

Don't wait for the tooth fairy

Close the loop and gain patient commitment, says **Ashley Latter**.



Ashley Latter
runs ethical
selling courses.

When I deliver my ethical selling lectures I find that dentists don't give treatment plans: in other words, they don't ask for commitment from the patient. The consolation news is that it is still one of the biggest challenges most sales people find in most industries.

Let me give you an example: A few weeks ago, I visited a new health club that had opened up around the corner from where I live. The following is roughly word-to-word what happened in the conversation. We had just spent 10 minutes being shown around the gym and then we went back to the sales office. See if you can find the mistakes that were made.

Health club instructor: What do you think?

Ashley Latter: Absolutely brilliant and it is much better than my present gym.

HCI: Let me go through the membership prices for you.

AL: No, it's for my wife, two children and me. We would like a membership for four.

HCI: OK. Is your wife a member of a health club?

AL: Yes.

HCI: Then you do not need to pay the joining fee. That is free. So you will save around £150 each.

AL: Fantastic, that is a really good gesture.

HCI: So in that case the membership is around £75 per month for the four of you.

AL: That's good value. If paid by cheque all at once, do I get a discount? (I had my chequebook in my hand.)

HCI: Yes, you will save two monthly standing order payments.

AL: That is really good value. I think my family would love it here



● Closing the loop will ensure the patient is committed to the treatment plan.

and the kids would love the pool.

HCI: Here are the forms. Why don't you go away and chat to your wife and think about it?

AL: Yes, I will do that.

That's exactly what I did. I walked away and never joined. At first my wife was keen, but has since started to walk with a group of friends and is really enjoying it and I have stayed with the gymnasium where I have been a member for more than 12 years.

The health club instructor missed out on a sale of more than £700. If she did that five times a week for an average sale of say £500 and she works for 45 weeks a year, the health club is losing more than £50,000 worth of business. That is straight off the bottom line, bearing in mind the costs of running the health club are the same. The funny thing was that if she had asked me, I am about 90 per cent certain I would have said yes, and it would have been a nice anniversary present for my wife.

So why do most sales people find it challenging to close the business? Well it can be several reasons. These include:

■ Lack of confidence; ➔