



# UNDERSTANDING THE REAL SALES CYCLE AND HOW TO MANAGE IT

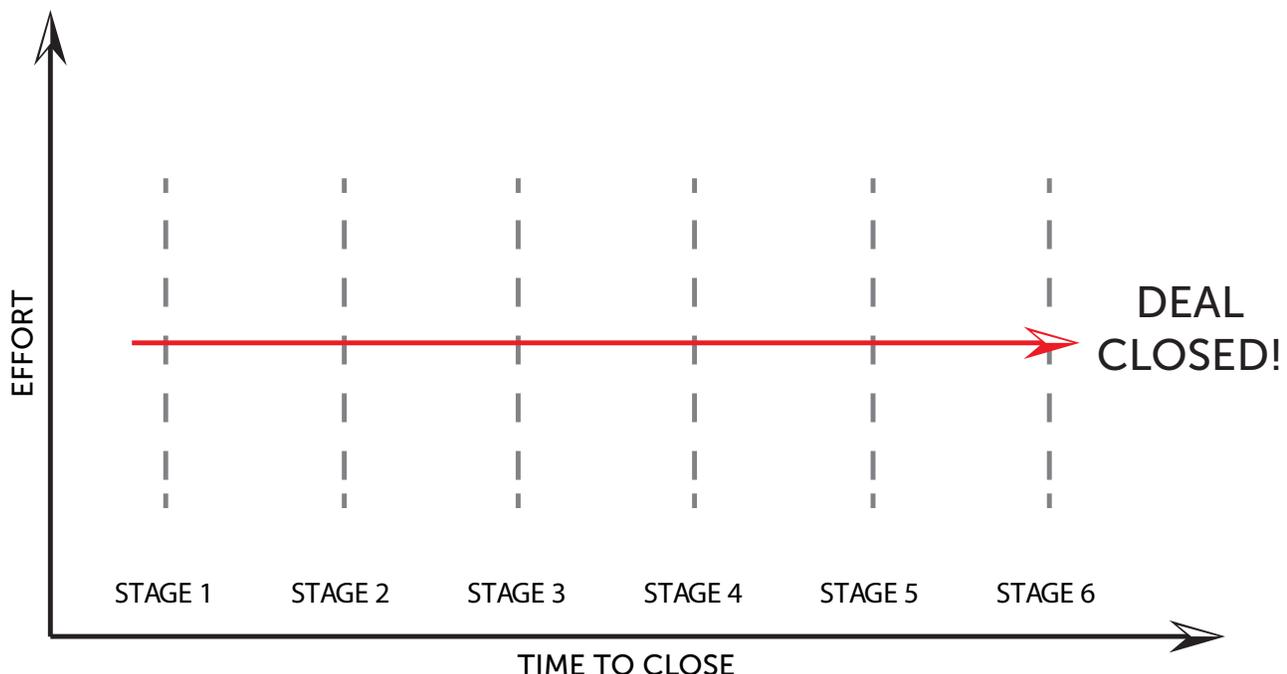
# The sales cycle as we've been taught is linear, but is it really?



*"The linear sales cycle is an old, outmoded inaccurate way to look at the selling motion."*

A linear sales model assumes everything moves from left to right. It assumes the deal is always moving forward, or closer to the close. We all know this isn't accurate.

The problem is, a linear sales cycle doesn't account for the sales person's effort or unplanned issues. A deal is NOT always moving toward the close and knowing this is key.

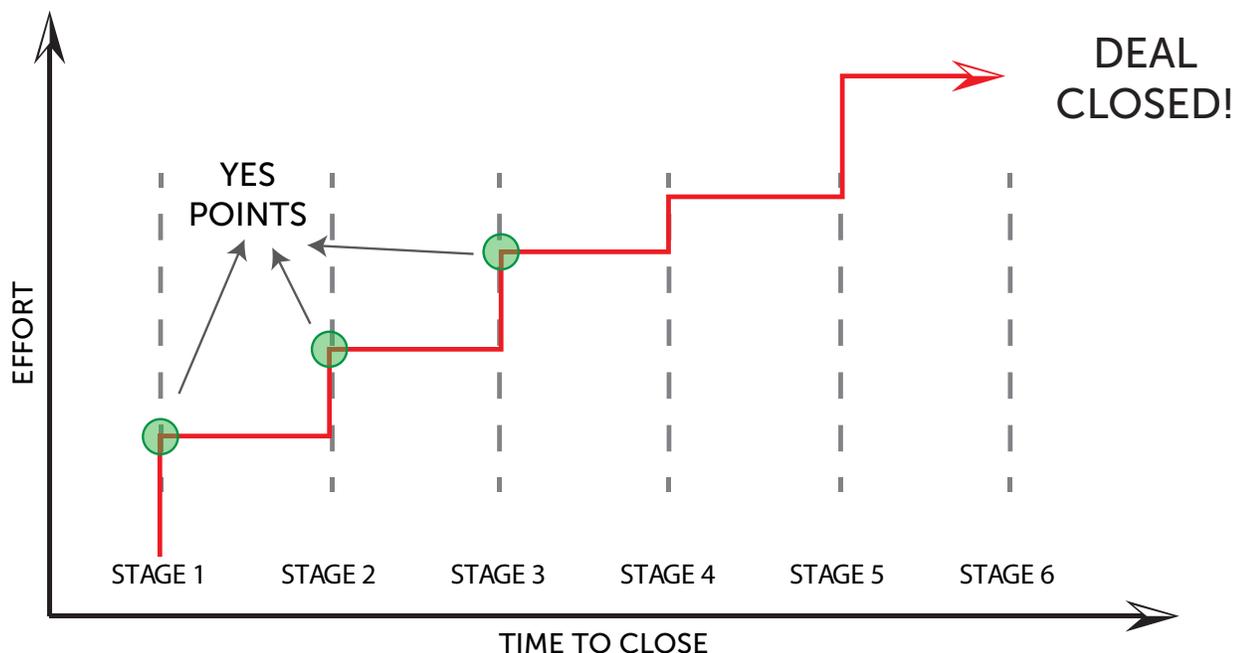


# *There is nothing linear about it.*

**A** real sales cycle is anything but linear. A real sales cycle is stepped and has many trigger points. We call these trigger points, “**YES**” points. The “**YES**” point represents when the buyer says **YES**. “**YES**, this is what I am looking for. **YES**, I will meet with you. **YES**, I will demo your product. **YES**, I’ll put you in front of my CFO. **YES**, I will budget for this. **YES**, I’m interested in learning more.”



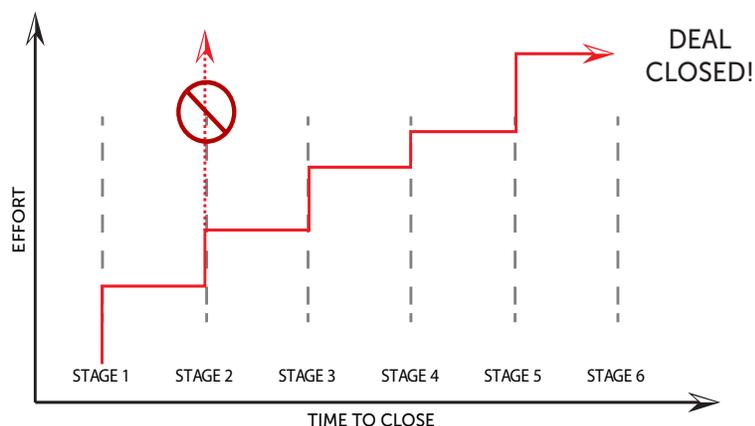
## *Yes, I will!*



# *It's only at yes, that a sale really moves forward!*

A real sales cycle recognizes the effort it takes to get to a “YES” No matter how hard you work, if you can't get to “YES” you are only going up. You're working hard, but getting no closer to the close – which means you haven't:

- ✔ Met their need
- ✔ Proven you understand their business
- ✔ Built intrigue
- ✔ Captured their attention
- ✔ Demonstrated value
- ✔ Established confidence
- ✔ Proved it works
- ✔ Proved it's a better solution
- ✔ It can change their world
- ✔ Got the client to believe you and your company are god!



Regardless, the customer hasn't said; “YES! Let's keep going!!!” Without “YES!” you're only going UP, and that isn't any closer to close!

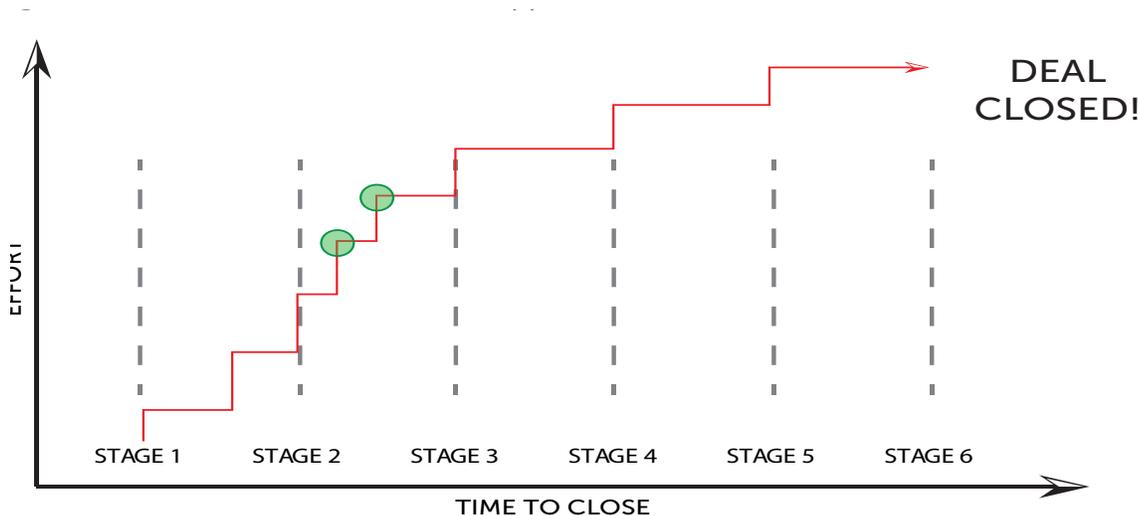
*Yes points are like mini-sales.*



**K**nowing what you're selling at the moment is critical. Is the **YES** a **YES** to an appointment? Is the **YES** a **YES** to a phone call?

Is it a **YES** to an introduction to the CFO? You have to know what you're selling at the moment, because I promise you it's not the deal. The real sales cycle requires multiple sales **YES**es to get to the end. **YES**es can't be skipped.

The deal requires a lot more than one **YES**. The more complex the sale, the more **YES**es you're going to have to get. A real sales cycle could even have multiple **YES**es in a single stage. Which means you've moved the sale along, but are still in the same stage.



**YESes ARE MINI-SALES. YOU'RE GOING TO HAVE LOTS OF THEM BEFORE YOU ARE DONE.**



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*The most important element to managing a real sales cycle is knowing what it is your customers and prospects need to say **YES**.*

The most effective sales organizations anticipate their buyers **YES**es and have them embedded into their sales process.

Sales people need to manage their time in order to align with the buyer's next **YES**. They needn't waste time on anything other than getting the next **YES**. Sales managers need to make understand what the customer wants or needs "NOW" to say **YES**? Sales managers need to make sure sales people are positioning themselves to get the next **YES**.



The key is to be looking ahead and to be focusing on your prospects business and buying process, not your selling process.

**COMPANIES DON'T CARE HOW YOU SELL.  
THEY ONLY CARE ABOUT HOW THEY BUY.**

Anticipate, ask, and confirm what your prospects and customers need to say the "next" **YES**.



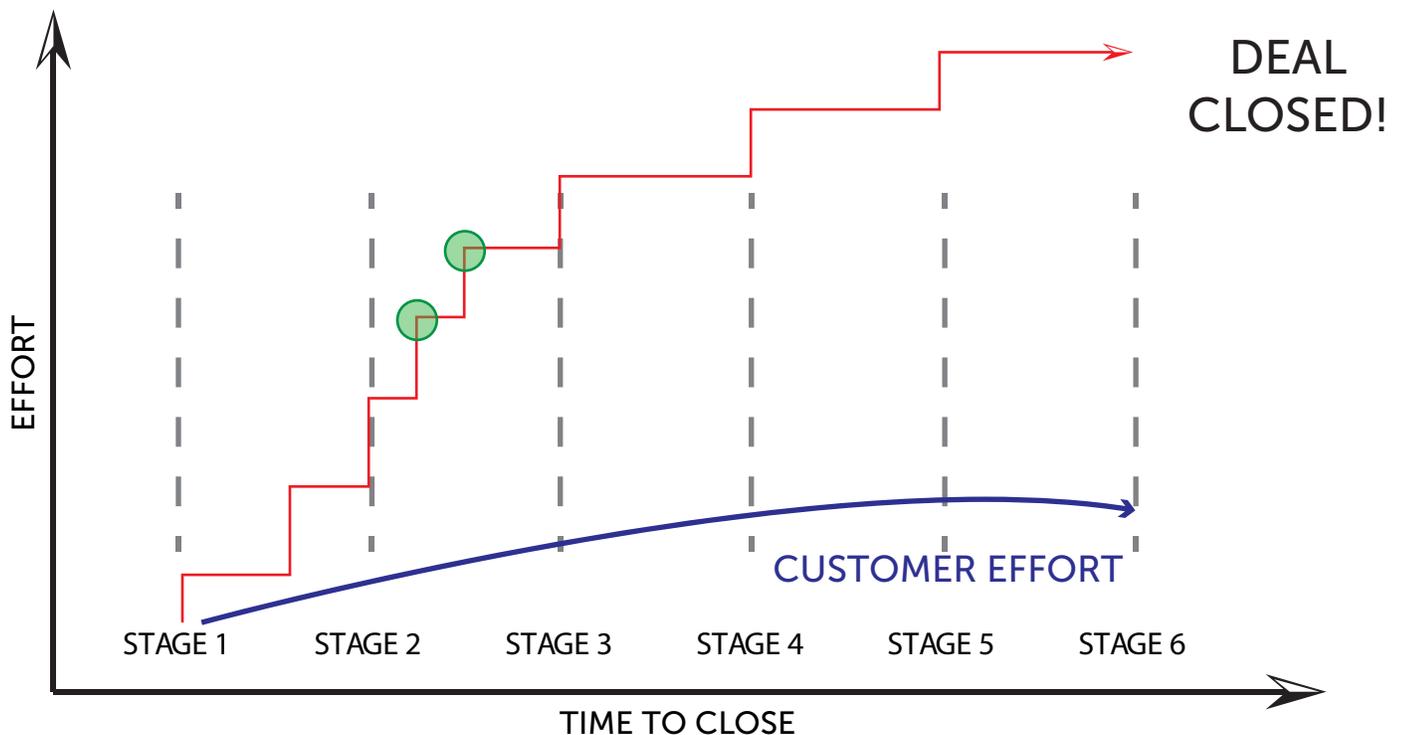
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**YES**es only come when the customer or prospect is participating in the sale: when they are working with you. If you are doing all the work, the sale is out of whack.

*Imagine selling a car to someone who won't take a test drive... what are the odds they will buy the car?*

Inherent to buying is participation. Passive buyers rarely buy. Real buyers are active. They WANT to be part of the process. They WANT to kick the tires. They WANT to take a test drive. They WANT to do the research. If a buyer won't do the work they aren't a buyer. Don't get out of whack – it's hard to get **YES**es.

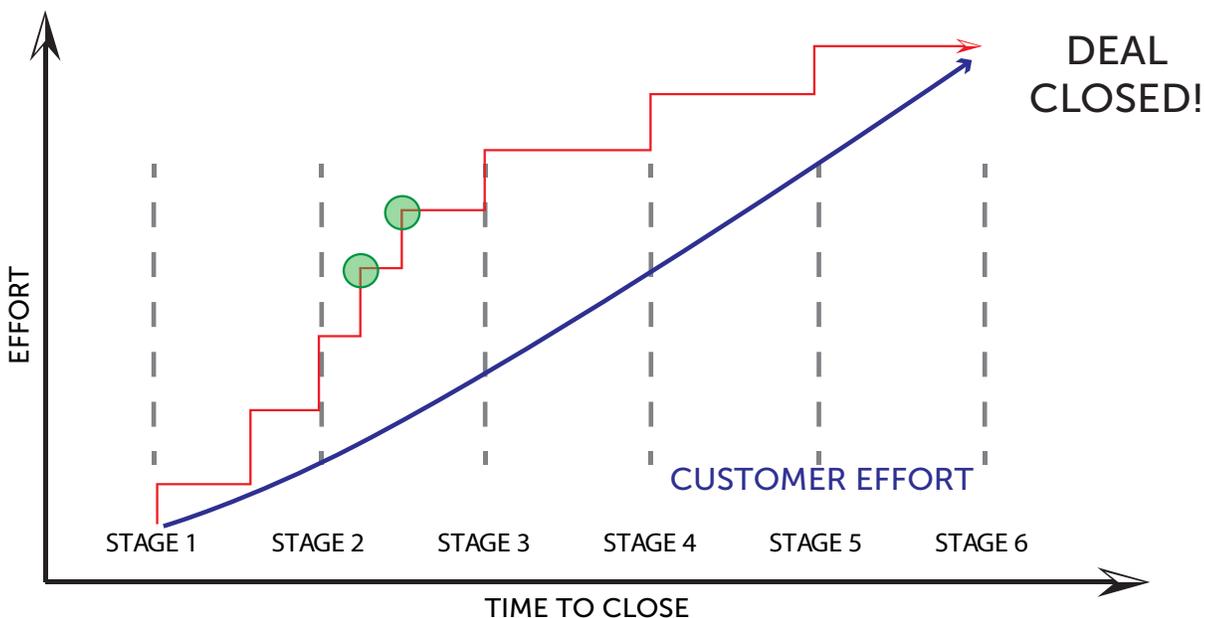


When a customer is doing the work, you'll know. Just as you are doing more and more to get the deal done, so will the customer. There is a correlation to **YES**es from a customer or prospect and the amount of work they put in. Whenever a customer or prospect asks you for something, ask for something in return.



## *It's a salesperson's job to put the prospect to work.*

A sale can not close without a customer or prospect doing as much work as the sales person.



## Summary

- Understanding what a Real Sales Cycle looks like will help you:
- Accelerate time to close
- Close more deals
- Avoid wasting time on deals that aren't going to close
- Improve forecasting accuracy
- Avoid selling on price
- Establish better customer relationships
- Be more efficient
- Know your customer better
- Put you in the driver seat of the sale

## Remember

- Respect the fact a sales cycle is NOT linear.
- Manage the selling effort to align with the each **YES**.
- Know the customer's buying process.
- Align your sales process accordingly.
- Without a **"YES"** you are not closer to the close.
- The customer or prospect has to work too.
- Always have an ask for the prospect.
- Active buyers, buy, passive buyers just waste time.



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