

The 4 Keys to Improve Basic Questioning

A client can quickly detect the inexperienced salesperson because they:

- Ask very few questions about the current situation or problem
- Assume the client can figure out how the product or service will be of value
- Unwittingly pass control of the sales interview to the client.

Don't focus on persuasion begin by creating an **environment of trust and understanding** by asking questions. The first question can be *"Would you mind if I ask you a few questions?"* Leave the product or service solution until the client's problem is fully understood. Don't assume.

1. Plan questions prior to the sales meeting

This can lead to:

- Establishing rapport and building mutual trust
- Controlling the sales interview
- Uncovering problems, difficulties and the degree of urgency
- Identifying needs, motives and any roadblocks
- Bringing to the surface any unresolved past issues.

2. To maximize information ask open questions

- It encourages the free flow of conversation
- Allows the client to talk most of the time
- Allows the conversation to remain expansive
- Allows the client to discover ideas for themselves.

An open question begins with “What...When... Why... Where... How... Who or Which?”
Example: “What is most important to you when dealing with a new supplier?”

3. To get a concise response ask closed questions

- Feedback is direct
- Facts quickly identified
- Can change the direction of the conversation.

A closed question begins with “Is... Did... Are... Do... Will...Have...Does... or Has”.
Example: “Will this be going to tender?”

4. Ask Qualifying questions

Qualifying is the term used to identify those involved in the decision process and their level of authority or influence. Qualifying can also assist in identifying the level of need or urgency for a product or service.

Clients, including long-term clients, need to be re-qualified whenever:

- Your organisation has released a new product or service
- The client's organisation has restructured.

The information gained by qualifying will allow you to strategically position yourself, your organisation, product or service to their greatest advantage. An example is “Can you walk me through the decision process?”

Applying these 4 keys can positively impact on your relationship and understanding of your client as an individual and their organisation's needs.



For more information or if you want to discuss a sales or sales management issue then contact Kurt Newman on +61 412 252 236 or email kurt@salesconsultants.com.au.



Kurt's expertise is in improving the sales effectiveness of his clients' businesses by generating more sales and in a more profitable manner. He has guided companies to increase sales from 10-56%. Clients range from small to multinational companies and he has completed projects in Australia, the Middle East, Asia and Europe.



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