

Close-Out Coaching Script

Five minutes. Private. With one technician at a time, about one specific weak close-out. This is the conversation that turns a rubric into a practice.

Companion to: *Fix the System*, Chapter 9. **Who uses it:** the maintenance supervisor, during the weekly close-out audit. **When:** once per week, for each of the bottom-5 close-outs from the weekly audit. **Format:** private one-on-one conversation, five minutes, with the close-out text in front of both people. **Tone:** teaching, not punitive. The goal is better close-outs next week, not behavioral compliance this week.

Before the conversation

- ☐ Re-read the close-out yourself. Score it against the rubric. Know which of the 5 elements were missing or weak.
 - ☐ Pull up the job plan the close-out was written against. You may need it for context.
 - ☐ Pick a private space — not the break room, not the shop floor. The technician should not feel called out in front of peers.
 - ☐ Keep the conversation to 5 minutes. If it's going long, you're doing it wrong.
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The four-step script

Step 1 — Read the close-out aloud, together (30 seconds)

Say: *"I'm looking at your close-out for WO [#] on [asset], last [day]. Can we go through it together?"*

Read the close-out text aloud, slowly. The technician is watching. This is the first step in making the close-out visible as something someone actually reads. For many technicians, this is the first time their close-out has been read aloud back to them.

Do not editorialize yet. Just read.

Step 2 — Ask what happened on the job (2 minutes)

Say: *"Walk me through the job. What did you see when you got there? What did you do? Anything unexpected?"*

Let the technician talk. Listen. Write down what they say — literally, on paper or in the CMMS comment field, in front of them.

Most of the time, the technician will describe in two minutes of conversation five to ten times more information than was in the close-out. That gap is the problem the rubric is trying to close. The information exists; it's not making it into the CMMS.

Step 3 — Rewrite the close-out together (2 minutes)

Say: *"Everything you just told me is useful. Let's put it into the close-out. Here's the rubric — [point to the five elements]. Which of these did you actually do on the job?"*

Walk through the five rubric elements together. For each, ask: "What would go here?" The technician answers. You type (or they type) their answer into the close-out.

Common conversations:

- Technician: "I did torque the bolts to 120, yeah." -> type "Torqued to 120 ft-lb per spec" into the Readings field.
- Technician: "Actually the gasket we had in the kit was wrong, I grabbed a substitute." -> type "Substitute gasket ECO-42 used in place of spec ECO-40" into the Deviations field.
- Technician: "This is the third seal on this pump this year, actually." -> type that observation into the Notes field.

By the end of step 3, the close-out meets the rubric. And the technician did the typing, with you facilitating. They experienced the five-element format as a conversation, not a mandate.

Step 4 — Close with one specific ask (30 seconds)

Say: *"Good. Next week, when you close out your jobs, can you write them with these five elements? The notes field especially — you just told me stuff about this asset nobody else in the shop knows. That's the field that saves us the next failure on a different asset."*

Let the technician respond. Usually they nod. Sometimes they push back ("I don't have time"). If they push back, acknowledge the concern ("I hear you — that's why we're targeting three minutes, not thirty") and move on. Do NOT argue.

End with: *"Thanks. Back to it."*

What NOT to do

- **Do not compare this technician to other technicians.** No "Eddie is writing much better close-outs." The comparison is against the rubric, not against peers.
 - **Do not bring up past close-outs from months ago.** Focus on THIS one. Fix it. Move on.
 - **Do not make it about effort.** The technician is not lazy. The system wasn't reading their work. Now the system is reading.
 - **Do not extend past 5 minutes.** If the conversation runs long, it stops being coaching and becomes a performance discussion. That's a different conversation with different stakes. Don't mix them.
 - **Do not have this conversation in public.** Private only. Always.
 - **Do not reference discipline or consequences.** This is teaching. If a technician fails coaching repeatedly over months, that's a performance issue for HR. This script is not for that.
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After the conversation

- ☐ Note the coaching in your weekly audit log (the technician's name and the one-line takeaway).
- ☐ Follow up next week — look at that technician's close-outs specifically. Acknowledge progress privately if you see it.

- ☐ If you see no progress after two coaching conversations with the same technician, escalate to the maintenance manager. The issue may not be skill; it may be organizational.

Track the coaching over time

Date	Technician	WO #	Missing elements	Action committed	Progress noted

Why this works

Most technicians who write "Repaired. RTO." are not bad at maintenance. They are good at maintenance and bad at the close-out habit. The bad habit formed because nobody was reading the close-outs, so the close-outs stopped being worth writing.

This five-minute conversation does two things at once. It reads the close-out (step 1). And it demonstrates that someone is listening (step 2). After two or three of these conversations with a given technician, they start writing close-outs that don't need coaching. Not because you punished them. Because you proved the audience exists.

An identification-stage insight from Chapter 5 applies here too: technicians write for an audience. This conversation IS that audience. Your job as supervisor is to be that audience consistently until the habit is installed. After that, the "well done" board does the reinforcement for you.

From Fix the System by Ivan Getov. Companion to Chapter 9: Close Out and Learn. getov.xyz/toolkit/fix-the-system/ch09/close-out-coaching-script. Free. No email required.