

### Coffee's for Closers

Blake, the character played by Alec Baldwin in David Mamet's *Glengarry Glen Ross* was a real sweetheart. Bodacious . . . audacious . . . overly aggressive A-type . . . testosterone pouring out of every pore. I'll never forget the scene where he descended upon his sad sack underlings and humiliates them by telling them, among other insults, to "... put that coffee down. Coffee's for closers." The look of sadness, contempt and resignation in Jack Lemon's Willy Loman eyes was indeed memorable.

Our business environment puts great pressure on all of us to get the deal done. This includes the mediator. More often than not, the effectiveness of a neutral facilitator is judged by how he or she can close the deal, whether or not it's a correct criterion. To the effective neutral, closing means working on an end resolution with the very first contact with the disputants and the dispute. Contrary to the appearance to a lot of participants that a deal gets done miraculously in the final hour of a mediation, the reality is that "closing" begins much earlier. Not only is it challenging work; it requires the participation and candor of all involved. The next time you urgently await the result from the neutral, please remember that you are an important part of the closing and successful resolution and that benefits beyond the coffee await you.