



### **8 "Must" Questions To Ask In Every Selling Situation**

By: Mark Smock

Solving the problems of people and organizations is ultimately what business is all about. Effective selling involves defining your existing or potential customer's problems. If properly "sold", a sales prospect will have his problems solved with your company's products or services. To be successful at selling, you must systematically approach customers with a proven repertoire of qualifying questions that allows you to clearly understand your customer's current business challenges.

In order to most effectively solve your customer's problems you have to ask questions, the "right" questions and most importantly, listen to the answers you get. The best source of information about a sales prospect's business problem is the prospect. However, any seasoned salesperson will tell you that the customer does not always know what their problem is, how it happened or how to deal with it. Without a proven list of problem definition questions, a salesperson has little chance of achieving sales success.

In every selling situation, there are eight fundamental questions that must be answered to ultimately generate a purchase commitment, a solution to your customer's problems:

- 1) Does the customer know exactly what the business problem is? Are they giving you symptoms of a problem or the problem itself?
- 2) How long has the problem existed? Is this a temporary situation or an ongoing challenge?
- 3) What will happen if the problem continues? Short and long term ramifications should be explored
- 4) What has been done thus far to address the problem? This answer could be your "door opener" later!
- 5) What were the results of those efforts to "fix" the problem? Actions taken and money spent should be quantified here
- 6) What is the cost thus far of this problem? Here you can determine what it cost them NOT to have your company's products
- 7) Are there budgeted funds available to "fix" this problem? If there aren't, why not and will there be? If not, good luck!
- 8) Who is involved and how is the purchase commitment to be made?

You must clearly understand who the decision makers are and how the commitment decision is to be made. If you do not, there will always be "someone else" who will kill your deal within the organization!

Once you have valid answers to all these questions you can accurately determine whether the products or services your company has to offer can cost effectively solve your customer's problems. If your products or services can solve your customer's problem you now have something to talk about!

Before you begin your sales pitch, your explanation of how your offerings best meet their needs, be absolutely sure that you have all the decision makers at your presentation and have confirmed the money is budgeted to back up their purchases. If all the key decision makers are not present and you are not sure the funds are there to continue the relationship your probability of achieving sales success at this customer has been dramatically reduced!

One Final Question: Ask for the Order!

You may be wondering why, "Asking for the order" was not one of the "8 Key Questions to Ask in Every Selling Situation"? When you know your product or service can solve your customer's problem cost effectively, and it is clear they understand and sincerely appreciate the value of your product or service offerings to a level of justification that they can, and will, make a reasonable purchase commitment to you, you have AN OBLIGATION, not only to your company, but to your customer, to ask them to buy what you are selling! A simple way to do this is to ask: "What do you want to do next?" Say nothing more until they respond.

Effective selling can be as simple as striving to get accurate answers to these fundamental problem qualification questions. It is most interesting to experience how systematically going through these eight questions with your potential customer will reduce their tendency to generate purchase objections. Also, there is an interesting relationship or "bond" that develops between the salesperson and the customer when they are asked to explain and again experience why it cost so much for them NOT to have your products or services in their lives!

Today's successful salesperson is a problem solver. How you define your customer's business problems can often be as important as how you eventually solve their problems. Use these fundamental problem definition questions as a format for your next sales call and see what happens. They could be the edge you need to get that order you thought you would never get!



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## Resources You Can Use

### Author Bio

Mark Smock is 30+ year veteran of the sales profession and President of [www.business-buyer-directory.com](http://www.business-buyer-directory.com), the FIRST international business buyer directory of its kind. Business Buyer Directory provides a non-traditional means for proactive business buyers to locate businesses for sale worldwide that meet their exact registered purchase criteria.

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