**Closing Short-Term Medical Sales**

**Introduction to Short-Term Medical Sales**

In this course you’ll learn about the opportunities with short-term medical sales, asking the right questions, closing (in-person and over-the-phone), cross-selling opportunities, and all about following up.

Short-term health insurance is a type of health plan that can provide you with temporary medical coverage when you are between health plans, outside enrollment periods, and need some coverage in case of an emergency. However, to get the most out of a short-term health plan, you need to understand how they work, what they cost, and what they cover.

**What are Short-Term Medical Plans?**

Short-term medical is temporary health insurance. It’s designed to be cost-effective and flexible during times of transition, allowing your clients to:

Get covered as soon as possible – Apply online and enroll within a few minutes. Coverage is available year-round and may begin as early as the next day, if eligible.

Choose your policy length – Policies last from 30 days and to 364 days and sometimes more, depending on where someone lives and how long they need coverage.

Access benefits right away – Coverage is typically limited to unexpected medical expenses rather than long-term healthcare needs (i.e., preventive care, maternity).

The Affordable Care Act doesn’t apply to short-term health insurance, which means it isn’t guaranteed issue and does not include all of the essential health benefits that major medical insurance (aka ACA plans) must include.

While short-term health insurance does not provide major medical coverage, it does have some similarities:

* You pay a premium in exchange for coverage.
* You present your plan ID and pay a copay, if required, when visiting a healthcare provider.
* Your provider files a claim with your short-term health insurance carrier, which pays for covered medical expenses according to your policy.
* You receive a bill for your portion.

Like ACA plans, short-term plans typically include a deductible, coinsurance, and copayment. They may or may not include a provider network.

Short-term health insurance generally covers high-dollar medical expenses related to injuries and unexpected illnesses. For example, plan benefits typically include things like hospital room and board, emergency care, and surgical services as opposed to preventive care, maternity, and treatment of pre-existing conditions.

Of course, not all short-term coverage is the same. Some may include benefits for a few basic preventive care services (e.g., Pap smears) or limited coverage for pre-existing conditions.

Bottom line: You’ll want to shop around to see what short-term plan best suits

**Why Should You Sell Short-Term Medical?**

They can be less expensive for consumers, but short-term health policies have another side:

They’re highly profitable for insurers and offer hefty sales commissions for brokers. These plans can be purchased at any time throughout the year, which is different than plans sold through the federal marketplaces. The open enrollment period for those ACA plans in most states ended January 15. The rising demand for short-term plans is a boon for insurance brokers, who often see commissions on such policies hit 20 percent or more.

On a policy costing $200 a month, for example, that would translate to a $40 payment each month. By contrast, ACA plan commissions are often flat dollar amounts rather than a percentage of premium and can range from zero to $20 per enrollee per month.

For the agent, not only does short-term medical plans give them a product line they can sell all year long but it provides them an opportunity to bundle products together to create the perfect coverage for their clients.

**What is the Opportunity with Short-Term Medical?**

The opportunity for short-term medical is very robust.

Plans are available in most all states and with different plan types, agents can tailor a benefit package to suit every budgetary need that they will come across.

Short-term medical is great for clients who might need temporary coverage because they are 26 years old and coming off their parents’ plans, or for those who quit their job or missed the enrollment period, or even those who make a good salary, and the ACA plans are too expensive for them to consider. Short-term medical plans are great for filling short-term gaps in coverage, and they allow you to choose the duration of the coverage and you can cancel at any time.

For the agent, short-term medical sales provide a greater commission rate than other long-term plans like ACA. Also, short-term medical coverage pairs well with other products like Accident plans or Dental, Vision, and Hearing plans to create a well-rounded coverage package and most short-term medical carriers have all of those types of plans so you can bundle them at one point of sale.

**Who is the Ideal Buyer for Short-Term Medical?**

Generally speaking, temporary health insurance tends to be a fit for healthy people who are:

* Between jobs with employer-based benefits.
* Attending college outside a parent’s health insurance plan network.
* Early retirement before Medicare takes effect.
* Aging off a parent’s health plan and not yet being enrolled in other coverage.
* Looking for an alternative to COBRA, if it’s too expensive.
* In an employer waiting period before group benefits take effect.
* Ineligible for an ACA subsidy or Medicaid but unable to afford major medical insurance at this time.

**What are Closing Techniques?**

Closing techniques are pathways for the sales person to close or get the sale from their perspective client. There are many variations of closing techniques but keep in mind that having a clear sales model in place is key to closing the sale. Following your sales process correctly will always be key in closing the sale. Once you get to that close, there are many options to closing and some are:

* **Now or Never Close**– This is where salespeople make an offer that includes a special benefit that prompts immediate purchase. For example: “This is the last one at this price.
* **Summary Close –**Salespeople who use this closing technique reiterate the items the customer is hopefully purchasing (stressing the value and benefits) in an effort to get the prospect to sign. For example: “So we have the Short-Term Value plan we discussed, we have it at the $125 per month premium and that you wanted, all I need now I your signature and you can start using your benefits day 1”.
* **Sharp Angle Close –**Prospects often ask for price reductions or ad-ons because they know they have the upper hand — and they also know you expect it. If you have approval, try the sharp angle close technique to catch these prospects by surprise. For Example: “So you wanted me to run a quote for you on a Final Expense product before you would agree to contract, if I do this will you agree to contract today?”
* **Question Close –**Effective salespeople focus on closing a sale as soon as a conversation with a prospect begins. Through a series of questions, they develop desire in the client and eliminate every objection to purchase. For example: “Based on the questions I asked around what you are looking for in your medical coverage, does what I am offering you meet those needs?”
* **Soft Close-**The soft close is a way to show your prospect the benefit of your product and then ask a low-impact question to ascertain whether they’d be open to learning more. For Example: “If I can lower you premium costs and increase your benefit package, would you be interested in hearing more?”

**How do You Know Which Closing Techniques Will Work for You?**

The key to knowing which closing techniques will work for you is to determine what your strengths are as a salesperson.

Are you stronger at developing the relationship vs someone who is all about the sale? Are you always focused on the sale and need to work on your relationship skills? Differences aside, the key to knowing which closing technique to use lies in knowing where you are in the sales process so that when you do close for the sale with whatever technique you like to use, the client is ready.

A simple sales model would help any agent in determining where they are in the sales process and help the close, whether that is a close for an additional meeting later or a close for the sale. A very simple sales model is one called the GAME selling model.

* G– grabbing attention. Having a nice opening to the sales call that grabs the attention of the client is always a key to moving the process along. Often times a salesperson only has 15-30 seconds to win the client’s time.
* A– asking questions. Probably the most important part of the sales process and key to finding out what you client’s needs are and how you can help them.
* M– making recommendations. After you have asked enough questions to uncover the issues the clients having, the needs they are trying to have met, you can now begin to make recommendations that address those issues and meet the needs that your client has identified themselves through your questioning period.
* E- expecting actions or closing– If the steps above have all been completed correctly your closing will be earned and easy because your clients have stated the need and you have addressed it with your recommendations, now you just have to close for the sale, If they are still hesitant, then you simply back up a step and continue until you get their agreement then move forward again.

Click on the topics below to learn more.

 **Finding the Right Fit for Your Personality**

Everyone has their strengths as a salesperson.

Some are very personable and are relationship salespeople. Some are very analytical and rely on their strengths of product and numbers to show their value during the sales process. The key to finding the right closing style is knowing your strength and how to marry that up to your client personality. If you are very relationship oriented in your sales process, but your client is a very non-social type, then you will have to adjust your style a bit for it to work. Maybe they respond better to emails vs phone calls or maybe they prefer phone calls instead of face to face meetings. It is very important to understand how you prospect likes to communicate. Same goes for someone who is very analytical in their approach to sales but has a client who needs to build a relationship with their salesperson before they can trust them to sale them a policy.

In the end, it all comes down to communication and how you can best communicate with your client to win the sale. So a few tip to finding your right fit are:

* Understand your personal style of communication
* Understand your prospect’s communication style
* Understand how your clients like to communicate
* Adjust your style to match your prospects.

**How to Practice Your Closing Techniques**

Once you have determined your sales model, you will ultimately have a few favorite closing techniques that you like to use, whether that is a Summary close or a Questioning close or others. What are some ways you can improve you closing?

Practice, practice, practice!!

Here are some tips on how to practice:

* Role Playing- get a co-worker or a friend, someone who is willing to spend some time with you role playing so that you become comfortable with verbalizing your closing techniques.
* Role play scenarios- Role play your whole sales model, so that you have to understand and listen for queues from your client so that you can overcome those by moving back in the sales model to address them and then earn the right to move forward again.
* 30 second grinders- practice you close in mini 30 second closes. It will help you become more successful in addressing the most important needs of your clients more efficiently.
* Emailing- in todays world some clients want to make decisions over email before speaking and closing.
* Over the phone- practice your close over the phone, you will learn the value of listening because face to face sales you can see the nonverbal reactions so you can adjust, over the phone you will have to listen for those, the silence, the inflection of their voice etc.
* Above all, learn to close for what you have earned in the sales call. Sometimes that is not the sale, it is a close to continue the relationship to get to the sale.

**Asking the Right Questions to Close**

Asking the right questions to close a sale is key. If your sales process was followed correctly then the questions during the close should just provide additional closer for the sale. However, good questioning during the close can uncover additional issues the client either failed to mention or forgot to mention and could ultimately save the sale in the end.

Below are some examples of sales closing questions:

Question 1

Unless there is something I have missed, I think I have addressed all of the concerns you had mentioned, I think we have a good solution for you and your family. Are you ready to get started?

This question will reconfirm you did meet the needs the client states in the sales process and if not it will allow you to back up a step and continue asking questions to once again move to the close.

Question 2

Based on our conversations and the recommendations, would you feel confident in signing this today?

Again, this confirms that all the issues have been addressed and it sets a more urgent timeline for the close, today!

Question 3

Have I done enough to convince you this is the right product for you? If so are you ready to move forward?

This is a soft close, the client will not feel stressed and it gives them the control and ability to convey any unmet needs or hesitations they may have.

Question 4

We have gone over a lot of information today, I think we have met your needs but this information might be a bit overwhelming. Why don’t we set a time later tomorrow afternoon to finalize everything, so that you can have some time to look over the information again and if you have any other questions or concerns we can address those as well tomorrow.

You client might seem overwhelmed with the information and rather than pin them to an answer now and possible lose the sale. Close for another meeting so it shows them you want the best for them and that you are willing to wait an extra day or so if needed to make sure they are comfortable with their decision.

Question 5

Well, I think we both agree this is the best choice for you. I think the next steps would be for me to send over the contract for you to sign so you can start using your benefits as soon as possible, are you good with that?

Quickly confirms you both have agreed and moves the focus to the next steps of signing the contract so the client can start using the benefits.

**Compliant Presentations & Using the Right Technology**

Always be sure to use only carrier-approved brochures and product information, the approved product brochures and information, carrier websites, or approved 3rd party for quoting and enrollments, and know your state’s limitations on short-term medical plans to remain compliant when presenting a product.

**Body Language & Non-verbal Communication**

During the face to face sales process you will be able to view both body language and nonverbal cues that should help you in understanding your clients response to your sales presentations. These cues will help you during your presentation to know where you stand and where you need to go in getting the sale.

Some examples are:

* Facial expressions.
* Body movement and posture.
* Gestures.
* Eye contact.
* Touch.
* Space.
* Voice.
* Pay attention to inconsistencies.

**Using the Right Question Pair**

When asking questions to your client, is it beneficial to ask those questions in pairs that lead to outcome you desire.

Examples of these would be questions like:

**“So, your current insurance plan is now higher than your budget allows correct? And you are looking to find a new plan that fits your budget better?”**

**“You are having trouble finding doctors in network with your current plan correct? If you could find a similar plan that does have your providers in network would you be interested in moving plans?”**

**“So just to clarify, you are looking for a plan for you and your husband that has mental health coverage? If I can find that plan for you would you be willing to switch?”**

**Tips for Selling Over-the-Phone**

Closing a sale over the phone can be difficult if you are not used to it and do know take into account the limitation of not being face to face.

A few tips to help for closing the sale over the phone are:

* Introduce everyone on the call
* State the goal of the call
* Set the agenda and stick to it
* Initiate your closing technique
* Answer any objections
* Set timelines for next steps
* Clearly state next steps for each party
* Get started

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**Active Listening**

Successful sales are a direct result of effective information gathering.

The more you know about your client the better you can design your presentation and ultimately your close.

Active listening aids the salesperson in the following ways to achieve greater success.

* Helps overcome the initial resistance – listening to the client can help you rephrase the sales pitch and close so that it shows you are listening and not pushing the sale.
* Helps build rapport – Listening rather than talking helps show that you value the client and are here to help them vs you talking and you client feel like that are getting pitched.
* Reduces objections- Active listening allows callers to follow up with questions that are more relevant to the prospect’s need. Relevant follow up questions allow callers to emphasize on solving the prospect’s problem. This, in turn, helps prospects realize the value of the solution thereby reducing objections.
* Helps the close- Active listening during the sales process allows for a much smoother close as your presentation throughout will be guided by the client’s needs vs your sales pitch. You are closing to meet their needs.

How to Ask for the Sale

Asking for the sale becomes much easier when you focus on what you have earned in the call.

If you know you are not ready to close the client then you need to close for what you have earned in the call. Whether that is a close for a follow up call to present your recommendations or a close for a follow up call to go over the answers to some of their questions.

If you focus on closing for what you have earned in the call you will have greater outcomes and the client will not think of it as a hard close. They will think of it as a natural next step.

**Cross-Selling Additional Products with Short-Term Medical Plans**

Cross-selling other products with short-term medical is a great way to increase your revenue and at the same time fill more coverage gaps for your clients. Also, we know that clients who have multiple products on the books are more loyal and stay customers longer that those with a single product and they have greater persitency.

A great way to provide additional products is first by introducing it to the conversation and then by going through a needs assessment with your client and then using that to fill in the products that create the best benefit package to meet their budget needs.

**Dental, Vision, & Hearing**

Adding a dental, vision and hearing plan is the easiest way to create value for your clients and create an additional revenue stream for you the agent. It is relatively inexpensive, and it can provide a great benefit to your client.

For example: If they were to need a root canal and a crown, that $1,200 bill could put them in a big financial bind depending on their income level.

Also, often included in the plans are vision and hearing benefits that can help your client cover the cost of glasses or even hearing aids.

**Accidental Insurance**

Accident insurance helps pay for medical and other out-of-pocket costs that might incur after an accidental injury.

This includes emergency treatment, hospital stays, medical exams, as well as other expenses faced such as transportation and lodging needs. Accident plans usually offer a lump sum payment that clients can use to offset claims or help pay deductibles of other products they might have like major medical who’s coverage would kick in after the deductible is met.

The accident plan is in most cases very reasonably priced and can provide great coverage in gaps from other plans and offer the agent another revenue stream.

**Hospital Indemnity**

Hospital indemnity insurance supplements your existing health insurance coverage by helping pay expenses for hospital stays.

Depending on the plan, hospital indemnity insurance gives cash payments to help pay for the added expenses that may come during recovery.

**When & Why You Should Follow Up**

Once the sale is complete you should always follow up immediately to make sure they have received everything they need and you can help answer any questions that may have.

Once the initial touchpoint is made you should reach out every few months to insure they are happy and that there are no issues.

The biggest reason why agents lose clients is the lack of following up. They sell the plan and then they forget the client. The agent has a responsibility to service that client and part of that is consistent communication. The agent needs to be aware of any usage the client has and if there were any issues with using the plan.

This will provide both comfort to the client and loyalty.

**Knowing When to Reconnect**

Knowing when to follow up with your clients is key to creating loyal clients.

Follow ups should be at minimum the following times.

* After the sale to ensure all plan information and needs are competed and the client is ready to use their benefits
* A month later to check in to see if things are still going as planned.
* After first usage by the client
* Every few months to check in
* A month before the plan is due to term (STM plans etc) to they can make changes in time for benefits to start the first of the next month.

**Know When to Schedule a Term Review**

Depending on the plan and if there is a termination date, term reviews should be scheduled a few months before that termination date so that next steps can be discussed and a new plan of action put in place so that coverage is ready upon that plan’s termination date. For products that do not have a termination date, a review once a year would be recommended as to ensure that the nothing has changed with the client and to ensure that the client still has the best coverage plan possible.