

# The Aikido of Sales

## How to use your client's words to close the deal

By Jeff Tan

**A**ikido is possibly the least understood martial art form. Yet it is one of the most powerful. Instead of using raw aggression to defeat an opponent, the Aikido master uses an opponent's strength and power to gain control over them. There is little wasted effort, little posturing and certainly no unnecessary movement - until the time is right. Such a strategy is being increasingly seen as ideal in the world of sales, especially in dynamic and cosmopolitan cities like Shanghai?

*We listened to what our customers wanted and acted on what they said. Good things happen when you pay attention.*

John F Smith  
Retired Chairman, General Motors Corporation

Top sales professionals are all Sales Aikido masters and studies of the way they close a deal show that they have a very different closing strategy when compared to the not-yet-proficient sales professional. The essence of this strategy is that the Sales Aikido master listens to their client's every word from the very first minute of their very first meeting. He will remember key pieces of information provided by the client and repeat it word-for-word when closing the deal. By using a client's own words and language, the Sales Aikido master creates massive rapport unconsciously with the client and fully understands the client's unique needs and desires. And as all top sales professionals around the world know, rapport is the be-all-and-end-all for closing a deal because people buy from people they like and trust. This is especially true in cosmopolitan cities like Shanghai where rapport can and will cut through cultural and language barriers.



What should the sales professional do in his quest to become the next Sales Aikido master? There are but two simple steps to use.

Step 1 requires the budding Sales Aikido master to listen for reasons why the client needs a product or service. He then memorizes, verbatim, what the client has said and will incorporate these very same words in the closing sales pitch by asking a question around the client's words. Examples of what a typical client might say and the Sales Aikido master's response are:

**Client:** "I'm worried for my family's future should something happen to me"

**Sales Aikido master:** "I'm sure you're very interested to see how my product or service can help ease your worries about your family's

future should something happen to you?"

**Client:** "Sales figures are down and I fear for my job"

**Sales Aikido master:** "You would be more than happy to find out how my service will help you stop your sales figures from going down so that you don't fear for your job, wouldn't you?"

**Client:** "We need this project to compete with the big boys"

**Sales Aikido master:** "How would you like to hear the solution my service offers your company so that you can win this project to compete with the big boys?"

After asking questions based on the client's stated fears, needs or desires, the time is right to close the deal. Step 2 is next and the sales professional's task is to describe how his product or service addresses and fulfils the client's needs. With rapport firmly established and the verbal Aikido moves of Step 1 and 2 completed, the client will be begging to buy!

In summary, to become a Sales Aikido master:

✓ Remember key pieces of information the client mentions, specifically his reasons for wanting a product or service

✓ When the time is right, ask a question centered around the client's desires

✓ Close the sale by stating how your product or service addresses and fulfills the client's needs

By following these steps, the client will inevitably ask, "Where do I sign and how fast can you deliver?" Another certified Sales Aikido master is born!

*The only way on earth to influence the other fellow is to talk about what he wants and show him how to get it.*

Dale Carnegie



Jeff Tan is the chief coach of eXplorer3 Life. He's passionate about empowering individuals or business owners so that they bring out the best in themselves and their organization.

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