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Elevating Your Questioning to Unlock Deeper Insights

Think of questioning like a stone skipping across a lake – each bounce touches the surface, but never dives deep. You may feel accomplished by asking many questions, but are you truly engaging your client? Or are your questions skimming from topic to topic, easily interrupted by distractions?

The skill of questioning goes beyond simply knowing when to use open or closed questions. To uncover deep-rooted issues, especially those that have not prompted action yet, requires a more intentional approach. Sometimes, the client is not fully aware of the magnitude of their own challenges. That is where your structured questioning comes in.

To uncover problems where no action has been initiated means the problem is not serious enough or the client is not aware of the full implications of the problem. To uncover the latter requires a structured approach to questioning.

Profile questions

These lay the groundwork for meaningful conversation, aimed at identifying or confirming current or future challenges. They are created from the preparation you have done beforehand, including insights from referrals and industry knowledge. Prepare three to five questions that probe into the client's organization and or personal experiences.

Example:

"What do you value most about your current supplier?"

"If improvements could be made, what would they be?"

"In your role, what challenges have you faced in the past year?"

Salespeople who stick to surface-level profile questions often lose their client's interest, leaving them emotionally disengaged.

Issue questions

To create deeper clarity and understanding, issue questions help you and the client explore the problem more thoroughly.

Example:

"What criteria did you use to select your supplier?"

"Has your supplier addressed your concerns?"

"How have you managed these challenges?"

Effect questions

These dig even deeper, revealing the personal and professional impact of the client's challenges. They highlight the emotional weight and urgency of the issue.

Example:

“How have delays and invoicing issues impacted your business?”

“By leaving the decision for a month what compounding challenges could happen?”

“How have the current challenges affected you personally?”

Effect questions can be powerful. They bring the full extent of the client's emotional pain or desire to the surface, illuminating both the potential costs of inaction and the compelling reasons for change. They help the client connect emotionally to the problem and ignite the need to act.

Effect questions can:

- Reveal the full scale of the issue
- Paint a complete picture of its impact on the organization and the individual
- Highlight cause and effect, uncovering related problems
- Lead you to the core problem.

Motivation to Act

People naturally seek to avoid emotional pain and move toward what feels good. If the pain is strong enough or the desire great enough, the client will be motivated to decide. This might be tied to personal or organizational goals, like prestige, recognition, cost savings or increased profitability.

Elevating your questioning is like using a music scale. You will move up and down between Profile, Issue and Effect Questions until the real need is revealed. That is when the buying cycle truly begins. Aim for depth, and let your questions inspire action.



Kurt Newman is a distinguished sales practitioner with a remarkable track record spanning industries. His expertise covers a wide range of products and services, including newly released, consultative, relationship-based, and highly competitive retail offerings.

Kurt's exceptional performance has earned him major sales awards and helped him set industry records. As a recognized sales expert, successful author, and respected coach in sales and personal development, Kurt has guided numerous organizations and individuals to achieve significant improvements in their sales performance and profitability.

In March 2000, Kurt founded Sales Consultants, an organization dedicated to enhancing sales performance across industry. His professional journey has taken him across continents, working with clients ranging from small enterprises to multinational corporations in Australia, the Middle East, Europe, and Asia.

Kurt's influence extends beyond direct consulting; he is a prolific writer whose sales articles resonate with a broad audience on social media and in traditional media publications. His authored works include *21 Timeless Insights*

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Kurt's commitment to continuous improvement and lifelong learning is evident through his ongoing studies and research into business dynamics and human behaviour, ensuring that his insights and strategies remain at the forefront of the sales and business development fields.