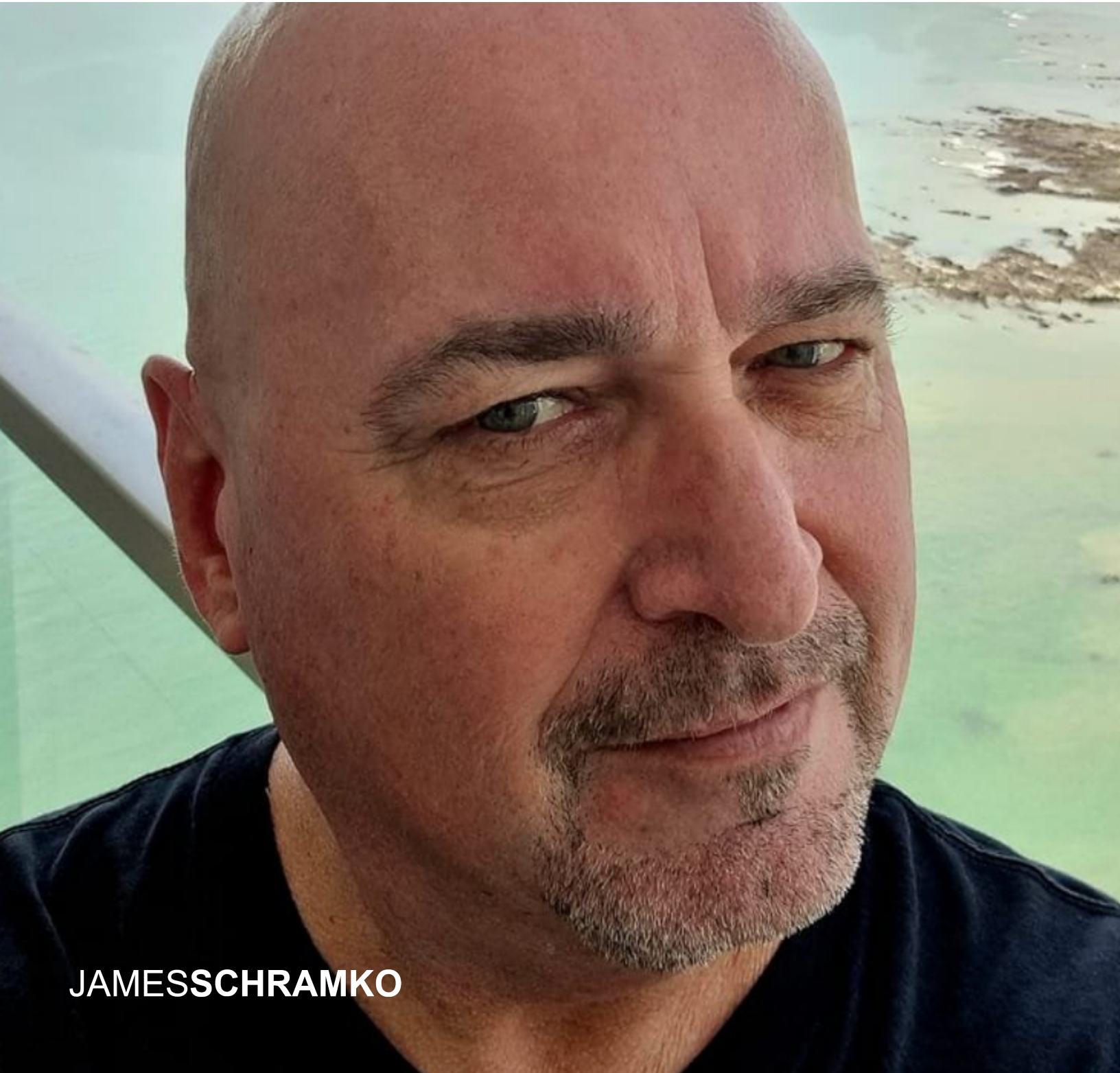


From Prospect to Client: How a High-Converting Proposal System Can Boost Your Sales

Discover the power of a high-converting proposal system. Trevor Crook returns to share real life successes and strategies for getting increased sales.



JAMESCHRAMKO



Trevor "Toecracker" Crook

James: James Schramko here. Welcome back to my podcast. We have [Trevor ToeCracker](#) back again. Welcome back.

Trevor: Thanks, James. Number five, I'm so honored.

James: Well, you get yourself up there in the [top charts](#) often, which is nice. So I feel like the topics that we talk about are tremendously useful to our audience. Today will be along the same lines, we're picking a topic of proposals, this is something that does come up a fair bit. A lot of the people listening to this, they might have agencies, they might have services, they often have things at higher prices.

Some of them do have a proposal system, some of them don't, but need it. And maybe some people have it and don't need it at all. We'll uncover some of these things in this episode 1004. So, to kick off, let's just talk about what a proposal system actually is.

Defining a proposal system

Trevor: Yeah, good question. So for me, it goes back to my banking days. A lot of my stuff goes back to my banking days. You know, when I was in the senior management positions, if an application had to go up the line, because someone in their ivory tower has signed that off, it needed a proposal. Of course, they had their own format for it. Sure the numbers need to stack up, needs to be valuations and security. But the end of the day, that proposal has got to convince that person using their lending discretion to say yes or no.

And so when I got into copywriting in 2001, I just started doing what I'd been doing in the bank for so long. I would talk to somebody about maybe a copywriting project, or some sort of consulting coaching project, and I'd have the conversation, and I would get off the call, or early days, it might have been face to face, look at my notes, and then send them what I call this proposal, which had everything in it from my perspective, so they could make an informed decision whether to proceed either way, right?

And rather than blurting a figure out during the call or the Skype, or these days a Zoom, I would just put everything in that proposal format - the good, the bad, the ugly, the positioning, the proof, the pricing, the risk reversal, testimonials - and then they say yes or no. And I'll have emails to go with that if it's been sent via email.

Handling the price question

James: So this is really interesting, talking about the timeframe or the fact that you haven't disclosed the price. On a call, would people ask you how much it costs? I mean, that might have been one of the things they were probably fairly interested in. And often, they might be shocked about it. How did you get around that situation?

Trevor: Yes, because that's a question that's asked a lot. Not just to me, but for people in general.

James: For everyone, like, how much is this thing? You know?

Trevor: Yeah, and I mean, I guess I've got a reasonable vetting process, if I'm going to talk to somebody, to make sure they're not, you know, I'm not wasting their time, and they're not wasting mine. And the question does come up.

And the way I approach it is this. Let's say it was you and I, James, and I'd say, James, good question. However, what I like to do is when I get off the Zoom call, look at all my notes based on what we discussed, look at what you feel that you actually want. And I'll work out what I feel you'd need, which could be two different things. And I'll put everything in my proposal so that you can make an informed decision, including my fees. And I'll get that to you in the next 24 to 48 hours. Will that be okay? And I never have an objection to that.

James's experience with proposals

James: Well, I think clients want proposals. I learned a really valuable lesson around this when I was in my previous role, which was when I was a rookie salesperson, I was 23 years old. And I would sit there at my desk, and I had a carbonized book, and I'd sit there with the customer, I'd take them for a test drive, I'd value their trade in, I'd figure out what they need. And I'd get to the point where we had to talk about the solution that was right for them and how much it would cost.

And they were very, very enthusiastic for me to write it all down. And for them to take that away with them. And my peers, they called that a shopping ticket. And I had this carbonized book, I wrote it out, and it was like triplicate, or duplicate. And so I'd write it on my copy, and then it would print through, and I'd tear out the top, and I'd give it to them, and I would never see them again.

So I had a flawed proposal system where I was giving them the shopping license. They would get in their car, drive down the road to the next dealer selling the same thing, hand it over and say, beat that. And I was cooked. So I'd say from then, that was 1995, I've not really used proposals in my business. So this is a really interesting topic. I've instead found ways to either deal with it in the conversation and avoid that decay of someone going away and life getting in the way, or thinking about it.

And in fact, some people actually go the opposite way. They heap all the pressure on the call, it's like, you join right now while we're on this call, it'll be \$10,000. And it's okay if you don't want to do that. But just know that after we hang up this phone, it's going to be \$15,000 when I send through my proposal, right? So they use the boiler room style tactics, which are of course, abhorrent, like I just absolutely hate that pressure type of selling.

So I guess because of an early experience, I just, I didn't want to get into the proposal thing. And my workaround came via a different industry, as it often does. I had a fellow salesperson used to have a job in a video industry. This is, for people not our generation, there used to be these shops, with movies in them you could go and rent on videotapes.

And the wholesale distributors, the companies that sold these video tapes to the shops, would print their price lists on purple paper, because if you try and photocopy it, again, old school, this is when you put a piece of paper in something and hit copy, it would turn black. So they were not shareable, and they wouldn't fax.

So I actually got some blue paper, I went down to the printing shop, I got some blue paper. And then I would write my notes. I said to the client, Look, I'm just going to make some notes here. And they'd say, Can I have a copy of that? And I'd be like, Look, if I try and copy, this is going to turn black. These are just my notes so that I know where we're up to, in the conversation. I'm happy to write it all down on an order form.

And that's where we sort of transfer into the order mode. And so that was kind of my bridging thing. But of course, most of the heavy lifting I did was - I still needed, like it was hard to sell over the phone, the thing I wanted to sell over the phone was the appointment, but it was often a preference for face to face.

Can people lose interest?

Now in this modern online world, I imagine a lot of your prospects are not face to face. And now you're having to have conversations either on Zoom or the telephone, or maybe even text. This is why it's such an interesting topic. Is there a chance that having a proposal will cause a decay? Will they lose interest in between the time you talk to them and when the proposal comes 24 to 48 hours later? That's certainly on my mind.

Trevor: Yeah, well, I mean, the thing is, it's a template and I could literally adjust it in five minutes or 10 minutes and send it off in reality, right? Change the headline, change a few tweaks, you know, change on pricing depending on whether it's mentoring or copywriting fees. For me, what I've found in my own case is that the type of conversation I'm having with them, there's a lot of proof along the call.

They've generally reached out to me in the first place, I'm not chasing them to get on a call with them. So they've been referred or they know about their perceived reputation or whatever, so they're coming highly qualified. And I mean, whilst I say 24 to 48 hours as a worst case, it's usually out, you know, within the 24 hours.

And my own projects, I'm closing roughly 85% to 90%. Okay? And let's say it's a copywriting fee that even though I'm not taking on copywriting projects, of course I have people who I pass the projects on to. I might quote 35,000 for that as an example. Now they could talk to another copywriter and charge them five, seven, 10 grand, but a lot of cases, I still get the Yes.

And the copywriters that I've mentored over the years, which is a lot, statistically, they double their fees within the first three months, you know? Around when I used to, it was around 80, 85%. So they can actually take on more clients if they want to, but the reality is, they can take on less clients or even have the same lead flow and double their fees so they're getting paid double and doing less.

And, you know, a lot of copywriters and people in general, they hate the conversion process, because they're not trained or not skilled at it, or they don't invest enough of their own time in to sharpen their skills. This just does the heavy lifting for them. It's like that crowbar to leverage people from a prospect into money in the bank.

Two examples of increased conversions

And two of my favorites really from non-copywriting type clients who have implemented this was one of my full-on mentoring clients, but he had a sideline business. And that was a business-to-consumer market for them. And we had a mentoring call, sometimes would flip between one business or the other. So in this particular session was just on this trade business.

And I said, Well, why don't you just do a proposal? Because they weren't converting to the level that they wanted to convert. And he's like, Oh, yeah, okay, I didn't think of that. Went through it. And within about 90 days, based on his own figures, they increased their conversions 260%. No increase in ad budget, no increase in actual leads, same number of leads, higher conversions, from simply changing the way they presented their pricing, their offer.

And then the other guy, which was really more interesting for me was, I was a patient of his, in that sort of pain, you know, as a pain consultant, and I'd given him money. And I went up to him for one and a half days' treatment to fix my old cricket injury in my right ankle. And at lunchtime, I said, Look, if I had not been referred to you strongly by somebody, I would not have given you one pound as in the UK, let alone the amount that I gave you.

And I said, because your proposal, your offer just sucked. And then I said, How about you give me some of my money back, and I'll teach you my system. And then I said, What are you currently converting at? He was at 15%. I said, alright. So we agreed, and it took a few weeks to get his proposal document together, after I reviewed it and copy chiefed it. And about 90 days after that, had gone to 60%, at much higher fees. So you know, it's a 400% increase in conversions.

And so I got some data from him literally a few weeks ago, on this and that, and he's still using it, obviously. And what's more interesting is his daily fee rates. So somebody goes, I need emergency treatment today. It went from 1500 pounds to 20,000 pounds. And people pay it, you know? So the financial, not so much freedom, but the difference of having this system has made his life and his wife and kids' is quite astonishing, based on his own words.

The pros of doing proposals

James: So for anyone who's doing proposals now, there's a good chance they could do better proposals?

Trevor: Yes.

James: And it's also suitable to people who aren't highly trained, skilled at, or desire or enjoy selling, especially over the phone or face to face. It seems like it's a system they can lean on. I loved your little word play there. What is it, a crowbar that just moves money into your bank account? [laughs]

Trevor: Yeah, I mean, it's just, whoever it is who doesn't worry about selling, just use this.

James: I like it. And it sounds like it's good for services and anything where you can be less commoditized. It was hard for me selling a car where the customer could buy the exact same unit from any one of seven suppliers within a 30-minute drive. That was a tough environment for me to learn how to sell. When it was a used vehicle or when I'm selling things like surfboards where they're the only one of its kind or very different to other ones, it's much easier to hold out and to build value in it.

Would it be fair to say this proposal system could be an augmentation to a current service business that might become the primary conversion source, or it's just one of many?

Proposals as a game-changer

Trevor: I personally think this can be a game changer for people to convert. You know, I was on a call three or four weeks ago with someone I hadn't seen since we met at an event in 2005. Just playing catch up. Runs quite a successful ad agency on Facebook, and we were just, you know, chewing the fat on stuff.

And he's like, Any chance I can get your proposal system? And I was like, Yeah, 25 grand, right? Or you can wait for the training, because he understood how it would help him differentiate himself from other agencies the way he presents his pricing, and being able to charge more as well. And as I mentioned, I think before we hit the record, I didn't, for many years, realize what such a valuable resource it was, right, because I was just, yep, I get out, I talk to somebody, proposal goes out, you know, majority of the time they say yes, they don't question the fees.

And then I, you know, just started to teach it to people, and they're getting results. And what I've liked about from my own perspective is I've been able to take it from outside the copywriting, coaching consulting niche, and in various industries, and they get the results from. And even some of the landscapers that I've been mentoring with, with my business partner, you know, not only did we get them to start charging, you know, for design fees, when they used to do it for free, as well, well, how about, you know, what do you send? Let's improve that, how about you model this?



And you know, when you can go from the average project is, you know, 30,000, to closing projects at 80,000 to 100,000 pounds gross by simply presenting your services in a different way, that's impactful.

James: I think that's the most important point, presenting your services in a different way. I did have a guest, I think it was James Reynolds spoke at my event, he had an SEO business, he actually bought mine. And he was sharing tips on how to do proposals. There's lots of tools out there that make this easy for people. Like at the time, I think there was Quote Roll or something, you can do digital proposal tools that send it out, you can embed videos, etc.

But I imagine there's a focus on the tech there. And I imagine people are just putting line items or descriptions and maybe missing some of the sales elements of a proposal.

Because the system was "too salesy"

Trevor: Pretty much all of them. And a classic was this female copywriter that I took on as a protégé quite a few years ago. I mean, she was good. She picked up a gig to do a whole Jeff Walker Product Launch Formula in [Jay Abraham's](#) voice etc., etc. And she just flat out refused to model my system, because she came from a corporate background and just hated it.

She said it was too salesy for her. She was very clinical. But she was very good at closing pretty much on the call, and her two sort of maybe three-page "proposal" went out and just recapped what they were going to get in for the fee. Now, in her own words, she was batting about 1000 when she was below that \$10,000 mark, 5,000, 6,000, 7,000.

And we jump on a call. And she's like, I'm starting to get rejected. I just missed a project at \$10,000 and one at 12,000. And I said, Well, what you're sending out, it's not working. You know, once you started getting those bigger fees...

James: So it's not salesy, but it's not selling.

Trevor: Yeah.

James: Fancy that.

Trevor: Yeah, exactly. And so she just completely recoiled on the Zoom call, and I said, Just humor me and humor yourself, and give it a crack, give it a try. So I was in Poland at the time, and she was in LA, and a few hours later, I get this message from her, she goes, I want to go back to the two prospects that said no, and see if I can convert them. But I don't have time. Like, I want to go back tomorrow. So I don't have time. But follow your proposal because mine's around, you know, 20, depending on who you are, and mine's proof is 23 to 28 pages long.

So she slammed something together based on some guts of the proposal. And I said, Alright, send it off. Two yeses. So 22,000 in two projects. Right? They said no to a day basically, a day or so later saying yes, based on the way she presented what she was offering. And I was on her email list. And so she emails our entire list about this whole thing and this is how she described it.

She tells a story about me saying that her proposal sucked and she should follow mine. And they were basically her exact words were, And when he told me that, it was as though he'd farted square in my face after eating a plate of Brussels sprouts. So the thought was so vile. However, I did it, and this is the result. It was a long email. And so basically she had to eat humble pie. And then of course, she realized that that's what she needed to do to close these bigger projects.

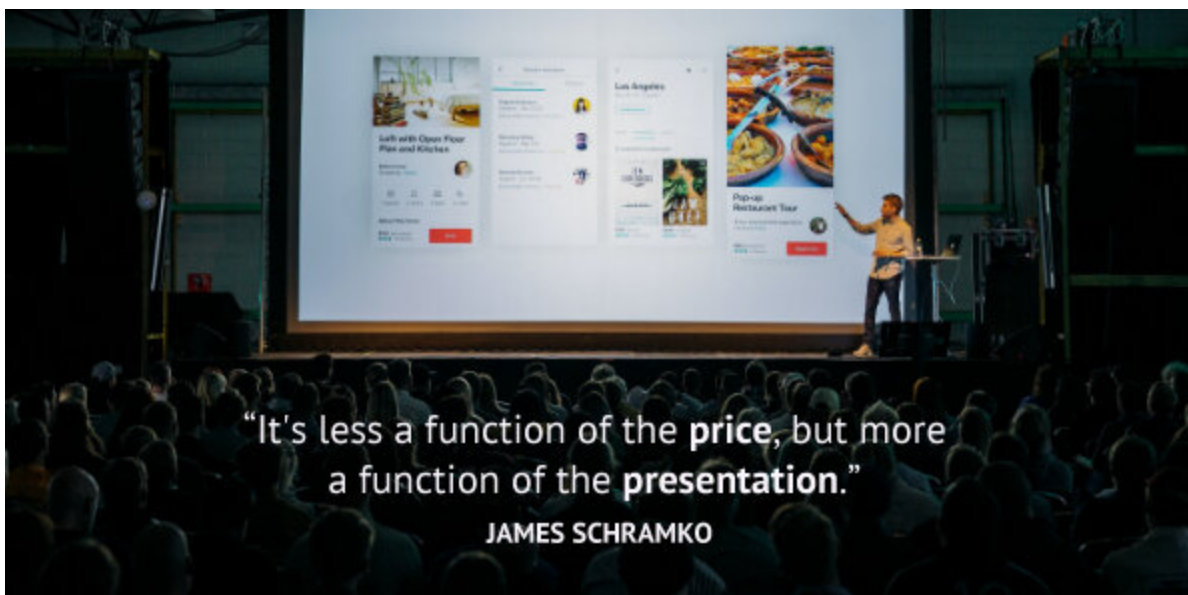
When students don't want the risk

And yeah, I mean, I've closed them personally, some massive projects doing this. Now, could I close a lot of them on the call? I'm pretty good at closing on a call. But I don't want to take that risk. This works, you know, send it off. I know I've closed some people on it, you know, private chats, you know, 20 grand, etc., etc. But this is still my go-to one.

And what I used to get a kick out of was the mentoring students, as part of the mentoring, is I had to see their proposals before they send them off to a prospect. Right? You can probably see where I'm going with this one. Because even though you're sharpening up their skills, a lot of time you're working on the mind game, they still want to err on the side, of course, and in case the client says no, well, what if they say yes at a much higher fee?

And so, you know, I knew what they were going to be doing, I knew their skill level, and I knew what I was providing for them. So I would literally look at it, not every time, but probably if I had to put a percentage on it, 20%, 25% of the times, when I'd look at their proposal, I would just at the stroke of a key change the number up. And every time they did that, and they had to send it off, there was no more mentoring, that was the deal, right, my way or the highway. And it would get accepted, you know?

The classic was a guy in Australia, he'd quoted somebody in the US, basically \$8,000. Because he's gone, 8000 US converted to Australian is good. I just changed it to 13. And said, Send that off. Boom!



James: So it's less a function of the price, but more a function of the presentation.

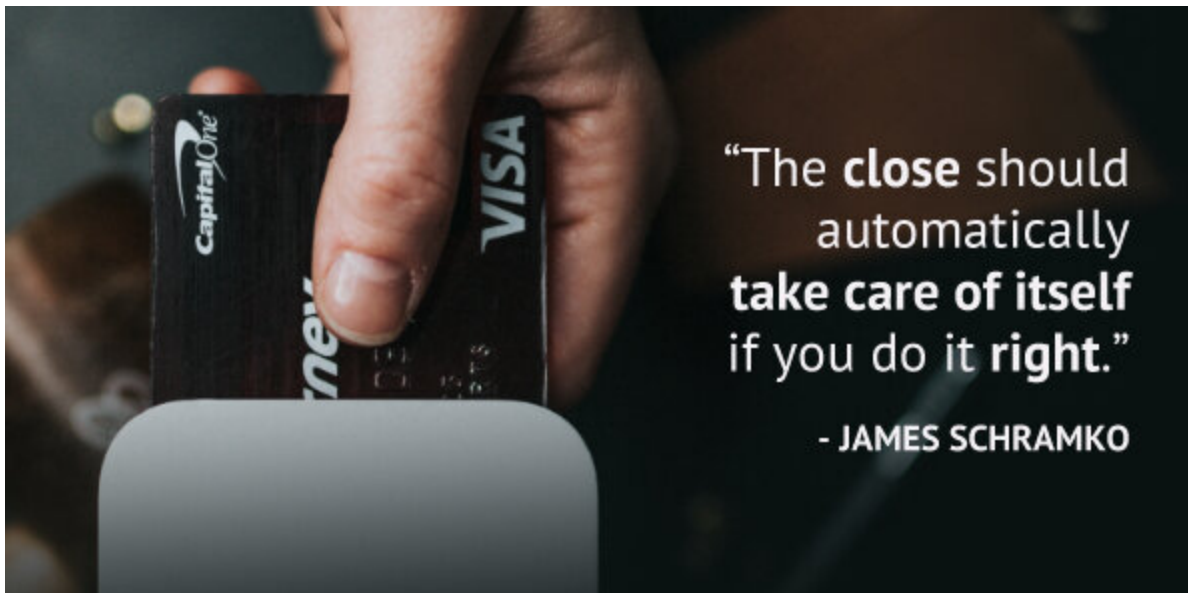
Trevor: Presentation. And when you follow the elements and put all the proofing in there, and position everything the way that, you know, it was worth for me, because I've been using this format since 2012, after an initial more generic versions of 2001 to 2012. But it's just free money, in reality.

You know, one of the guys that I taught this to, he said recently, he said, Look, I hated the conversion process. I had good copy skills. But just following this made it seamless and painless. And I went from an average \$5,000 project to 10, to 25, depending on the scope of the project. Right? Another lady, she used a portion of it to close a 13 and a half thousand dollar project, when previously her project fees were two to three grand.

A parallel with James's methods

James: Well, I think we've established that it's effective. And I've seen, you know, in my parallel universe, I've helped clients with this coaching application framework or selling services over the phone. They've failed to sell anything, they follow the steps, and they start making sales. It's great as an educator to have a system that works. I published that as a playbook inside my own membership, which is probably ridiculously low cost for the high impact that it could give someone. That's just one of the playbooks.

There's a lot of discussion in the industry around setters and closers. That's where people are commandeering their prospects on direct messages, getting them ready to have a phone call with someone, and then the phone call's with a closer, which is like, just the most gross way to talk about selling, because it's nothing to do with the closing is it? It's really a lot to do with the opening, the investigation, and presenting things the right way.



“The close should automatically take care of itself if you do it right.”

- JAMES SCHRAMKO

The close should automatically take care of itself if you do it right. There's not 27 tricky tie downs and tag ons that are going to magically make a sale happen. And we shouldn't be using high-pressure tactics, that's really went out with the Wolf On Wall Street, right? So getting back to it, there is this proposal way.

For my clients who have done proposals, I've suggested that they call them action plans, from a framing perspective with the client, because one of the triggers for me was this proposal just kept bringing up the idea that you're proposing business, but it's a yes or no option. Whereas an action plan is a little more assumptive that we're going to go forward. And this is what we'll be doing. And this is, you know, you can put in your proof elements of what other people have gotten. And this is the logistics. Hey, go ahead. And that's worked really well for the people in the absence of knowing Trevor's proposal system.

The lengthy document with sales elements

Now, you've given some indicators that it's very long. You've given an indicator that it has sales elements. Do you want to tell us how it works, like what does it actually look like?

Trevor: Yeah, but before we get to that, good point on the proposal. I mean, sometimes I call it an invitation.

James: Nice. So it's like when the early days of webinars, I used to call them online training session, because people didn't know what a webinar was, right? So putting in a customer frame, an invitation, that sounds lovely, because we all want invitations. And it sounds like they're lucky to be able to go forward with that.

Oh, and the mini version I've seen, and I used to sometimes send, it was like about 12 years ago, I'd send an email out saying, Hey, I was about to put together a video explaining how my program works. And I was going to explain this and that and the results that Freddie and Jimmy got. However, it's pretty much almost full. So here's what we're doing. Here's when we're doing it. Here's what I expect the outcomes will be. This is who it's for. This is who it's not for. If this is something you're interested in, just reply back yes.

And that was all I needed to do to make sales, because I've done so much framing up or, you know, building up of trust and publishing information prior to that. And then I've seen other people do a Google doc close. That's what they call it. And I think this is the current modern way of a proposal, is they just say, Putting together this thing, if you're interested, put your details below. And then they send them a Google Doc, they share a Google Doc that is effectively a sales letter summary. So yours sounds like a longer version than that.

Trevor: It is. And I've definitely used the Google Doc, I'm going to be testing some very short two- and three-page Google Docs. But on highly qualified people. But yeah, mine's long because of how much proof I've put in. My own case, because I've been doing this a long time. But even someone who's, you know, been at their profession or industry less, it's still going to be reasonably lengthy.

So the headline is important, like with anything, right? So when I've had a conversation with somebody and I work out what the outcomes they want to get from investing in my services, as an example, I wrap a headline based on that conversation, I make it personalized. Why? Because when they see it, they go, Oh, actually, he listened, he understood the outcome that I'm wanting to get.

So I'm hitting them right on that, and I put their name in, their business name, etc., etc., it doesn't really matter what service is being offered, and, you know, if you're a tradesman, they do the same thing. And really, the first page is just sort of recapping, based on, yep, I understand that you know this, and you know that, about, you know. But to get those results, you need the right combination of x, y, z. And then I just go into the proof element. Proof, proof, proof proof, proof.

James: And as relevant as possible to their scenario?

Trevor: Relevant as possible to their scenario. Yep.

James: So if you're doing pool landscaping, you might have pool landscaping results, maybe even pictures or something. Jobs you've already done. That would build a massive amount of trust, wouldn't it? Like, because that's something going through the mind. Is this person shift? Is this their first job? Do they actually take the money and run?

Trevor: Yeah, and you know, and certain industries have a lot of back out.

James: There is. I've seen a, you know, in our Facebook community here, someone posted a picture of a roofing company. They pitch underneath the other suppliers, they take a deposit and then disappear. It's like a full-on scam. And I imagine if someone received a lengthy document with lots of verifiable proof, it would have to play against that type of fear, because they're like, Well, I trust it.

Example, I'm having a vehicle modified at the moment. And two people recommended this place to me. And then the third person I asked about it said they're the best. And then I've checked their website, and they have endless proof and results, like articles, like a consumer guide, like, why we're the best performer, you know, most up-to-date performer in the country, what it is we do differently.

Then when you speak to them on the phone and communicate with them, everything backs up, the look and feel of what I'm hearing about to the point where I'm just like, Shut up and take my money. [laughs] Right? Because I feel like the risk is extremely low. I feel so confident in their ability. I've never even set foot in their establishment.

Trevor: Yeah, they're obviously doing a lot of things right, and the recommendations and everything you found backs it up. And what I've found for clients, especially when me in my own case, but we'll talk about the people, the doing of their own business, as somebody might have been to their website and seen their proof, there's testimonials, and then when they've had this conversation that's getting presented in a certain way and they're seeing it again, it's got, Yeah, I remember hearing that or reading that.

James: Well, that's what I'm thinking. If these people had a proposal for my type of vehicle, and they sent that out, and it has the proof, and it has other recommendations, because I had to kind of help them sell me a little bit with like, what other things would you consider for this type of vehicle? Like, what are the common things or the things that would be must haves? And they told me a few more. Like, they weren't forthcoming with that, I had to extract it from them.

But I can see where proposal would be great. Like, these are the things you've asked for. And here are other recommendations that we've seen. And then they could have, you know, Trevor got this, Fred got that, and their comments about, that would really start to make me desire that and feel like, oh, I should have those, too.

Are multiple packages a good idea?

Do you have multiple packages in your proposal? Like there's this, that, or that? Like a Goldilocks?

Trevor: Sometimes there's two.

James: Two, yup.

Trevor: That's a mentoring no, because that's what it is.

James: It's the thing, yeah.

Trevor: You know, if you're a landscaper, or you're offering something where there's options where you want to lay both out, when I'm proposing or teaching copywriters to propose their fees, is there's always two fees. Right? I'm positioning, you know, give them the apples to oranges, once they've seen all the proof. And it's just, I mean, it's snapshot case study.

James: So now it's an alternate choice assumptive, which one of these two programs are you choosing?

Trevor: Do you want to pay this fee and no royalties, which is higher? Or do you want to pay a lower fee with a percentage, an agreed percentage based on performance?

James: And so, I guess if you're in a, let's say, a car modifier, or whatever, you might have a better or best, or a good or best, or best value or premium type thing, where someone could choose a bundle with extra things in it.

Trevor: Yes. When I adjusted my own system to target the landscape gardeners that Barry and I were mentoring, there was a few different options. And you know, they could choose, but what was interesting as you know, we'd have them in the call, and they're a very skeptical industry. So the invitation would go out. And I'd just roll them into a three-step email sequence, which I modeled from my three-step direct mail sequence. Instead of three direct mail letters over 30 days, they got three emails over about 10 days.

And I held an ace up my sleeve for email three. And we went through a phase there when we were doing these calls, we'd convert about 75% of those to two and a half thousand pounds a month subscription model. And we'd keep most of them for over a year. Some we kept a couple of years, you know? So it's just, you can have this or you can have this, right? Which one do you want?

And then I typically give them three days to make the decision. Right? It's not the price is going to change. It's just the offer expires. Because if I don't do that or if you don't give them that option, then what reason have you really got to go back to them? Because anyone gets distracted, busy, meant to, you know, respond, whatever, the phone rings, dinner's on the table, knock at the door, and they don't get back to it.

Why have a time limit?

James: And what reason do you put for you putting the time limit?

Trevor: For me?

James: Yeah. Because I mean, there's a reason why it's good to have it as the seller, but how do you position that in a way to them that doesn't feel like a cheap deadline?

Trevor: Yep. Okay, fair question. I usually have some sort of bonus, like a good bonus for them to take action now. Okay, so if it's a mentoring client, and I've laid out the fees, it's like, you know what, if you do decide to agree three days from now by the date, expiry date in red, the first session is going to be two hours, which is basically a bonus month, for, you know, being a fast decision maker, you know, take an action, whatever you want to call it. Right?

And then it's their decision. And when I send the cover email, I let them know that everything's in the proposal. They can make an informed decision either way. Should they have any questions, feel free to reach out. And then offer expires, I let it go a couple of days. So I just do the follow up. So the good boy, Hey, Bob. This one, when do you have time to look at the proposal, that type of thing. No response or whatever. Expires three days.

Then I send out the final, the final whammy, right? And just remind them as like, Hey, I thought you were serious because, you know, we had this conversation, you're serious about getting these outcomes. You know, surely you can at least resonate with one of the things I've raised or doesn't it make sense to do something about it? And by the way, here's an additional bonus, it might be a guarantee on the services or whatever. And that just helps close them.

And that literally is I just model as I said, a few minutes ago, model what I did in direct mail to get people to say yes. Right? And when I send off the proposal, I go, you know, everything's here, you might do an informed decision, like I said, and, you know, it's entirely up to you, though. But we've had this call for a reason, you want to get outcomes based on our call, I can help you.

James: Cialdini did some research on that. He said that when you say something like, well, but it's up to you, that can double the conversions, when you give the customer a reminder that it's their choice, which I think is quite courteous to do as well. It's nice to hear you say that independently, because I'm sure you've been doing that for a lot longer than before that study came out.

Trevor: Yeah. Pretty much we've been doing it for twenty years.

James: You can use any variation of that, right? Look, it's entirely your call, or you be the best judge of what's right for you, those sorts of indicators can significantly increase conversions.

Trevor: Yes. And sometimes, someone will come back to you and they've got a question, or they'll think, okay, well, hey, there's a bit more than I was expecting. No, well, you know, we can either cherry pick and leave something out. And we can get to that later, this should be enough to get you the results.

Pinning down the real reason for No

James: There was an old sales school of thought that it's good to isolate the price. For example, they say, Look, everything else aside, is it just the price? That was an old Tom Hopkins, or probably even Brian Tracy. And I've been hearing this literally in the last week, people saying, is it the price? Do you think that's dangerous? Or is it okay?

Trevor: I think it's okay, if you get to the real reason, not the BS reason.

James: Do they know the real reason sometimes? For example, your 20-something-page proposal with a lot of proof, that might convert way better. Sounds like it does, than a one-line proposal with just factual, like an invoice-style proposal, which is what is probably everyone's sending out. People might not know they're not buying because they don't trust the person, or they don't know if it'll actually go ahead or not, because there's zero proof.

So they probably have a tough time saying, Well, you know, had you sent me a 20-page document loaded with proof, I would have gone ahead. But since you didn't, I'm not sure if you can do the job. Sometimes they just have this gut feeling, but they can't put it into words, which is why I think it can be a little dangerous isolating price, because you better be good at diagnosing if you're going to go down that path.

Trevor: Well, I had a guy that was referred to me by another copywriter when I still lived in Australia. And it wasn't a massive project. It was 4,400. And he said, No. And I said, Well, do tell. And he's like, Well... He just was fluffing around the answer. And so I probed him a little bit, and got to it that he was still a little bit unsure, even though somebody else had referred him to me.

And he'd read everything. He'd heard everything. And it was just his, well, what if it doesn't work? Right? So I probed him, I learned that, find out the one true reason why they're saying no, because once you do, you're armed and dangerous. It puts you in the position to overcome that objection.

James: Like offer a guarantee or something?

Trevor: Yeah. And which is, I said, Well, you did read the guarantee, right? He's like, Yeah. Okay, I'm going to read it to you on the phone. It was a phone call.

James: I call that an assisted sale. [laughs]

Trevor: Yeah.

James: Where you're helping them through your online offer or whatever.

Trevor: I think he just wanted to hear it from me personally.

James: It's not different to that, let's think through this together, when they say I want to think about it.

Trevor: Yeah.

James: It's like, well, clearly, there's some information missing here. So let's just go through that again and think through this together. That could be one way to help people. At least find out if there's some major gap that you've omitted in the process.

When you find a great supplier...

Trevor: Well, what was interesting about that guy is that he was one of the guys, I've spoken about him before on the [outrageous offers podcast](#) I've done with you, and it blew his business up, right, because of the offer that was wrapped around with it. And then of course, six months later, he's like, I got another project for a different business, money, right? Another seven and a half grand.

James: It's like when I find a great supplier, like I'm looking for things to go and do business with them. I've got the most incredible surfboard shaper relationship. And I unfortunately, I snapped a surfboard last week. And I was pretty excited to take it down there, so I could just, you know, take him some beers and ask him to fix it, because he does the best job ever. And I know he's going to do a great job, but it was just nice to have a catch up, you know, like, I'm happy to send them business.

When you get a supplier like that, it's great, you know, like the performance place. You know, I wanted to see if I can take my other car there now. I haven't even been there yet. But I'm just expecting it's going to be amazing.

The understated approach to achievement

Trevor: I'm sure we'll see pictures, will we all? On Facebook.

James: You will never see the pictures. [laughs] Like, you know the best thing about my life is that I don't publish it on social media, like my house, my possessions and stuff. It's like, I cherish the privacy and the non-flexing method. I'm happy to share endless content for my clients. But it's like I had this troll the other day on YouTube. He was basically poking fun at my videos. He said, Oh yeah, advice from a guy with 10 likes. That was his troll comment.

I looked at his profile, and he had 13 subscribers, right? And he has just one of those fake names, you know, like, yellow dog's d*ck or something. And so I replied back, I said, Listen, I only take comments seriously when someone has at least 14 subscribers. So keep at it. But you know, like, the reality is, you know, I'd be interested to do a comparison on any measure of success this guy wants to pick, like trump cards. Probably I'm doing okay. But it doesn't bother me, it doesn't get on my skin. It was just like, humor.

And yeah, so you won't see it. And it's a choice I've made. And what I've seen is in my line of work, I've seen so much flash and bling and flex, but it's mostly bullsh*t. You know, it's the Yin Yang, the black and the white side to it. If someone's got all the things, they're missing something else. Maybe they're missing a relationship, maybe it doesn't matter how many things you get, you'll never get enough, and they'll always feel incomplete or whatever.

It fascinates me, some of the most humble, low key people, you'd never pick in a million years. I really like that understated approach. I think that's my style.

Trevor: Yeah. I was tongue and cheek when I said that, because I already knew the answer.

James: Yeah, I know. And sorry for the very long explanation. But I guess I really needed to let my audience know that I'm doing just okay even if you don't see it all.

Trevor: Yeah, I'm selective. I mean, I don't care about I had the bling and...

James: You mostly post shoes, fancy shoes.

Trevor: Shoes, and travel lifestyle, and outdoor lifestyle, and food. And, you know, and I've just got into a relationship, which has been missing for a while. So that's certainly been a...

James: Oh, it's wonderful news, Trevor.

Trevor: And good. And, yeah, there's going to be no proposals there.

James: I'm curious, would you do a proposal in written form in that regard? Because that could be considered unromantic.

Trevor: Yeah. No, I wouldn't.

James: Because, was it Gary Halbert wrote a full page ad in the paper looking for a partner at some point? That was fairly famous.

Trevor: Yes, yeah. It's a classic letter, calling out what you want, and more importantly, what you don't want, which was very good copy. Yeah, but no, in that case, no, it's too early days, but it's all good.

James: I know a guy who's got some kind of Tinder process. I'm not up to date with all these apps, but he's got a VA running Tinder messages. And then he's got a whole system around it to get all the dates he wants, but it made me feel a bit sad hearing about that. I feel like there's times to use the systems and processes and maybe times to be a little bit human and organic.

I think the takeaway here is no matter what business you have, whatever you're selling, think about your delivery method and how you can improve the targeting and the messaging, and see if there's a system that's reliable and repeatable that gets you a higher result, whether that's a proposal, whether that's a coaching application call, or whether that is some other method, refine your message, tune your methodology.

Getting your hands on Trevor's proposal

People will ask me, Trevor, the obvious questions, like how do I get a copy of this proposal? How do I find out about this proposal? Do you teach it anywhere? Do you have it in a course, etc?

Trevor: Up until this point, I've just being doing a done with you. When somebody reaches out, we agree on the fees, done with you. I am in the process of creating a course around it. And a couple of guys I know are doing very well at big challenges want to do it with me as a challenge process.

James: Or maybe you put together a little group and let me know about it. I'll let our audience know about it.

Trevor: Well, yeah, that's sort of what I'm working on.

James: Otherwise, they'll contact you, and you'll send off your proposal for the training, and they'll say, Thanks, Trevor. No need. [laughs]

Trevor: Yeah. No, don't do that. [laughs]

James: Cut and paste, like the cut and paste, it always blows my mind. I shared a playbook last week, which is, it's a multi-email series technique that I've been using to sell like crazy behind the scenes. And I know, there'll be one or two people who will copy exactly, they'll say exactly what I say, they'll send exactly the same email, and then one or two of them will even email me saying it didn't work for me, right? I'm like, Yeah, because you didn't do any work, right? Work being the operative word, you've got to customize this technique for yourself.

So I think understanding how it works is the big point I wanted to make, like, what we've been able to elicit from this episode is that there is a system out there where you can have a post-call follow up that is effective combined with an email sequence that combines elements of a headline, relevant statements back to the client of the thing that they want help with, how your solution is going to help them with that, trust elements, proof elements, guarantees, risk reversals, all that sort of stuff, a timeframe, a contact process, a fee schedule, one or two, maybe, and that this thing is out there and Trevor's been doing it for a long time.

What's your best website, Trevor?

Trevor: [Smofo.com](http://smofo.com). S-M-O-F-O.com.

James: Short and simple. Love it.

Trevor: Or just jump on Facebook, facebook.com/toecracker, because that's where I'll be, you know, I thought about doing a six-week training on this. But I don't think I actually need six weeks, I think four sessions is enough, and then being able to reveal. I'm about to start a private client one to one to train her for her business. And then after that, it'll just be, I'll put it in the course and create a group around it, and give people the support, because it does take a little bit, even if you're a copywriter, take a little bit to sharpen this. And that's where the copy chieftain for me comes in at the end.

Before they even follow the full system, they've got to do the big chunk, the biggest sort of weapon in that whole proposal system invitation first, and now that before I even teach them the rest.

James: Yeah, it's just going to be words you can - good words to use and bad words to use and so forth.

Trevor: Yeah, but you know, I did cover this when I did the [Outrageous Offers](#) training.

James: Well, that's all right. We can't assume that everyone's listened to every single episode. But I do recommend that. We have [a playlist of Trevor's previous episodes](#). We'll put them in the show notes here at episode 1004. It's great to have you back, Trevor, as always, interesting banter, few stories either way. And the main thing is we get some learning outcomes, some actionable items from each episode. And I feel like this has been an excellent one, because it's not something that I've gone deep in the proposals. I've pretty much tried to avoid proposals through most of my business life, because of an early trauma. And it's good to hear that it's working for others. Thank you.

Trevor: Yeah, thanks for having me on again.

JAMES SCHRAMKO



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