufacturing sector, that wanted to save or make money, were reframed to make them more specific so they could be matched to product and service features:

- Cutting costs on ingredients to boost profits.
- Raise the perceived value of the product.
- Reduce required manpower lower costs.
- Faster production to increase turnover.
- Lower maintenance expenses.

The prospects all asked for ways to reduce spend or increase income. To address the needs, they were reframed so they could be matched to features that can provide benefits on cost or revenue.

Consider how your sales results and commission payments will increase if you can turn a request for a discounted price into a full priced sale based on features that provide benefits which give the prospect savings or increased revenue.

A good technique to use when a prospect wants to benefit financially is to show how the savings the features provide can payback the cost of the purchase of the product or service.

In the next link of the Chain we'll discuss matching needs to features. When you perform this step think about how the needs you are matching can be reframed so they relate to specific benefits. Just one need reframed may link to many features of your sales offer.

2. How Your Sales Offer Delivers The Needs – The Features

You've selected a common need that your prospects often have. For example, to save money or increase revenue, but make sure the need you select is relevant to you and your sales role. Now you're going to work on selecting features that can supply the benefits to address the need.

Need – Feature – Benefit – Close

Choose a feature of your product or service. Go through all the benefits that feature gives to the customer. Note all the benefits that will answer the common need that you have selected, whether it's the general need or one that you have reframed to make more specific. Continue with finding more features until you think you have all the features linked to the need.

What usually happens is that you note, mentally or physically, all the obvious features linked to the selected need first. Keep going and you will discover the less obvious and the indirectly connected features supplying benefits linked to the need.

If your product is aimed at retailers and the selected need is cost, the first features that come to mind may be price or discounts on bulk orders. Think a little more and other linked features may come to mind such as transport or delivery options, and payment terms that are beneficial to cash flow. Look deeper into the connections between features and the need and you start to see other options. Using the retail example, you can include features that add value to the product, enhance the point of sale display, increase retail sales, or push up the retail price.

For many products and services, the list of features with a link to the selected need is huge. The more times you do the exercises to discover new ones the bigger the list grows.

Feature Discovery Exercise - A quick way to discover more linked features

Take a piece of paper or open a drawing pad on a tablet or other device.

In the centre write the need you have selected to link to features.

Draw a short line from the need in any direction and write the first linked feature that comes to mind.

Draw another line from the need in a different direction and add a different feature. Do this until you have a ring of Tier 1 features around the need in the centre of the page.

Choose one of the linked Tier 1 features around the need and draw a short line from it in a direction away from the centre of the page. Now focus your attention on the feature with a line extending away from it and add a related feature at the end of the line. For example: A Tier 1 feature of competitive pricing could have a related feature such as a discount for bulk orders and other Tier 2 features that save money. Add more lines to the tier 1 feature and write connected features at the end of each line.

Now choose another tier 1 feature and add lines connecting another tier of features. Continue by doing the same for each of the tier 1 features until you have a ring of tier 2 features circling the page.



Keep going, choose a Tier 2 feature, draw lines and add features. Create a ring of Tier 3 features then do the same for that tier and keep going until the page is full. Your page should look like a spider’s web radiating from the need at the centre of the features.

For more complex products and services you may run out room on a page and still have more features to add. If that happens, start a new page and use one of the features from the outermost tier as the centre of page starting point for your new page and start adding more connected features to it. Use the same tier pattern and keep adding outwards as far as you can.

If you understand mind-maps, you’ll know the psychological benefits of doing this exercise in this way. Adding a line first, before thinking of a feature, helps utilise the way the brain searches for answers and relevant information. Focusing on a need or feature as a base and then asking your brain to come up with a feature that is linked to it uses thought patterns that are inherent in humans. When asked a question, we search for related information to help us find an answer using the question as a base from which to start. For example, when someone asks you about an area or a country, maybe a holiday destination, even if you haven’t been there you will come up with the nearest match that’s stored in your experience, memories, and knowledge.

Preparing for the next link in the chain

Whether you are doing the exercise above to discover more features related to your needs, or you're completing link 2 of the Need to Close Chains and adding a feature, make sure you have a clear grasp of what the feature does.

In readiness for the next link where you add a benefit, you need to know what it is your feature will do and then we can talk about what it does for the prospect: the benefit.

3. What The Feature Does For The Prospect – The Benefit

What are the benefits that your sales offer will provide, via features, that will meet the needs selected for the first link of the chain? You've already learned how to discover all the features related to a need in the previous links, now we're looking at Link 3 and the benefits.

Need – Feature – Benefit – Close

Let's use the example of a common need that many buyers have, saving money. And we will use as an example product, buying a car.

When you put the two together and consider how a car salesperson can meet the customer's need of saving money, you will probably start thinking about benefits such as: Price reductions, cheap finance, or adding value by throwing in some free extras.

Stop! I want you to start thinking in a different pattern

Think of it this way, no one buys a car. You heard me right, no one buys a car. A car is not a benefit, it's a feature that supplies the benefits the car buyer wants.

The benefits the car buyer wants could be: Transport, Security, Fashion accessory, Status symbol, Sex appeal, Tool, Family taxi,and a whole stack of other things they could want from a car, but no one actually buys a car because a car is so many different things to each owner. People buy a car because they want it to do something for them, and that is what a benefit is. Even if a person has no practical need to have a car and they still buy one, they are doing so because it fulfils a want, need or desire.

What's the difference between a feature and a benefit?

There are books that take over 100 pages to describe what features and benefits are and how to use them when selling. I've seen training courses that spend a full day on the subject. Many organisations and trainers start adding other terms to benefits and features such as advantages.

My opinion: The more complicated you make any part of the sales process, the harder it is to use effectively while selling. Keep it simple!

My definition of features and benefits:

A feature is something your product or service does or has.

A benefit is what the feature gives the customer.

There, done in just 2 lines, let's move on.

Returning to our example of benefits for car buyers, if a car salesperson tries to sell just a car, they will fail. Selling features doesn't work, to be a top sales performer you need to sell benefits that fulfil the buyer's needs.

Great car salespeople sell what the customer wants the car to do **for them** (benefit) not just what the car does (feature). They find out what the needs, wants, and desires of the customer are, and they select a car with features that will deliver benefits that meet the customer's requirements.

Poorly trained car salespeople show off their detailed technical knowledge of the features of cars, the engines, and makes and models, and all kinds of other boring facts. Even if they include the benefits of all this specification data, the prospect's interest will not be grabbed. They want to hear about how the car will give them the benefits that they want. A teenager buying their first car couldn't care less about engine capacity, they want to know what their friends will think about the car, and that is not in the car's handbook.

If a potential car buyer has an overriding need to save money, the salesperson should present features that provide benefits that in some way save money. But the salesperson shouldn't just use the obvious benefits, such as fuel consumption or price discounts. The prospect will hear about those from the competitors. Add some features that provide benefits that are less directly connected to money. And you find those extra features by getting busy with the Feature Discovery Exercise we did earlier. Then you add the benefits.

For example: You could show the customer a car that has low or zero emissions (feature) that gives the buyer low or zero road tax (benefit).

A leasing plan (feature) instead of a purchase price for lower monthly payments (benefit).

You could present the low prices for parts (feature) saving money on servicing and maintenances (benefit).

A car that keeps its value on the trade-in price (feature) so they will spend less on their next vehicle (benefit).

Sellers should include the obvious benefits but use the exercises to discover many more benefits related to each need. How about a car suitable for using as a part time courier (feature) so the buyer can earn extra money to pay for it (benefit). Just a thought.

Benefits of your sales offers

What about your sales offers, what benefits do they offer that will meet the need you selected in Link 1? To really know and understand the benefits you need to know the features of your products and services. What they have, what they do, how they work, and what are all the benefits connected to each feature.

Run through all the features of your products and services, use the Discovery exercise we went through earlier if you have completed it, and now connect the related benefits. Do it in your head or make notes. A great way to connect features and benefits, like the Feature Discovery exercise, is to start with a feature in the middle of the page and draw a short line, then add a benefit of that feature. Continue as in the previous exercise and consider all the things that each feature will give the prospect, these are the benefits.

A Quick Summary Of What You Have Achieved So Far

In Link 1 you chose a common need a typical buyer may have.

In Link 2 you selected features that have or do something to meet that need.

In Link 3 you have added a benefit, what the feature does for the prospect.

Now Let's Make The Training Work For You

Let's start with link 1

State another typical need, want, or a desire your customers often require.

Note it down, remember it, whichever is best for you.

Link 2

What feature of the product has or does something to meet the prospect's need?

Link 3

What is the benefit the prospect will gain from the feature?

Here's an example from our earlier discussion on car sales

Link 1

Prospect's need – A large car to fit 2 adults, 2 children and a dog comfortably, but it has to be easy to park.

Link 2

Feature that will supply a benefit – Automated parallel parking.

Link 3

Benefit – Easy parking even for large cars.

Back to Link 1 - Add Some Speed and More Techniques

Link 1

Choose another need, want, or desire a prospect may have related to your sales offers. If your products and services are simple and you need to use a need you've already selected that's okay, there will be more than one feature that can supply a benefit to meet each need.

Link 2

Choose a feature linked to the need.

Add a brief explanation of what the feature does or has, how it works. This is useful if the connection between the need and the feature is indirect or not obvious or could be new to the prospect.

Link 3

The benefit that the feature can supply that meets the need.

This time add an explanation that shows how the benefit meets the customer's requirements. In some cases, when the connection is obvious, this requires only the briefest of comments to check the customer connects the two. When the connection is not as obvious you may need a longer explanation on how the benefit is linked to the need. Remember, it's what the feature does for the prospect.

The 3 links in the chain should now be starting to flow with the different links connecting and smoothly running into each other.

Practice, Practice, Practice

Start again, from the top, and let's speed it up a bit:

Link 1.

Pick something the buyer wants, needs, or desires.

Link 2

Choose a feature and explain what it does.

Link 3

Describe the benefit and what it does for the prospect.

Flow through the 3 links of the Chain a few more times until it feels natural and connections come easily with less thinking time between links.

As you find it easier and more comfortable, and thinking time decreases, you're becoming subconsciously competent at using Need to Close Chains.

As you practice for more varied and different needs you will become more confident about your sales presentation skills. And, you will find more features to connect to needs and to benefits, which will increase your product knowledge, your effectiveness, and the sales results you achieve. You'll know when the training is working when a prospect gives you a need and you calmly have a conversation where a feature and benefit quickly come to mind and you can confidently present them to the prospect.

Now for the final link in the chain: Closing and gaining agreement, checking understanding, or a trial close...

ONE LAST LINK IN THE CHAIN

You now know the first 3 links in the Need to Close Chain, here's the final one.

Need – Feature – Benefit – Close

As a professional salesperson, you're probably aware that you should be gaining agreement and checking understanding throughout the sales process. Where appropriate you'll use a trial close to check you're on the right track and also to test for objections from the prospect without losing the sale.

Each time you present a benefit to a prospect, at the end of a section of your presentation of your proposal, or when answering a question or objection, it may be appropriate to add a line that asks for something back. What that line is, and the level of commitment or agreement you want back from the buyer, is dependent on what you sell, its price, and the situation in which you conduct your sales.

A retail seller on a market stall might use just one sentence to present to a customer the feature and related benefit of a pair of jeans and how well they meet the buyer's needs. They may follow that with a brief line that attempts to hard close the sale, such as: Shall I put those in a bag for you? But a salesperson selling a long term £Million service contract would gain small amounts of agreement throughout a much longer selling process.

The last link in the Chain is a line that is appropriate for you to use in your sales situation after presenting a feature and benefit that meets the prospect's needs. So, you need to decide on the strength of the close, the detail of the questions, and whether you are asking for agreement or for a full close?

Should you go directly for full agreement and close the sale, like the retail salesperson, or would you formally check the buyer's understanding and gain a little agreement, like the service contract seller. Your perfect level of agreement is probably somewhere in between.

Do you normally use a trial close that questions the readiness of the prospect to buy, or is your selling process much longer and you gain agreement to the next stage throughout the sales process. In general, the shorter the sales processes and the lower the price the more direct, hard closing or agreement gaining is used. Maybe even a direct full close can be sought in the line that follows the presentation of a feature and benefit.

Here are some examples that start at full closing questions and move along a range towards just checking a prospect's understanding:

Shall I start the paperwork - will there be anything else - when would you like it delivered – shall we do the paperwork - is that what you were looking for - does that meet all your needs - does that sound okay - does that answer your question - can you see how that would work - does that make sense - what do you think.

Now take a few moments to decide on a couple of lines that you can use as the last link in the chain. Don't spend too long on this, remember it's only an exercise for training not a script that you will use.

Add The Last Link In The Chain – Agreement Gaining

Go through links 1 to 3 again:

Link 1

Pick something the buyer wants, needs, or desires.

Link 2

Present the feature and explain what it has or does.

Link 3

Connect the feature to the benefit and explain how the benefit meets the need in Link 1.

Now add the last link - Link 4.

Now add a closing or agreement gaining line that's asks for a level of agreement or commitment appropriate for your sales process and prospects.

As discussed above, it's important to use a line at the right level on the scale of hard close to small agreement gain. You can use as many different lines as you want in this step and vary them to select the most appropriate one for each feature and benefit.

You want to build up the connections between all the links in the chain, so they become part of your sales knowledge. Keep repeating the Need to Close Chains exercise from Link 1 through to Link 4 to secure those connecting links in your mind. Start slowly and then speed it up, keep trying new possible needs that your customers could have as your starting point, and look for new features you haven't used before to deliver the benefits.

Make the Need to Close Chains part of your daily routine, a morning ritual, and a preparation action before each sales appointment. Use the chain to train yourself on the products you sell.

Need – Feature – Benefit – Close

The Need to Close Chains combined with Sales Skills Training

The Need to Close Chains work well when you combine your new ways of thinking with practical sales skills training.

The sales skills course I always use with my teams is Selling Success, you can see why at: [Sales Training Course](#)

Now you've learnt the Need to Close Chains Training Technique let's look at how to use it to change your motivational state to one that will give you access to all your resources, knowledge and skills...

CHANGING YOUR MOTIVATIONAL STATE

One of the benefits of the Need to Close Chains training is how it can help to move you quickly into a selling state. A mental frame of mind where you can access your knowledge and resources related to selling. This next section shows you a way to use the Chain to get into that mental state and explains the long- and short-term benefits for all salespeople in all roles.

There are two internal mental effects of this training technique. The first is a short-term effect that occurs straight after you have done the exercise several times in succession. Later we will look at the long-term benefits.

Short Term Benefits Of Need To Close Chains

Think of this as similar to a warmup before a sporting event. You stretch your muscles and warm them up and prepare your body and mind for the task you are about to complete. A few practice shots or throws, a run through of what you will be doing both physically and mentally.

A warmup gets you prepared, prevents injury, and puts you in your best state of mind to use all your skills and resources for the event ahead. Would you get out of bed in a morning and go straight to an important game or event and expect to play at your best level? I doubt it, and yet many salespeople do exactly that. They grab a quick breakfast and go straight to a meeting with a prospect that could have an impact on their future income, their lifestyle or their career, without getting into the zone.

The result I often see when coaching sellers in the field is that they only start to give their best performance part way through the meeting. Sometimes that's too late and the sale is lost. When judged later against other bidders for the sale they've lost important points early on.

Worse, is when a seller comes out of a meeting and has all the answers and knows all the things they should have said and done while in front of the buyer. It's as if the meeting was the warmup that got them into the right mental state to use their resources, but it's too late.

The above happens because you can't possibly focus on all the external information that comes in through your senses all the time. You can't hold all your internal stored information in your conscious thoughts all the time, and this impacts on your recall ability and access to experience and resources. You have to tell your mind what you want to focus on just before you need access to all the stored mental files related to the topic. By going through the Need to Close Chain links you will bring your experience and skills into your conscious awareness. You are telling your mind, this is what I'm going to need today, and your mind will bring into focus all related information.

The short-term effect is to bring to mind your sales resources and the ability to give your meetings with prospects your very best shot right from the start. That gives you the best chance possible of closing the sale.

How To Move Into The Best Mental State To Close Sales

Take a few minutes before your sales meetings and go through the connecting links we discussed earlier. As you go through the links and start to connect needs to features to benefits and add your agreement gaining lines, you will start to focus on the connections and dismiss other thoughts and distractions.

Start off by going through the links of the chain slowly and gradually increase the speed. You should get to a quick-fire speed with each link quickly following the last and little time needed for thinking about your answers in between. This time spent on preparation is an investment in yourself.

Use whatever information you have about the prospect you are meeting or calling and consider what needs they may have and include them in your Need to Close Chain preparation exercise.

If you do get stuck on connecting a feature or a benefit to a possible customer need while going through this exercise, make a note of it and look for an answer later. Using the Need to Close Chains as a preparation exercise is not the time to add new information to your accumulated knowledge base, it's a time to bring existing experience and knowledge to the fore ready for easy access.

I don't recommend doing this mental exercise while driving, as your thoughts focus on the connections you will become less aware of your surroundings.

Long Term Benefits Of Need To Close Chains

When you use the Need to Close Chains regularly for a period of time, you are also installing new mental pathways by letting your subconscious know you want to see these connections. You will soon be able to enter your best mental state for selling almost instantly because you have done it so many times and made new, and stronger, neural connections.

The long-term effects of using the Chains to prepare for meetings are:

- Fast access to a selling state of mind.
- Quickly connect needs, features, and benefits.
- Present to customers in a calm, relaxed, and confident manner.
- Overcome more objections because you know more features and benefits to use in your responses.
- You will close more sales.

Use the Chain technique to change your state whenever you need to access your sales skills and experience. Like all of our training, the more you invest in it the more effective it becomes.

On the next page we look at a way to test the effectiveness of the Chains technique on yourself, or your sales teams...

TEST THE CHAINS TECHNIQUE

Now you know the technique and how to use it you can test how effectively it works for you. Do the first part of this test before you start regularly using the Need to Close Chains.

Do this as quickly as possible

Write or type a list of needs your customers could have, try to come up with at least 20. When you have the list add a feature and benefit next to each need and time how long it takes you to add them for the entire list. Make a note of the time.

Also check how appropriate the features and benefits that you have selected are in relation to the need. Do they deliver the benefits that meet the needs. Don't change any of your answers but score them based on their effectiveness.

1= A poor choice, doesn't really meet the buyer's need. Too general or only loosely connected to the needs.

2= A reasonable choice but now you've thought about it there are better answers.

3= A perfect fit. The need is met by the feature and the benefit.

Add up the scores and make a note of the total score then put the list away somewhere safe along with the time it took you to complete the list and don't look at them for a week.

Every day for a week, use the Need to Close Chain technique at least twice a day. At the end of the week come back to your list of needs and do the same test again with either the same customer needs or a new list. Check your new time and score against the ones you first achieved. The difference in your time and score will give you an indication of how effective the technique has been in boosting your ability to link benefits and features in just the first week.

Test The Effectiveness Of The Technique On Your Team

I start sales meetings and training sessions with a round of Chains.

Get one person to suggest a customer need, the person next to them selects an appropriate feature, the next the benefit, and the next adds a suitable closing or agreement gaining line.

Each time you do the exercise you will see some improvement, an increase in speed, a better selection of features and benefits. This is a great way to keep your team up to speed and avoiding the practice of selling on price.

About Proven Sales Training.com

Hi, I'm Stephen Craine, owner at Proven Sales Training Director at Salesagents.uk and a career salesman, trainer, hands on manager, and business owner with 25 years of experience of successful selling.

The aim of the Proven Sales Training website is to bring together in one place all the sales techniques, tools, and viewpoints that have been proven to work and make them accessible to everyone in sales.

Whether you are just starting out in your sales career, experienced and want to continue your improvement, or are now training others how to sell, you will find something of interest on the Provensalestraining.com website.

There are pages of free training, ways to improve your sales process or you can focus on individual stages, more free eBooks, and for serious sellers that want to increase sales and boost their income there is a shop full of professional courses. Some of the courses are short and focused on a specific topic, like this one you have been using. Others are comprehensive courses that give you a complete manual on selling, appointment making, overcoming objections, closing and other sales related topics.

I hope you have enjoyed this book and found techniques to take away and adapt. Reading courses like this one and the others on the website stimulates new ideas and opens up your viewpoint so you can see new ways to expand your sales knowledge.

I'm always happy to hear from fellow sales people and how they have used the books, courses, and training on the website. Feel free to contact me through the contact page on the website.

I wish you every success in your sales career, it can be a great way to earn a living as an employee or starting your own business.

Stephen Craine

Proven Sales Training.com

MORE RESOURCES FOR SALES PROFESSIONALS

Combine Need To Close Chains With Other Sales Training

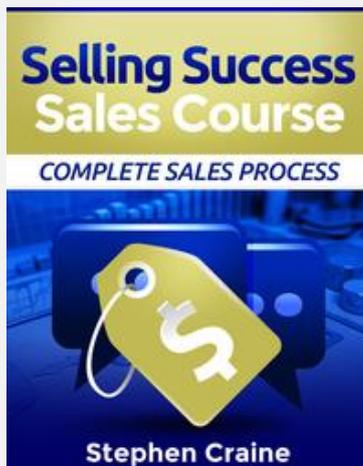
Need to Close Chains is a sales training technique that builds knowledge about the products and services that you sell, and gives you information that you can use in your sales meetings and calls.

What the Need to Close Chains doesn't give you is the actual words to use when selling or making sales appointments. The Chains training doesn't give you a script or write the lines of your sales pitch for you.

To create scripts in your own words that are customised for your products and services you need a proven sales training course. Try this one...

SELLING SUCCESS

Our most popular sales training course



A step by step guide to creating a flexible script for your conversations with prospects.

Proven successful for face to face meetings and telesales calls.

After this course you will know what to do and say at every stage of the sales process.

You will know where you are and what your next objective is at every step.

Learn to close with agreement gaining weaved into the sales stages so closing becomes just a simple, easy question.

Developed throughout my career and used to train sales teams that sell products and services in a many different industry sectors, you can now have that same success.

The course takes you through a sales process from the Introduction stage, through Questioning and Presenting, to Closing the sale and dealing with objections.

Whether you're looking to maximise your income, grow your own business, or gain job security by achieving consistent sales results, see what this course can offer you at: [Selling Success](#)