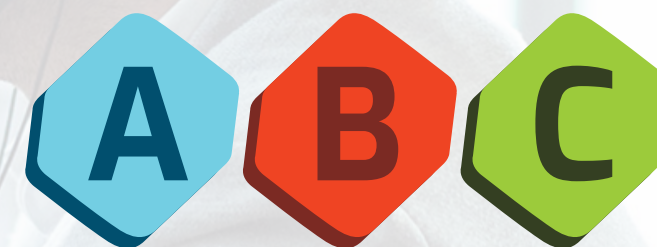


Sales eGuide: Learn Your



The Full eGuide for Closing Consistently

Master the ability to "Always Be Closing" in your service business



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Introduction

Adopting the ABC Mantra in Your Service Business

Adopting the ABC mantra, or “**Always Be Closing**,” can be a valuable approach for service-based businesses looking to increase their sales and revenue. While the mantra is typically associated with traditional sales environments, its principles can be applied in a variety of settings, including pest, lawn, HVAC, cleaning and other service businesses.

By consistently moving customers towards a desired action or outcome, service providers can improve their conversions, increase customer loyalty and ultimately grow their business.

However, successfully adopting the ABC mantra requires a **strategic approach** and a deep understanding of the unique challenges and opportunities of their industry. In this eGuide, we explore how service businesses like yours can implement the ABC mentality to boost sales, improve customer relationships and so much more. We also gain insight from a sales expert in the pest and lawn spaces. We include highlights from our conversation with Henry Holst, director of residential sales at Greenlawn Fertilizing/Greenpest Solutions in West Chester, PA, who talks about his sales process and why it works.

Whether you read this eGuide all the way through or flip through specific topics when you need guidance, you’re sure to find valuable and practical advice that’s easy to implement into your business that same day.

To make it as inclusive as possible, we’ve packed everything you need to know into three main categories:

Approach

Best Practices

Communication



A pproach

Sales Techniques & Processes You Need to Know

Sales is an art and science, and there are many techniques and processes that successful sales agents and customer service representatives (CSRs) use to close deals. Let's take a look.



Training & Preparing Your Sales Reps and CSRs for the Call

Training and preparing your team for sales calls is critical to the success of your sales efforts. By investing in training and preparing your CSRs for sales calls, you can improve their performance and increase the likelihood of closing more deals. A well-trained and confident team can also help to create a positive brand image and build customer loyalty.

Here are a few important points to consider:

1

Knowledge of the product or service

Your team must have a deep understanding of your products or services, including features, benefits and any limitations. This knowledge will help them answer customer questions and overcome objections.

For example, lawn CSRs and sales reps need to understand how your company measures chemicals, which chemicals are used, how long various services may take and more.

2

Communication skills

Good communication skills are essential for effective sales. The team should be trained in active listening, clear and concise speaking, and adapting their communication style to the customer's needs — more on this later.

3

Objection handling

Your sales reps should be trained on how to anticipate and handle objections, such as price or competitor objections to increase the likelihood of closing the sale.

4

Closing technique

Closing is the ultimate goal of the call, and there are various closing techniques, such as the “assumptive close” and the “alternative close.”

5

Customer service

Your CSRs should be trained on how to provide excellent customer service, such as being empathetic, showing appreciation and following up after the call.

6

Role-playing

Role-playing exercises can help your reps practice their sales skills and build confidence. Encourage them to role-play various sales scenarios, including handling objections and closing sales. And don't forget to have fun with it!

For example, you can role-play different scenarios such as an argumentative customer or a commitment-phobe customer to test their skills. Record the pitches so the rep in training can listen back and learn.

7

Emphasize the benefits

Focusing on the benefits of the product you're selling, rather than just its features, is key to making a sale. By highlighting how the product or service can meet the customer's needs and improve their life, sales reps can make a more compelling case for why the customer should buy.

3 Common Sales Objections & How to Handle Them

1

“Your price is too high and I can’t afford that expense.”

Price is never actually the issue. The issue is either that they don’t see the value in paying your price to fix their problems or they cannot find the money to pay for it. Your goal in this situation is to find out why, according to their situation, your price is “too high.” Get clarity by asking them for more information regarding their pricing concerns.

2

“You’re all the same. What makes you different?”

When the prospect asks a question like this, it is most important to find out what they mean. Everything is relative and each person has unique past experiences. They may start sharing all of the bad qualities of their current provider, which allows you to step in and mention how your company can help solve their challenges. You do not have to defend, simply justify and show them all the great things your company can do for them. Show them you are open to discussion, always.

3

“Just send me info and I’ll get back to you.”

This is usually the prospect’s way of shooing you away because they don’t want to be bothered. You can lower the resistance by saying, “I’d be happy to send you some information,” and then ask them what they would like you to send and why. This may uncover potential problems or challenges they’re facing that you may be able to help them solve. Finally, ask them when they would be willing to put time on the calendar for an appointment to review the information you sent.

The 6 Principles of Persuasion

The Six Principles of Persuasion are a set of theories put forward by psychologist Robert Cialdini to explain how people are influenced and motivated to take action.

1

Reciprocity

People are naturally inclined to return a favor, so by offering something of value to a potential customer, you can establish a sense of obligation and increase the likelihood of them taking action.

2

Commitment and consistency

People are more likely to follow through with a decision if they have made a public commitment to it. By asking for a small commitment up front, you can increase the likelihood of the customer following through with a larger action.

3

Social proof

People are influenced by the actions and opinions of others. By highlighting the popularity or success of a product or service, you can increase its perceived value and make it more appealing to potential customers.

For example, "Check out our reviews and what our customers have to say about us."

4

Liking

People are more likely to be influenced by someone they like and trust. By establishing rapport and building a relationship with a potential customer, you can increase their likelihood of taking action.

5

Authority

People are more likely to follow the advice of someone they perceive as an expert or authority. By positioning yourself or your product as the authority in your industry, you can increase the perceived value and credibility of your offering.

For example, "We already service x number of houses in your neighborhood and are a trusted local resource."

6

Scarcity

People are more likely to take action when they perceive that something is in limited supply. By highlighting the limited availability of a product or service, you can create a sense of urgency and increase the likelihood of a customer taking action.

For example, pest and lawn companies can entice prospects to "secure their spot" because they have limited resources and technicians available.

4 Effective Closing Techniques

Closing a sale is the ultimate goal of a sales pitch, and there are many techniques that sales reps and CSRs can use to increase the likelihood of closing the deal.

Here are four effective closing techniques:

1

The Assumptive Close

When a sales rep makes assumptions about the customer's agreement with the proposal and asks for the sale as if it has already been agreed upon. For example, "Great, I'll go ahead and add you to my technician's route and process your payment."

2

The Alternative Close

When the agent presents the customer with two options and asks them to choose one. For example, "Would you like the monthly or quarterly lawn package?"

3

The Ben Franklin Close

Named after the famous statesman, this technique involves listing the pros and cons of making a purchase. This helps the customer weigh the benefits and drawbacks of the decision and come to a conclusion.

4

The Trial Close

This technique involves asking the customer for feedback or a commitment at various points during the sales pitch. For example, "What do you think of our pest product so far?" or "Are you ready to purchase today?"

Learn From a Home Service Expert

In preparation for this eGuide, we had the opportunity to get real-life input from an expert who has mastered the craft of growing a successful sales team in both the lawn and pest industries.

Learn From a Home Service Expert

Henry Holst, the director of residential sales at Greenlawn Fertilizing/Greenpest Solutions in West Chester, PA, goes above and beyond daily to make sure his sales agents have adequate training and support. In our conversation, he humbly explained a few key focus areas and strategies to encourage the ABC mentality among his sales agents — and hopefully yours, too. We've extracted a few valuable points from our conversation below. Take a look!

On Training Sales Reps –

Why Role-Playing Works

“The process of our sales strategy, while similar to others in different industries, is differentiated by our intense focus on role-playing which pushes new hires out of their comfort zone. Our sales process packet involves a structured approach, where new reps go through 50 probing questions, identify their favorite eight, and then associate each with features, benefits, possible objects and buffers. The process is challenging in the beginning, but through intensive role-playing and field coaching over a period of two weeks, reps can hone their skills to the point where they no longer need role-playing and are eager to engage with customers. This is when we know we have done our job effectively.

On Tracking Metrics –

Bundling Percentage

“In terms of metrics, we track several key indicators, such as bundle percentage, which sets us apart from other businesses as we prioritize selling additional services at the point of sale. For example, mentioning our mosquito program at the end of the lawn price or mentioning aeration as part of our program. During [mid-winter], our focus is on outbound metrics such as dials and contacts, but as leads come in strong [toward the spring and summer], the close percentage becomes the top priority. Our main focus is on close rate, which is essential to our success, followed by payment capture, as our goal is to increase the number of sales made through prepay or autopay options. This has a direct impact on our new sales retention and is why we offer seasonal incentives based on these metrics.”

On Incentivizing the Team –

Depending on Customer Retention Rates

“Our sales commission structure is based on the type of payment made by the customer. The commission percentage varies for prepaid sales, autopay and invoiced sales. Additionally, sales reps are subject to chargebacks. The commission for prepaid sales, which tend to have the highest retention rate, is higher compared to other payment types, incentivizing reps to encourage customers to opt for this payment option.”

Best Practices

Negotiation, Customer Engagement, Leveraging Feedback & More

Understanding best practices in sales and customer service can help you close more deals by creating a positive customer experience and building trust with potential customers. Meeting your customer's needs and solving their problems may be first and foremost, but don't underestimate the power of knowing your data.



Utilize Customer Feedback & Testimonials

Utilizing customer feedback and testimonials is a powerful tool to help you close deals.

Utilize Customer Feedback & Testimonials

By incorporating reviews and testimonials into the sales pitch, reps can demonstrate the value and satisfaction of using their product or service from the customer's perspective.



Gui Bergeron | CEO

“Meeting our customers in the channels that they're using most and accustomed to is an important part of our strategy. After hours, we never miss a lead.”



Benefits of Customer Feedback

1

Helps build credibility

2

Increases the perceived value of the offering

3

Social proof to address potential objections or concerns

4

Share real-world examples of the positive experiences of other customers

Improve Negotiation & Customer Engagement

Sales negotiation is a delicate art. Even if a sales agent has qualified a prospect and accurately managed their expectations throughout the sales journey, the deal can still end in negotiation.

It's important to ask yourself:

“Do my sales agents have the negotiation skills to always be closing? And if not, **how can we improve their negotiation skillset?”**

Sales reps who know how to negotiate effectively ultimately create better lasting relationships with customers. Negotiations give both the buyer and seller a space to communicate constructively to agree. If the sales rep remains composed and compassionate throughout the discussion, they can frame themselves as valuable resources that their customers can rely on for expertise — even after the sales processes are complete.



We've narrowed it down to seven negotiation skills that are important to focus on throughout the sales process:

1

Never go into a negotiation blind

Always be prepared with the key elements of the deal. These elements may include knowing the prospect well, understanding what your services you'd be providing, knowing how it will solve their problems and more.

2

Define your concessions

Clearly define limits on price discounts, freebies or other add-ons before meeting with the prospect.

3

Let them speak

After presenting the terms of the deal, give the prospect room to air their thoughts and reveal more about their position before jumping in with a discount or concession.

4

Write terms at the right time

Don't commit anything to writing until all parties have verbally agreed to terms.

5

Speak to the decision maker

Make sure you're negotiating with someone within the family or company who can make business decisions. A great question to ask is, "Aside from yourself, who else are the decision-makers for your company?"

6

Talk more than money

Discounts are not the only way the sales rep can sweeten the pot. Talk about the value of your solutions and discuss freebies or add-ons instead of a smaller price tag.

7

Keep the conversation light

Do everything you can to keep the prospect from getting upset. Remember that these conversations are meant to lead to agreeable, productive partnerships.

How to Analyze Your Sales

Analyzing sales data is an important part of making informed decisions and improving overall sales performance. By effectively analyzing sales data, you can gain valuable insights into your business and make informed decisions that can improve your sales performance and drive growth.

To effectively analyze sales, the following steps should be taken:

1

Track key metrics

Such as revenue, conversion rates and customer acquisition costs

2

Gather data from multiple sources

Including sales reports, customer feedback and market research

3

Use data visualization tools

To easily understand complex data

4

Identify trends and patterns

Such as seasonal fluctuations or changes in customer behavior

5

Make data-driven decisions

Such as adjusting sales strategies or investing in new products or services

By following these steps, you can gain valuable insights into your business and make decisions that can drive growth and improve sales performance.

ommunication

Excellent Communication Skills Are the Key to Closing

Excellent communication is a crucial component in successfully closing the deal. It allows reps to effectively convey the unique benefits and value of their services, which helps build trust and establish a strong connection with the customer. Knowing how to address potential objections and concerns, sales reps can effectively overcome any barriers to making a purchase.



Why Active Listening Matters

Active listening is a valuable skill for sales agents and CSRs, as it allows them to fully understand the needs and concerns of their customers. It is a communication skill that involves paying full attention to the speaker, understanding their message and providing feedback to show that you have heard and understood. It requires more than just hearing the words being spoken; it involves being fully present in the moment, focusing on the speaker and considering their words and emotions.

A few concrete benefits of active listening are:

1

Improved understanding

2

Builds trust

3

Helps address concerns

4

Increases engagement

5

Better problem solving

How to Ask the Right Questions

By asking the right questions, you can gain a deeper understanding of the customer's needs, build rapport and increase the likelihood of making a successful sale. Good communication skills, including active listening and asking the right questions, are essential for sales success.

Keep in mind that open-ended questions allow the customer to share their thoughts and feelings and provide you with more information about their needs and concerns.

For example, you can ask:

“What’s most important for you in pest control?”

“Can you tell me more about your lawn and what you’d like to achieve?”

Pay close attention to customers’ responses and use their answers to guide your next question. This shows the customer that you are engaged in the conversation and truly interested in their needs. Your questions should be focused on the customer’s needs, concerns and goals. Avoid leading questions, as they suggest a specific answer and can make the customer feel like they are being pushed in a certain direction. Instead, ask questions that allow the customer to freely express their thoughts and opinions.

If the customer mentions a specific concern or goal, follow up with questions that help you understand their perspective and how your service can help.

Conveying a Clear & Compelling Message

To convey a compelling message, the salesperson or CSR must be able to:

1

Understand the customer’s needs

2

Highlight the unique value of your service

3

Emphasize the benefits, not just the features

CRM

Customer Relationship Management

A Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system is a software solution that helps businesses manage customer interactions and data throughout the customer life cycle. The main purpose of a CRM system is to improve customer relationships and drive sales growth. A CRM system can include a range of features, such as contact management, lead management, sales forecasting and marketing automation.

Customer Relationship Management (CRM)

It provides businesses with a centralized database of customer information, allowing them to manage customer interactions, track customer behavior and analyze data to make informed decisions. By using a CRM system, businesses can improve customer satisfaction, increase sales and productivity, and build stronger relationships with their customers.

The top three benefits of working with a CRM system are:

1

Increased sales

Companies that use a CRM system report an **average increase in sales of 29%**.

2

Improved customer retention

Businesses that use a CRM system experience an **average improvement in customer retention of 27%**.

3

Increased productivity

CRM users experience an **average increase in productivity of 34%**.

Conclusion

D, E, F, G & so On... What Comes Next?

Now that we've gone through how to succeed in sales — the ABCs — what comes next? It's time to get to work! Whether you're training a sales team or an active member of one yourself, you now have this incredible resource for you to keep in your back pocket.

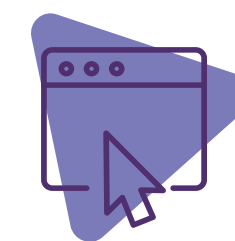
Slingshot is here to support your service business and help take it to the next level. Don't hesitate to reach out to talk in detail about your sales and CSR goals — we have no shortage of experience and advice for you to consider.



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