FREE GUIDE · SWIMMING IN SALES

7 SECRETS TO CLOSING POOL SALES

The closing principles every pool sales professional should be operating by.

By **Russ Bourque**

Founder, Swimming in Sales

26 YEARS IN THE POOL INDUSTRY · $40M+ IN PERSONAL SALES

swimminginsales.com

A NOTE FROM RUSS

Read this before you read anything else.

I've spent the last twenty-six years selling pools. Not consulting about selling pools. Not writing about selling pools. Selling them. Showroom Saturdays. Tough buyers. Tougher economies. Margin pressure that never lets up. Over $40 million in personal sales volume, one signature at a time.

Along the way, I've watched dozens of sales reps come and go. The ones who lasted — and the ones who built real careers — had a few things in common. They weren't necessarily the most charismatic. They weren't the smoothest talkers. They weren't even always the best on product knowledge.

What they had was **discipline around a small number of principles** — principles most people in our industry have never been taught, because nobody ever bothered to write down how pool sales actually gets done.

This guide is my attempt to fix that. Seven principles. The ones I wish someone had handed me on my first day. The ones I've watched move the needle for every rep who took them seriously.

Read it once front to back. Then read it again with a pen, and circle the one principle you're weakest on. That's where you start.

I'm rooting for you. — *Russ*

SECRET No. 01

Qualify in the First Five Minutes

Most sales reps spend 45 minutes presenting to people who were never going to buy. Then they wonder why their close rate is stuck. The problem isn't the presentation. It's that you presented to the wrong person.

Top closers qualify in the first five minutes — before they walk anyone through a single feature. They know who they're talking to, what budget makes sense, who's actually making the decision, and what the real timeline looks like. Everything after that conversation is just delivery.

> **The five-minute qualification isn't an interrogation — it's a guided conversation that makes the buyer feel heard while you collect the data points that determine whether this is real.**

Start using this Monday:

- Ask: "What made you start looking into a pool?" — listen for emotional drivers, not just features
- Ask: "Have you set aside a comfortable investment range, or are we still figuring that out?"
- Ask: "Besides yourself, who else is part of this decision?" — find the other decision-makers *before* the close
- Ask: "What's driving the timeline — is there a season or event you're building toward?"

SECRET No. 02

Sell the Summer, Not the Pool

Nobody buys a pool because they need a pool. They buy the Saturday morning coffee on the deck. The kids tearing through the backyard. The first summer their teenagers actually want to be home. The Memorial Day cookout that becomes a family tradition.

Reps who lead with gunite vs. fiberglass, equipment specs, and tile selection lose to reps who lead with the life the buyer is actually trying to build. The features matter — but they matter *after* you've connected the purchase to the emotional outcome. Specs justify the decision. The dream makes it.

> **Your buyer is not buying a pool. They are buying a version of their family's future. Sell that future first. The pool sells itself once they can see it.**

Start using this Monday:

- Open every presentation by painting next summer — get them imagining their first weekend in the pool
- Replace technical jargon with outcome language: "durable" becomes "this is the pool your grandkids will swim in"
- When you describe features, tie each one to a moment they'll experience because of it
- Save the specs for when they ask — and they will ask, once they're already sold

SECRET No. 03

Beat "We Need to Think About It" Before It Happens

"We need to think about it" is not an objection. It's the polite version of "you didn't give us enough reason to say yes." It almost always means one of three things: they don't trust the decision yet, they don't trust you yet, or there's an unspoken concern you never surfaced.

The strongest move isn't to handle this objection after it comes up. It's to defuse it during the conversation, before they ever say the words. You do that by surfacing concerns earlier and by being the one to bring up the toughest question in the room.

> **If they leave with unanswered questions, they're not going home to think — they're going home to forget. Surface the questions *during* the meeting, while you're still in the room to answer them.**

Start using this Monday:

- Midway through the meeting, ask: "What's the biggest concern still on your mind right now?"
- Before closing, ask: "Is there a question you haven't asked yet because you weren't sure how to?"
- When they hesitate, ask: "If you were going to talk yourself out of this tonight, what would the reason be?"
- Reframe "think about it" as a signal to ask: "Help me understand — what specifically are you still working through?"

SECRET No. 04

Talk About Money Like It's Normal

Half the reps in our industry treat the financing conversation like it's something to be apologized for. They mumble through monthly payments. They rush through the disclosures. They act like asking about budget is somehow rude.

Your buyer can feel that discomfort. And when the salesperson is uncomfortable talking about money, the buyer becomes uncomfortable spending it. The fix is simple: treat money like any other part of the conversation. Confident. Direct. Helpful. The financing options are a benefit, not an embarrassment.

> **Your tone around money is contagious. If you treat the conversation like it's awkward, your buyer will too. If you treat it like it's normal, they will too.**

Start using this Monday:

- Bring up financing *early* — not at the end as a desperate save. Position it as an option, not a fallback
- Use monthly payment language alongside total price: "That works out to about $X per month"
- Never apologize for the price. State it. Pause. Let them respond. Don't fill the silence
- Practice the financing pitch out loud until you can deliver it the same way you talk about pool depth

SECRET No. 05

The Follow-Up Is the Sale

Most deals in our industry aren't won in the first appointment. They're won in the follow-up. And most reps lose because they treat the follow-up as an afterthought — one half-hearted call a week later, maybe a generic email, then radio silence.

Top closers follow up like a craft. Within 24 hours with a personal touch. Within 72 hours with value — a photo, a reference, an answer to a question they raised. Within a week with a clear next step. The follow-up isn't about pestering — it's about staying useful while they make the decision.

> **The fortune is not in the close. It's in the follow-up. Reps who systematize follow-up close 2-3x more deals than reps who don't — from the exact same lead flow.**

Start using this Monday:

- Within 24 hours: a personal text or email thanking them and referencing something specific from the meeting
- Within 72 hours: send something *useful* — a reference, a photo of a similar build, an answer to a question
- Within 7 days: a clear next step — "Are you ready to look at the design proposal, or would another conversation help?"
- Track every lead in one place. The reps who lose deals lose them because they forgot to follow up — not because the buyer said no

SECRET No. 06

Upsell Without Selling

The word "upsell" makes most reps flinch — they picture themselves becoming the pushy car salesman they've always sworn they'd never become. So they leave thousands of dollars per transaction on the table, and the buyer gets a less complete pool.

The fix is to stop thinking of it as upselling and start thinking of it as *complete configuring*. Your job isn't to push features they don't need — it's to make sure they understand the options that will make the pool actually serve their life. Done right, the buyer thanks you for the additions. Done wrong, it feels gross.

> **Frame every option in terms of regret prevention: "This is the one feature people who skip it always wish they hadn't." You're not selling more — you're protecting them from a future they don't see yet.**

Start using this Monday:

- Ask, don't push: "Have you thought about heating? About lighting? About automation?" — then listen
- Use the "regret" frame: "The buyers who skip this almost always call us a year later asking to add it"
- Always show options at three levels — good, better, best — and let them pick where they land
- If they decline an upgrade, document it. "Just so I have it on record, you're choosing not to add X today." This often pulls them back to yes

SECRET No. 07

Ask for the Sale

This is the one. The single biggest reason pool sales reps lose deals they should have won. They never actually ask for the sale.

They hint. They suggest. They wait. They wrap up the meeting and say "let me know what you think" — and then they wonder why the buyer didn't decide. The buyer wasn't going to decide. It's not their job to decide. *It's your job to ask.*

Asking for the sale doesn't require pressure. It doesn't require theatrics. It just requires a clear, direct question delivered without flinching. "Are you ready to move forward?" is a complete sentence. Ask it. Then stop talking. Whoever speaks first loses.

> **The #1 mistake killing your close rate is not bad presentations or weak follow-up. It's the moment you reached the end of the conversation — and didn't ask. Fix that one thing and your numbers move.**

Start using this Monday:

- End every appointment with a direct question: "Are you ready to move forward today?"
- After you ask — stop talking. Silence is uncomfortable, but it's the close
- If they say no, the next question is: "What would have to be true for you to say yes?"
- Track your ask rate. If you're not asking for the sale in 90% of appointments, that's your single biggest growth lever

WHAT'S NEXT

Seven principles. One starting point.

If you read this guide and put even three of these into practice this week, you'll see your numbers move. Not because these are tricks — but because they're the fundamentals most reps in our industry were never taught.

Pick the one you're weakest on. Work it for a week. Then add another. By the end of a quarter, you won't be the same closer you are today.

And when you're ready to go deeper — when you want the full curriculum, the scripts, the frameworks, the coaching — Swimming in Sales is here.

Ready to Take This Further?

These seven principles are the surface. Inside Swimming in Sales, you get the full 12-module curriculum, the scripts, the frameworks, and the coaching support to turn every appointment into a real opportunity to close.

Train · Sell · Dominate

Close more pools. Build a real career. — Russ