FITNESS REVOLUTION™

HOW TO INCREASE YOUR CLOSING RATE IN THE NEW SELLING ENVIRONMENT

5 STEPS TO TURN ‘HIT-AND-MISS APPOINTMENTS’ INTO ‘CLOSING CONVERSATIONS’

Right now many gyms are having a harder time closing sales than they ever have.

Prospects are on edge and have a new set of objections, and conversions are down.

The pandemic has changed the situation and perspective for gyms and their prospects.

They haven't made the adjustment to the 'new' prospect and their 'new' reality.

Those gyms may have adapted their services by offering virtual or hybrid programs. But they haven't adapted their sales process to become adept at effectively selling the program. They're trying to close a current-state prospect by appealing to their pre-pandemic values. That won't work.

The principles of how to get your closing rate back to where it should be are the same now as they were before. They just have to be applied with the new prospect and their new reality in mind.

This guide will take you through the steps to getting more familiar with your prospect in their current-state, and being more comfortable having conversations with them that result in more closed sales.

You're invited to join our **Fitness Business Mastery group** for more fitness business resources and discussions with our Success Coaches and other like-minded gym owners.

1. FOSTER THE RIGHT MINDSET

It's likely that you're experiencing some of the same mindset obstacles now that as when you were first learning how to sell. Sometimes this is caused by lack of proper training; sometimes it's from not wanting to come off as a "used car salesman;" sometimes it's from a lack of perceived value (ie. believing the services are too expensive for prospects because it feels too expensive for you) etc.

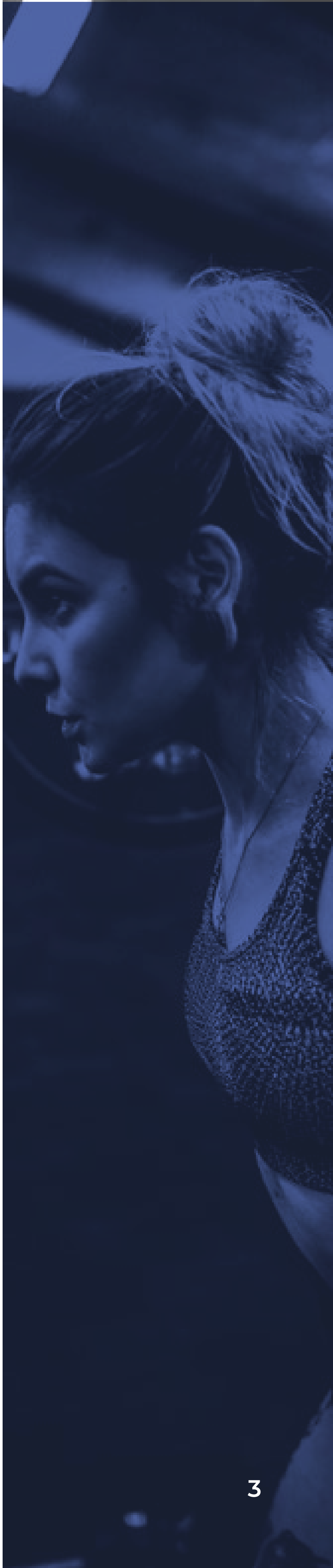
Here's how to foster the right sales mindset:

Clarify *what* you're selling:

- You have to adapt your value proposition. Gyms are no longer essential, but fitness is. You're not just trying to sell your equipment or your training program, you're selling the same thing you always have: a success path to the prospect's goals. HOW you deliver that may be different from how it was done 2 years ago, but that doesn't make it less effective. In fact, you should be able to highlight the advantages of the current HOW to your prospect (ie the virtual option gives flexibility and reduces time and money spent on commuting).
- As always, be sure to identify the benefits of the programs and training packages being sold. Rather than selling programs, terms, and appealing prices, it needs to be understood that it's much more than a training program or gym membership; it's something truly valuable to another human being: it's the success path toward their goals. That can include support, accountability, being understood, helping to develop an action plan, etc. To be set up for success, it must be clear what you are really selling (the benefits of your programs, not just the programs themselves).

Clarify *how* you're selling:

- Your prospects have three options. The first is to buy from you to solve their health problems/pains. The second is to buy from a competitor/alternative to solve their health problems/pains. The third option is to stay in the same place and experience the same pains they do now. They are the same three options that prospects had before the pandemic. That hasn't changed. When you see these three options with clarity, you begin to see your role in the sales conversation as a solution-provider and problem-solver, rather than the salesperson stigma you're hoping to avoid. When you sell to provide a solution and to genuinely help the prospect, it not only shifts your mindset as the seller, but also increases the authenticity and effectiveness of the sales conversation. It will also give you the confidence needed to handle objections properly when the time comes.



2. HAVE A FRAMEWORK FOR THE SALES CONVERSATION

It's imperative you have a framework that anyone selling can and does follow. A framework is a 'method', and you need to have a method for your sales conversations. A framework makes something repeatable, teachable, learnable, practice-able, manageable, and editable. It's 'the way we do this'. It will help you to identify what is working and what isn't working and adapt. That's more important than ever right now because of the wide variety in prospect's circumstances that you have to learn to recognize and address.

Here's how to <u>establish a framework for your sales conversations</u>:

Adopt a proven strategy:

- We recommend Fitness Revolution's 5-Step Sales Process*. This process uses behavior change science principles to build motivation, and to help prospects understand why they need to make a change so you have the opportunity to show them why you're the best solution. Enabling prospects to discover these things is critical to helping them overcome their new fears and concerns about the new situation. Remember, they haven't been through a pandemic before either. They're trying to figure it all out, too.

Assess what you're doing well:

- Identify your wins, even the small ones. Did you use specific language that worked well when you asked for the close? Did you find a way to open the conversation that built rapport really well? etc. Keep track of your best practices, and if you're building a sales team, make sure you're sharing them as a group.

Prepare for the unexpected:

- Having a strong sales conversation framework will diminish the volume of buying objections, but it won't eliminate them. A good framework is going to help you surface and handle objections throughout the conversation, so they aren't coming up when you ask for the sale. Understanding that will help you anticipate, prepare responses, and feel more comfortable and confident in your ability to handle them.

<u>Find out more about Fitness Revolution's 5 Step Sales Process here.</u>

3. MANUFACTURE SALES CONVERSATIONS WITH ROLEPLAY AND OBSERVATION

You've got to practice. Right now everyone is still more out-of-sorts than usual. Roleplaying and observing will help you familiarize and prepare yourself with the things that are on prospect's minds now. That will make you more comfortable in live settings, which will let you make the prospect more comfortable. While roleplay can be uncomfortable, it's the best way to get experience, test different tactics, and continue to improve consistently.

Here's how to <u>manufacture effective roleplay conversations</u>:

Do what you can do:

- If you have a sales team, do most of your roleplay with them. If you've got staff who aren't in sales, they will still be great to roleplay. If you're a one person show, you may need to get creative. Another trainer or gym owner, friends, family, clients.... Find someone.

Keep it easy and simple at first:

- Start by letting staff get comfortable with roleplay. This can be done with other team members or with you directly, but avoid overly challenging roleplay scenarios as you're introducing them to this.

The goal is to be a realistic and typical prospect:

- The key to good roleplay is having a typical prospect. Right now, the typical prospect is not nearly as typical as they used to be. That's ok. Work on the current version of your typical prospect 80% of the time. The other 20% can be spent on less typical prospect personas, ie more challenging personality type, or a particular objection that has to be overcome.

Evaluate performance:

- Know what you're trying to work on before you start, so you can ask for feedback from your roleplay partner about those things specifically. Make a point to note what's going well and what still needs improvement. It's best practice to record roleplays when possible so you can go back and make notes, and potentially use them as a teaching tool.

Consistency:

- Get a consistent roleplay schedule in place for long-term sales development. We recommend roleplaying at least 1x/week

Shadowing:

- Shadowing others' sales conversations and allowing yours to be shadowed is another way to help anyone get acclimated to a live sales setting and observe other ways to handle real prospects.

4. DEBRIEF

Debriefing sales conversations is vital for anyone selling to get consistent feedback on how well they are delivering the sales conversation framework and what they can do to improve it. If you have a sales staff it also provides you the opportunity to give feedback and sharpen their skills.

Here's how to hold valuable debriefing conversations:

Similar to roleplaying - you're going to have to do what you can do:

- They don't have to be an expert in sales for this to be valuable for you. The key to the value lies in how much you invest in it. Unless you're debriefing with an actual sales expert, you're probably going to learn the most from having to reflect on the sales conversation and explain your observations and thought processes to someone else.

Decide what information is necessary:

- Figure out what information is most important to surface and discuss in these debriefs and what information can be considered secondary. It's not often that every granular detail needs to be reviewed. Most likely there are 4-5 key parts of the conversation that should be covered. If there is a sales conversation framework, then those key parts would be something like 'did we meet the objective of this step in the framework? If not, discuss'
- One of the key's to FR's 5 Step Sales Process is building rapport with the prospects. Those who are struggling to sell right now are not doing that. They haven't recalibrated their understanding of current prospect's needs well enough and it's causing a disconnect. To work on that, right now anything about the prospect's situation, perspective, objections, buying criteria that are pandemic related should be discussed. The goal is for you to use these conversations to understand this new prospect better every time. That's the key to being able to connect with them and get them to buy.

Narrow the focus:

- Debriefs should be used to identify areas for improvement and learning opportunities. So, spend most of your debrief time on situations that don't meet the desired outcome. This doesn't mean debrief conversations have to be focused on the negative; make a point to highlight the ways the sales person succeeded with prospects too.

5. TRANSFERRING IT TO LIVE SALES CONVERSATIONS

As you're working on the other 4 steps and developing your sales skills, you're going to want to see the hard work transfer into your live sales opportunities.

You're trying to absorb a lot of new ways to think during a conversation, and probably having to replace some existing habits at the same time.

The key is progress, not perfection. It's not expected to take everything you learn and immediately see it show up in the very next sales conversation. While that would be nice, what is more likely and what you should be looking for are more 'new' things that have been picked up showing up in live sales conversations each time.

Try implementing one thing at a time. If you've been focusing on one particular aspect in your training, then simply try to take that into your sales conversations. After you've done that a few times, you can move on to introducing the next aspect.

Just like anything, it takes a plan and some work, but it will come together for you faster than you might expect. Like rapport building, developing a sales skillset is never "done." You need to continue to invest time and attention in your development over the long-term (hence the roleplay schedule and debriefing).

Fitness Revolution teaches independent gym owners how to run their business through our individualized business coaching. Our mission is to shorten the learning curve for gym owners so they can get control and build a stable and profitable business.

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