



# Close and Affirmation

## Writing an Applicant who will Graduate

# Module Objectives



- Define the close and affirmation process
- Identify common objections and responses
- Provide an overview of closing techniques

# What is Close and Affirmation?

- Step 8 – Close and Affirmation is the closing section of the presentation providing an outline for how to conclude the interview and begin the admissions process
- It represents the agreement between the Representative and the prospective student that an application for admission to the College is mutually agreed upon.
- Closing and Affirming is a process to continually evaluate and finalize the individual's commitment and motivation to begin school throughout the entire interview. However, the Step 8 – Close and Affirmation begins when you revisit the “Set Expectations” slide and review commitments.

# Best Practices

- Use an assumptive approach
- Don't hesitate or ask if it is OK to proceed
- Handle objections using information from the Student Profile
- Close and affirm **with** the prospect, **not to** them
- Allow a prospect to sell themselves
- Do not believe the first objection – challenge it
- Treat the process as an “evaluation” – not open enrollment!
- Avoid presenting the Close and Affirmation as a separate step

# Some Common Objections

- "I don't have \$100." or "Do I have to pay that today?"
- "I have to talk with my husband/wife parents or employer"
- "I want to think about it."
- "I want to look at other schools."

# Objections Versus Smokescreens



- Objections are specific
- Smokescreens are generic
- Objections are a genuine concern or question
- Smokescreens are a “knee jerk” reaction by a prospect to attempt to put off a decision
- Conditions such as operations, pregnancies, business trips and vacations should not be challenged too strongly

# Objection Handling Concepts



- The last in a series of objections is typically the real objection
- If a perceived smokescreen is challenged and it comes up again then it is a true objection
- Never argue with a prospect because you may be right, but you will never truly win
- Always protect the prospect's ego
- Lead them to answer their own objections

# Process for Handling Objections



Challenge all smokescreens:

- 1) Listen
- 2) Verify
- 3) Isolate
- 4) Resolve
- 5) Gain Agreement
- 6) Re-Close



# Example of Objection Handling

**Prospect :** " I don't have \$100. "

**(#1 – Listen) Representative:** "Is there any other concern besides the \$100?"

**Prospect:** "Well, I am worried that I may not qualify for financial aid."

**(#2 – Verify) Representative:** "What I am hearing you say is that you are committed to getting your education, but you have concerns about being eligible for financial aid."

**Prospect:** "Yes"

**(#3 – Isolate) Representative:** "Is there anything else besides financial aid that you are concerned about?"

**Prospect:** "No, that is the major one."

**(#4 – Resolve) Representative:** "I understand how you feel, most students are concerned about financial aid eligibility and how they will manage their educational expenses. However, the best thing to do is to get your application on file so you can go to financial aid and submit an FA application (or FAFSA). Once you do this then the Financial Aid department can tell you what you are eligible for and can also explore additional options."

**(#5 – Gain Agreement) Now don't you agree that this would be the logical way to go about it?"**

**Prospect:** "Yes, that makes sense."

**(#6 – Re-Close) Representative:** "Great, now how did you want to handle the \$100?"

# Take-Away Techniques



- Time and commitment concern
- Past history concern
- Personal concerns

# Time and Commitment



## Take-Away

(Applies to all prospects)

"I have one final concern before I make a recommendation. You realize that you will be going to school 4-6 hours per day (15 hours per week for WOL) and you will also have a couple of hours of homework as well (15 hours per week for WOL). In addition to that, you will be working part-time which represents a 10-12 hour day. That is a big commitment for the next \_\_\_ months."

"Is this something you can handle?"

(Listen to response)

"Help me understand why you feel so confident"

*(Make the necessary hourly adjustments above for a student who works full time or will be attending at night)*

# Past History Take-Away

“You mentioned earlier that you attended community college, but never finished your degree. Help me understand why you so sure that you are the type of person that will not only start, but also graduate from Westwood/Redstone College?”

What will be different this time?”

# Personal Concern Take-Away

“You mentioned earlier that day care issues had prevented you from pursuing your degree in the past. Remind me again what your plan is so we can be sure that this issue will not affect your ability to attend school again. ”

## Additional Concerns:

You can use any concern that came up in the interview such as transportation, finances, time, etc. Just make sure that it is an issue that you addressed previously and there is a game plan in place. If you bring up the issue and there was no resolution or plan then you may end up talking the prospect out of applying!

# Finalization Techniques



- **Assumptive**
- **Vow and Promise**
- **Ultimate Take-Away**
- **Ben Franklin**
- **Dependent or Spouse Focused**

# Assumptive Finalization



(Campus and High School)

*"Great, let's get started (pull out the Enrollment Paperwork and fill in name). What is your current address (fill in on application)? How would you like to take care of your application fee today? We accept cash, credit card, or check (accept payment). I will get you a receipt, and then we will meet with a Financial Aid Representative so they can go over your packet with you. Next, we will schedule you for testing, which is when you will bring in your completed financial aid forms, and your Proof of Graduation....."*



# Assumptive Finalization

(WOL and National)

"Great, let's get started. How would you like to take care of your application fee today, we accept, debit card, credit card, or check? Let's begin the application together. Let me confirm your address....."



# Vow and Promise Finalization

“Now (prospect name), as I mentioned before, in order for you to move forward, it is a requirement that I recommend you to my Director of Admissions. If you were an Admissions Representative, or we were to trade places briefly, what would you say to my Director on your behalf?”

# The Ultimate Take-Away Finalization



(Campus and High School Only)

Bring up, at maximum, two valid concerns from the Student Profile and have the prospect sell you on how they will overcome their own obstacles

**Representative:** "(prospect name), I am convinced. With your permission, I would like to recommend you to our Director of Admissions for our next class start. What is your current address? How would you like to take care of your application fee today? We accept cash, check, or credit card."

**Prospect:** "I have to pay that today? I don't have anything on me."

**Representative:** "We covered this when going over the investment sheet."

**Prospect:** "This seems so last minute. I'm not ready to commit to school."

**Representative:** Gather up the paperwork, pile it all together, and put it away. "My mistake. I thought that you were ready to get started."

**Prospect:** "Wait, what are you doing? I am ready."

**Representative:** Look at them and start pulling paperwork back out of drawer. "Let's figure out how we can take care of this together."

# The Ben Franklin Finalization

- This finalization is especially effective for our “shoppers” who are convinced they still need to look at other schools, or already have appointments set up to go see them.
- After you cover your concerns, and they sell you on why they are a perfect fit for the College, they put on the brakes. It is purely based on fear that they react in this way.
- Pull out a sheet of paper (or have the prospect pull out a sheet of paper) and make two columns, one labeled Pro’s and the other Con’s. You help them figure out the Pro’s of why they want to attend Westwood/Redstone and write all of the reasons down for them. At that point, you turn the paper around towards them and ask them to fill in the Con’s column (or have them fill out the Con’s column on their own if interviewing over the phone). When they realize they cannot come up with anything sufficient, you ask once again, “What is really keeping you from making this decision today?”

# Dependent/Spouse Finalization

After the “Why Westwood/Redstone” and the “Admissions Requirements” slide, you look at the prospective student and ask them to tell their parent’s (or their spouse/significant other) why they believe they are the perfect fit for your school and why Westwood/Redstone is the school they would like to attend.