

# Inside

## BUSINESS

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## The Canterbury Sales®

### Kairos and the breakthrough move

By Andy Gole

Many sales people reasonably seek the one phrase/question/tactic that will close the sale. They want the order right now; they have a sense of urgency.

Does this Holy Grail of selling exist? Perhaps they are seeking Kairos.

Kairos is an ancient Greek word meaning the right or opportune moment. It underlies the popular maxim, "I would rather be lucky than smart." How do we engage kairos in the selling process? We can strike when the fundamentals are favorable, when we meet the closing conditions – the conditions which, when met, result in the sale.

View the closing conditions as glasses. Imagine the prospect with a number of glasses on her desk, each representing a decision-making criterion – e.g. reputation, ROI, etc. The prospect won't make a decision until all the glasses are filled.

We learn the closing conditions by asking thoughtful questions, including, "What keeps you up at night?" A new prospect will share this inside information – making kairos possible – when we "earn the right" to a serious conversation.

We earn the right by making a material difference obvious. A material difference is so strong it commands a change in prospect behavior. The best material differences both:

1. Improve an essential metric – e.g. we can deliver in half the time
2. Meet deep emotional needs – for example:

"I get to keep my job"

Making the material difference obvious means matching the level of skepticism we encounter. Some combination of logic, trial, introductions, case histories, economic justifications and testimonials usually satisfies this criterion. "Making it obvious" is usually the weakest part of the selling process.

Kairos occurs at the intersection of urgent prospect need and obvious material differences. An effective salesperson must be sensitive to this decisive strategic moment, where kairos becomes visible through buying signals, including:

1. Commitment to greater engagement, such as introducing us to other decision-makers
2. Asking us thoughtful questions
3. Subtle body language – an important reason we want to sell "belly to belly"

Ideally we foment and recognize this intersection, creating kairos. It requires pre-meeting research and an obvious material difference to convince the prospect to share inside information. We then integrate that information with our material difference, tailoring it to the circumstances and creating the breakthrough move. We "enter the moment" – creating an idea customized to the prospect's situation – kairos.

Without training in breakthrough moves, we might just leave money on the table – the untapped kairos.

Consider this example of embracing kairos.

A business owner sees an opportunity, a

bold vision, after a vendor sales call and presentation. The presentation wasn't effective. The business owner envisions a reversal of roles, where he would sell to the vendor.

He asks the vendor, "Is this how you usually sell? It wasn't effective." He later offers the vendor the bold vision, suggesting the vendor hire him to teach selling skills.

The business owner's selling ideas were so compelling that the vendor invited him to make a sales call so he could observe the selling context. After an hour the business owner asked three questions and closed the sale. Shortly thereafter, the vendor hired the business owner to teach selling skills.

There was kairos on the vendor sales call. Closing the sale launched the business owner on a new career – as a sales trainer and consultant. He often wonders what would have happened if he didn't close the sale that day.

I was the business owner starting the new business. Here is my key learning from this experience, which generalizes to virtually any business:

- 1) We can command kairos by filling our pipeline with great opportunity, given:
- 2) We control The Holy Grail to kairos – making a material difference obvious.



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Andy Gole has taught selling skills for 17 years. He started three businesses and has made approximately 4,000 sales calls, selling both B2B and B2C. He invented a selling process, Urgency Based Selling®, with which he can typically help companies double their closing or conversion ratio. Learn more about Andy's method at [www.bombadillc.com](http://www.bombadillc.com) or by calling him at 201.415.3447.