

# 450

## SALES QUESTIONS

« *What to ask in*  
**ANY** *situation* »

The Ultimate Guidebook To The Single  
**MOST POWERFUL** Sales Technique

**Sean McPheat**



About The Author

## SEAN MCPHEAT

Sean is a multi-award winning entrepreneur and best-selling author. He's the Managing Director of international sales development firm, MTD Sales Training.

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Sean McPheat was the founder of MTD Sales Training back in 2001 and since then they have delivered training to over **100,000 sales professionals** and over **3,500 different organisations**.

Sean has been featured on **CNN, BBC, ITV, SKY, The Guardian, Arena Magazine, Marketing Weekly and Forbes**, as well as radio stations such as BBC WM, Insight Radio and LBC (Leading Britain's Conversation) and has **over 250 other media credits** to his name.

Sean is also a much sought after media figure and motivational speaker on all topics related to sales, business improvement and entrepreneurialism.

Sean has been recognised for his own sales and business building skills through the **British Business Awards** and has been featured in the **Who's Who Of Britain's Business Elite**.

Sean was a finalist in the 2012 British Excellence in Sales & Marketing Awards as **Sales Trainer of the Year** and was a finalist in the 2013 Training Journal Awards for **Learning & Development Professional of The Year**.

In July 2011 Sean's book "eselling® - how to use the internet & social media for prospecting, personal branding, networking & for engaging the decision maker" became a #1 Amazon bestseller - [www.e-selling.com](http://www.e-selling.com)

Sean is also the author of the "The Sales Person's Crisis" which has been downloaded over **20,000 times** on the internet at [www.salescrisis.com](http://www.salescrisis.com) and he has a Sales CD Programme out on the market called "Drive Time Sales Strategies – 39 Practical "HOW TO" Sales Tips While You're On The Way To The Sale" - [www.drivetimesales.com](http://www.drivetimesales.com)

Sean's weekly email tips go out to over **60,000 people** interested in sales and management and his blog [www.mtdsalesblog.com](http://www.mtdsalesblog.com) is visited by **5,000 people** each week.



### Contact & Useful Resources

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For more information about Sean, or to benefit from Sean's free resources visit:



[www.twitter.com/seanmcpheat](http://www.twitter.com/seanmcpheat)



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### Introduction

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#### ***“Yes is the answer, what’s the question?”***

If there is one skill that will rocket you to sales superstardom then it’s the ability to **ask quality questions**.

That’s it, in a nutshell!

I’m asked the world over for my thoughts on sales methodologies, sales models, buyer insights and deep psychological aspects of the sale but I can cut through all of that by saying that if you do not ask the right questions at the right time with the right tonality then you are sunk.

This is a book about sales questions and **LOTS** of them at that!

In creating this book I locked myself away in a darkened room and brainstormed all of the different types of questions that will help you. From questions on how to build rapport through to how to unearth the needs and wants of the buyer – you’ve now got them all!

### How to use this book...

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Treat this as a guidebook and dip in and out of it as you see fit. Some of the questions will be nailed-on for your industry and what you sell – i.e. you won’t need to amend them at all. Other questions will need tweaking slightly and others will not be applicable.

Remember at school when you wanted to ask the teacher a question but were too frightened?

“There’s no such thing as a stupid question Sean!”

Well, I disagree!

I’ve lost deals by asking stupid questions or, indeed, not asking enough of them.

In sales there are such things as stupid questions, so make sure that your questions have a purpose and that you ask them in the right way.

Questioning is an art form and when you get it right you’ll be someone who comes across as an expert in their field who cares about and who knows their stuff, so please put the time and effort into mastering your art.

### So what’s next?

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Well, if you haven’t already, find yourself somewhere quiet to sit, get a highlighter pen and pour yourself a drink (not the hard stuff, it’s an easy read!) then highlight the questions that you’re going to start to include in your interactions.

Happy questioning!



Sean

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# BUILDING RAPPORT

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## Introduction

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Although rapport should be built all throughout the sales interaction via the tonality that you use, your body language gestures and through active listening skills, when you first meet with a prospect you need to break the ice. This can be when you first meet them at reception, as you walk together to their office or meeting room, on the phone and when you're on the way out of the meeting or at the end of the call too.

Remember, rapport building is not a stage of the sales process. You should be building rapport at all times and all throughout the sales process.



## RAPPORT BUILDING WARNING

Please do not think that building rapport just covers topics like the weather, favourite football teams or cheesy comments on how beautiful their kids look from the photos on their desk.

Instead, you should build rapport by keeping things light but business like.



### Questions

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*"I noticed on your LinkedIn profile that you've only been here for 3 months. How are you settling in?"*

*"I noticed on your LinkedIn profile that you used to work for ABC Company. I used to work for them/ we've done work for them/ what did you do there?"*

*"Looking on your website I noticed that you've just done this/achieved that/won this contract/moved to bigger offices/ (anything newsworthy to talk of) how's that going?"*

*"How's business?"*

*"How long have you been with the company?" (If you don't know via LinkedIn)*

*"So you've been with ABC for 5 years?" (If you do know via LinkedIn)*

*"So you're the title/position. What exactly does that entail?"*

*"So as the title/position, do you also oversee..."*

*"How many people in your department/do you manage/ do you employ?"*

*"How long have you been in that/this field all together?"*

*"How long have you been in the/this business?"*

*"How did you get your start in the business/field?"*

*"How did your company/business that you own get started?"*

*"How many people do you manage?"*

*"Does your company have other locations?"*

*"Does your role involve a lot of travelling?"*

*"How do you keep up to date on important information in the industry?"*

*What periodicals do you read?"*

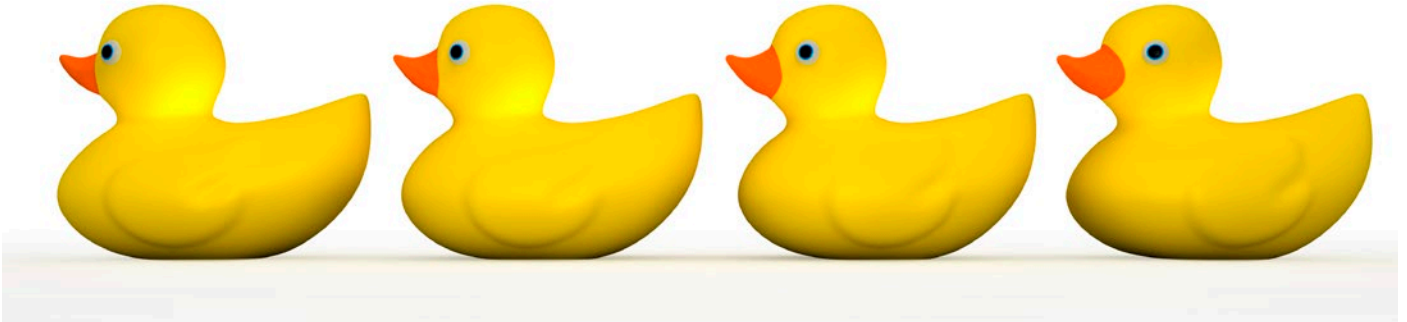
*"What are you up to this weekend?" (On the way out of office/meeting/end of call)*

*"What have you got planned for the rest of the day?" (On the way out of office/meeting/end of call)*

*"What have you got on for the rest of the day?" (On the way out of office/meeting/end of call)*

## SETTING THE STAGE

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### Introduction

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Before you get started, it is essential to set *the stage* for the interaction.

Too many sales meetings meander aimlessly from the very start.

When you get this part right, you'll be able to condition your prospect on what to expect not only during the meeting itself but also what to expect from you as well.

If you make a strong start to the meeting then everything you say and do from thereon in will be seen in this light. Similarly, if your opening bombs or is unclear then you'll have an uphill battle for the rest of your interaction.

When setting the stage you must make sure the prospect is aware of what you are going to do, approximately how long it will take, what the final steps will be (if you will ask for a decision or set up another meeting) and what the follow up steps will be.

You need to set the stage and confirm that the prospect understands and agrees.



### Questions

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*"Well, thanks for seeing me today John. What I'd like to do is really get to understand the situation you're in and understand your requirements and then I'll be able to go away and put a proposal together for you along with the fees. Does that sound ok to you?"*

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*"Well, thanks for seeing me today John. What I'd like to do is really get to understand the situation you're in and understand your requirements and then I'll be able to see how we can help you. Does that sound ok to you?"*

---

*"So, as I mentioned on the telephone, today's meeting should only take about 30 minutes and what I will do is show you exactly how our software works and why it is so powerful. I will demonstrate how much time and money it can save your IT department. Then, if everything looks good to you, we'll arrange a time for us to come back and install a trial version. How does that sound?"*

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*"What we will go over today is....does that sound acceptable?"*

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*"So today, I am going to .....and then I'll be able to see which of our solutions is the best fit for you. Is that what you had in mind?"*

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*"Our objective this morning is to first perform a comprehensive examination of your network procedures. As I had mentioned in our last meeting, this will take about two hours. Then we will analyse the information for a few days and get back to you with our recommendation. Is that what you were expecting?"*

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*"Over the next 20 minutes or so, I'll show you exactly how we are able to help your retail sales people close more sales. Then I'll detail our pricing structure and see what you think...Ok?"*

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*"I am going to ask you a series of questions to see if I can determine the problem. Is that ok?"*

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*"In order to do this, I am going to have to ask you several questions and some may be a little sensitive. Is that ok with you?"*

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*"In our discovery meeting, we will get into a few rather touchy areas...will that be alright?"*

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*"This meeting will only last about an hour, as I mentioned. However, it is best if we are not interrupted. Can you see to that for us?"*

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*"We will need to tour the plant to see if the square footage is sufficient. Will we have access this afternoon?"*

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*"So, as I mentioned we will only need about a half hour today, but I will need both you and your wife to be present for the entire interview. Will she be with us for that time?"*

---

*"So, today we will go over the entire plan and to do that we will need some accounting information as well as your head of I.T. Are they available?"*

---

*"Our objective for today is to run a diagnostic of the system. Of course, you will have to shut down for a few hours as I had mentioned yesterday. Is that still going to be ok?"*

---

*"No, it's no problem that you were running a little late. However, we do need a full 45 minutes for me to accurately show you what we have. Do you still have that time available?"*

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*"As I mentioned, during this portion of the process, I will have to actually get a look at your books. Do I have your permission to do that?"*

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*"Ok, as planned, today we will test drive the system. I will need a temporary administrative-level password and security access. Do you have the authority to make that happen?"*

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*"As we always do after an installation, we talk to the employees to see how they feel about the new service. May we have permission to talk to your people?"*

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*"For my presentation, I will need a complete audio visual set up and a big screen, as well as a podium and a microphone. Can you set that up for us?"*

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# INVESTIGATING NEEDS & WANTS

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## Introduction

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At the heart of every sale is a thorough fact-find.

You'll want to unearth the needs, the wants and the desires of your prospect so you can present your products and solutions in a way that will be of benefit to them.

The only way that you can do this is to ask quality questions so you can really find out what their current situation is, what their requirements are and what they are looking to achieve.

Remember, your prospects want a good listening to, not a good talking to! They don't want to just sit there listening to your monologue of why your products and services are the best.

Once you nail this stage you will have a big advantage over your rivals. A prospect wants to know that you understand their situation in detail. Chances are that your competitors are asking questions but they'll only be skin deep.

Instead, you need to drill down to the root causes of the issues that they face at a much deeper level and demonstrate your expertise on the subject.



### Questions

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*"How can we help?"*

*"Could you please give me some background to this?"*

*"Why are you seeking to do this (work/project/engagement)?"*

*"Why isn't this particular technology/service/product/situation/issue working for you right now?"*

*"Can you tell me more about the present situation/problem?"*

*"How long has it been an issue/problem?"*

*"How long have you been thinking about this?"*

*"How is it impacting your organisation/customers/staff?"*

*"How much is the issue/problem costing you in time/money/resources/staff/energy?"*

*"How much longer can you afford to have the problem go unresolved?"*

*"When you went to your existing suppliers and shared your frustrations about this problem, what reassurances did they give you that it wouldn't be repeated?"*

*"How did these problems/issues first come about? What were the original causes?"*

*"How severe is the problem?"*

*"Why do you think the issue/problem has been going on for so long?"*

*"When do you need the issue/problem fixed by?"*

*"What kind of return or payoff will you be looking for if you get a successful resolution of the problem?"*

*"How often do you think the problem has come up where you weren't even aware of it?"*

*"Who is ultimately responsible for this?"*

*"Tell me more about it."*

*"Can you make an educated guess as to how much it costs you?"*

*"Why have you been dealing with this for so long?"*

*"Why do you think it is happening?"*

*"What's your role in this situation/issue/problem?"*

*"What bothers you the most about this situation/issue/problem?"*

*"What are you currently doing to address the problem?"*

*"What have you done in the past to address the problem?"*

*"Have you used this type of product/service in the past?"*

*"Does this affect other parts of the business?"*

*"What has prevented you from fixing this in the past?"*

*"What kind of timeframe are you working in to fix this?"*

*"How long have you been thinking about it?"*

*"Who else is aware of it?"*

*"What is it costing you?"*

*"What is your strategy to fix this problem?"*

*"Who supports this action?"*

*"Is this problem causing other problems?"*

*"What practical options do you have to address this?"*

*"What kind of pressure is this causing you and the business?"*

*"Does your competition have these problems?"*

*"What goals and objectives do you have in general for this?"*

*"What is your biggest challenge with this?"*

*"What has made you want to look into this now?"*

*"In a perfect world, what would you like to see happen with this?"*

*"What are your key objectives with this?"*

*"What options are you currently looking at?"*

*"What options have you tried?"*

*"What do you like about your current supplier?"*

*"What kind of time frame are you working within?"*

*"How important is this need (on a scale of 1-10)?"*

*"What is the biggest problem that you are facing with this?"*

*"What other problems are you experiencing?"*

*"What are you using/doing now?"*

*"If you could have things the way you wanted, what would it look like?"*

*"Do you have any preference with regards to the solution?"*

*"Is there anything I have overlooked?"*

*"Have I covered everything off?"*

*"What alternatives have you considered?"*

*"Have you got any questions you'd like to ask me?"*

*"What is important to you in finding a solution to this?"*

*"What are your top 3 requirements that this solution just has to have?"*

*"How soon would you like to move with this?"*

*"What 3 key outcomes do you want from this?"*

*"How does this look/sound/feel to you?"*

*"Can you please tell me about that?"*

*"Can you give me an example?"*

*"Can you be more specific?"*

*"What other factors have we not discussed that are important to you?"*

*"Are there any other areas I haven't asked you about that are important to you?"*

*"What sense of urgency do you have here?"*

*"What else should I know?"*

*"If you could design the perfect solution, what would it look like, how much would you spend and how long would it go for?"*

*"What are the long term effects of the problem?"*

*"What are the intangible effects of the problem?"*

*"Do you know what other areas the problem is costing you money?"*

*"Can you put an amount on the problem in terms of cost: Weekly, monthly, annually?"*

*"Can you see how much money you/your organisation loses every day by not solving this issue?"*

*"Does the issue cause problems with employee moral?"*

*"Does the issue cause problems that negatively affect the motivation of your staff?"*

*"Can this problem affect productivity?"*

*"Who/how does the problem ultimately affect your current customers?"*

*"How does the problem ultimately affect your prospective customers?"*



*"How does the problem ultimately affect your sales teams?"*

*"How does the problem ultimately affect your other employees?"*

*"How does the problem ultimately affect your sales process?"*

*"How does the problem ultimately affect your pricing/selling costs?"*

*"How does the problem ultimately affect your reputation/goodwill/brand?"*

*"Can you see how this problem/issue can give your competition a competitive advantage?"*

*"If you were in your competitors' shoes, how would you take advantage of this?"*

*"If you were your competition, what would you do right now?"*

*"Do you know what your competition is thinking /planning about this?"*

*"Do they suffer the same problem?"*

*"Do your competitors also have this problem or is it unique to your organisation?"*

*"Is this an industry wide problem?"*

*"Is it regional/geographical/demographical?"*

*"How much does this problem cost you in man hours/time?"*

*"How much more productive could your people be if problem did not exist?"*

*"So what type of a number would you put on this?"*

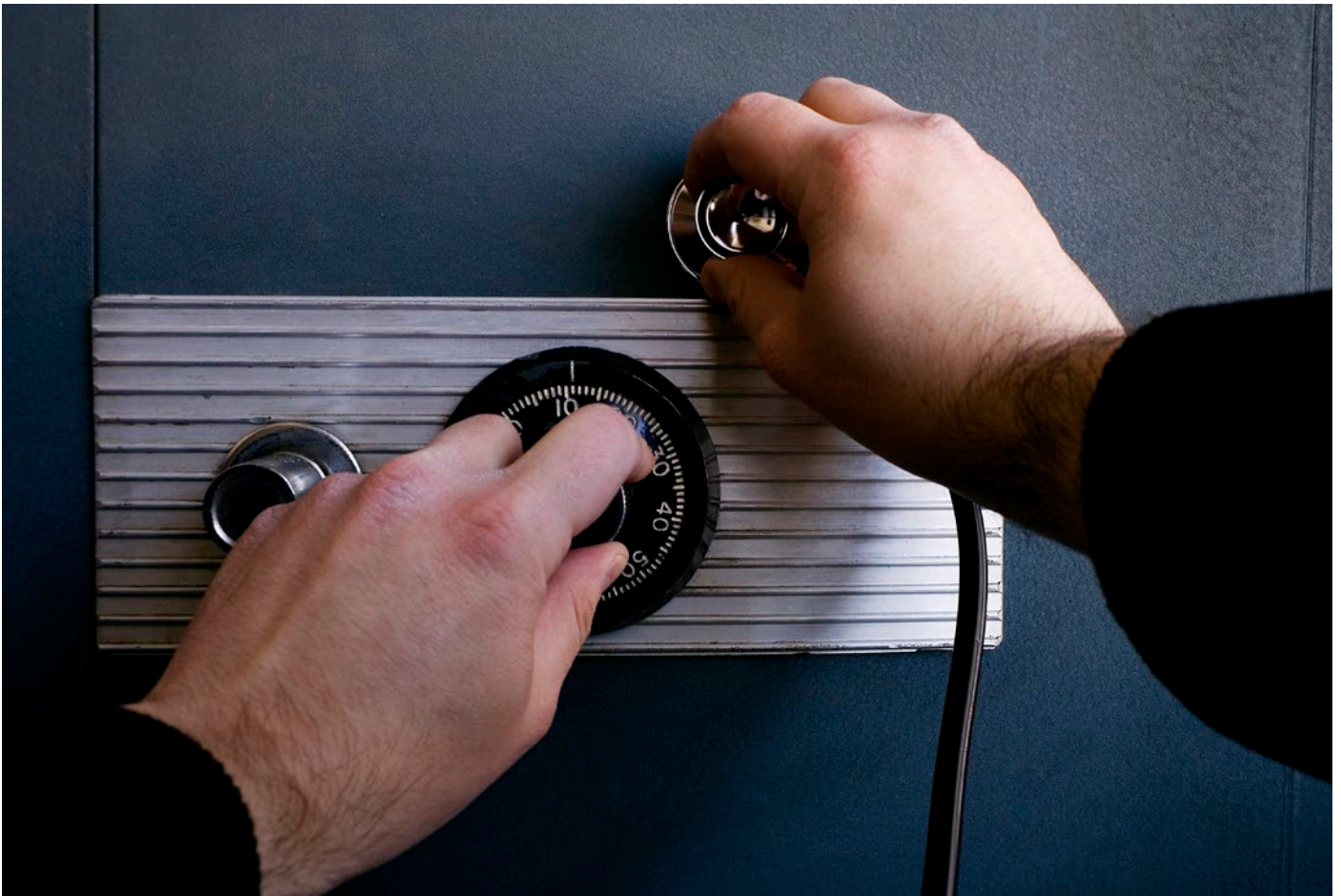
*"Looking at this from a point of lost sales, how much is just ONE sales worth to the company?"*

*"Who did you work with last time and why?"*

*"Thanks for all of the information that you've given me, it's been really useful. Have I asked you about every detail that's important to you?" (This is a "last chance saloon" question which enables the prospect to cover anything you may not have asked about but was important to them!)*

## HOW MUCH MONEY HAVE YOU GOT?

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### Introduction

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When qualifying a prospect you need to gauge what they have got to work with in terms of budget.

You need to find out if they have got the budget to start with, how much budget they have got and if they are in the same ball park as your products and services!

Some prospects feel comfortable when talking about money. Others do not!

Some will know what the budget is and others will not.

Some will know what the budget is and tell you they don't have one!

So there are lots of games that are played when it comes to establishing budget.

## Questions

*"We've got a number of options available; what were you looking to pay so I can match the right solution at the right price for you, just a ball park..." (Say "Just a ball park" very casually as though it's no big deal)*

*"Have you got a ball-park figure in mind? Just a ball park..." (Say "Just a ball park" very casually as though it's no big deal)*

*"What are you working with at the moment? Just a ball park..." (Say "Just a ball park" very casually as though it's no big deal)*

*"Have you got budget approval for this already?"*

*"How do you handle budget considerations?"*

*"How will this product/project get funded?"*

*"What sort of budget do you have in mind?"*

*"What are you looking to pay for this?"*

*"We've got a number of options available; what were you looking to pay so I can match the right solution at the right price for you?"*

*"Is there budget allocated for this project?"*

*"Whose budget will support this initiative?"*

*"Have you arrived at a budget or investment range for this project?"*

*"Are funds allocated, or must they be requested?"*

*"What is your expectation of investment required?"*

*"So we don't waste any time, are there any budget parameters to remain within?"*

*"Have you done this before, and at what investment level?"*

*"What are you looking to spend on this?"*

*"Are you working within a budget for this?"*

*"Have you got a ball-park figure in mind?"*

*"Does your budget to solve the problem, match the severity of the problem?"*

*"The last time something like this happened, how much did it cost you to fix it?"*

*"What are your time and budget goals on this?"*

*"As important as this is, I don't imagine you have a blank cheque to get it done...how much are you working to, to get this fixed?"*

*"If you had unlimited funds, I could very easily put together a package to solve all the issues. Since I know that is not the case, I'll stay within the limits you give me. So, what is your overall budget for this?"*

*"So what is your range on this? I mean, in a perfect world, what is the minimum amount you would like to see me get this done for? Then, what is the maximum you could possibly put into this, if it became absolutely necessary?"*

*"Now, will you handle this solely from your department's budget? Or would you be working with other departments?"*

*"So, what is your department's input in terms of the overall budget?"*

*"You said the problem is costing you £X a year. So how does your budget to fix it match up with that?"*

*"From what you've told me, this issue cost your organisation £X every month. So what are you going to invest to stop that?"*

*"With what you told me I can see that your organisation will spend £X over the next few months if this problem is not resolved. So, how much have you budgeted to prevent spending that money again this year?"*

*"From what you've told me, your competition is enjoying a huge advantage over you because of this. How much have you budgeted to take the lead back?"*

*"Ok, so we know this is costing you X amount of sales every day/month/quarter/year. (Calculate a figure that is close to the cost of your top package) Have you budgeted at least that amount to fix this?"*

*"So what do you think it is worth for you to get rid of this problem?"*

*"I know in the long term, you will invest 10s of 1,000s, however, how much are you ready to get started with?"*

*"This is a multi-faceted problem that will take time to get completely right. But for right now, how much do you have to take the first step?"*

*"How much have you budgeted for the first step in this project?"*

*"Like the old saying goes, 'You can eat an elephant if you do it one bite at a time.' How much do you want to commit for the first bite?"*

*"How much can you afford right now?"*

*"What did you plan on investing in this?"*



## DECISION MAKERS & DECISION MAKING

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### Introduction

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You're going to need to know who makes the decisions and how decisions are made so you can facilitate the whole decision making process.

Are you speaking to and influencing the right people?

Who is involved in the decision process?

You need to know all of this!

Too much of your time will be wasted if you do not understand how your prospect will make their buying decision and indeed, if you're talking to the right people in the first place!

You need to align the way that you sell to how they buy and you'll only discover this by asking questions.

Be carefully though as it may be an area that they want to safeguard because they'll actually be telling you how to sell to them!

### Questions

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*"Is there anyone else involved in making this decision other than yourself?"*

*"What's the process for making a decision on this?"*

*"How will you make the decision on who to select as a supplier?"*

*"How will you be evaluating the different options?"*

*"What other options are you considering?"*

*"What can you tell me about your decision-making process?"*

*"How much support does this have at senior management level?"*

*"When will you be ready to implement a solution?"*

*"When are you looking to make a decision?"*

*"How did you select your current provider?"*

*"How broad a search are you conducting for this purchase?"*

*"What's your top priority in approaching this decision?"*

*"Have you got a deadline for making this decision?"*

*"What's your key decision-making criteria when choosing a supplier?"*

*"Are you seeking formal proposals for this work?"*

*"Who will ultimately have responsibility for the successful resolution of this problem?"*

*"Who controls the resources required to make this happen?"*

*"Who has initiated this request?"*

*"Who are the main sponsors and/or champions for this?"*

*"Do you have to seek anyone else's approval to make the decision/make this happen?"*

*"After I get the proposal to you, how soon after will you decide?"*

*"How will you know who has the best solution for you?"*

*"So far, what conclusions have you reached about fixing this problem?"*

*"How do you see us helping you, and why us as opposed to someone else?"*

*"Have you decided what the best approach is to address this issue?"*

*"So how do you normally handle things like this from here? What are our next steps?"*

*"How does your organisation normally handle this?"*



*"Who makes the final decision? Is that you?"*

*"Assuming that you love the proposal I put together as well as the price, what would we do after that?"*

*"Should I bring/make/prepare multiple proposals? If so, whom should I prepare them for?"*

*"Do we need anyone else to be with us when I present our solution?"*

*"Is this decision normally handled on a departmental basis, or does it have to go up the ladder?"*

*"Do you normally work with purchase orders on things like this?"*

*"Do you usually use an open P.O. for orders like this?"*

*"Assuming that you love what I bring back to you including the price, who else has to fall in love with the offer for us to make it a reality?"*

*"Will you be working with other departments/heads/divisions on this?"*

*"So who will pull the trigger on this?"*

*"So does the buck stop and start with you?"*

*"Assuming that I am able to deliver exactly what you want and need, are you in a position to ok the agreement today?"*

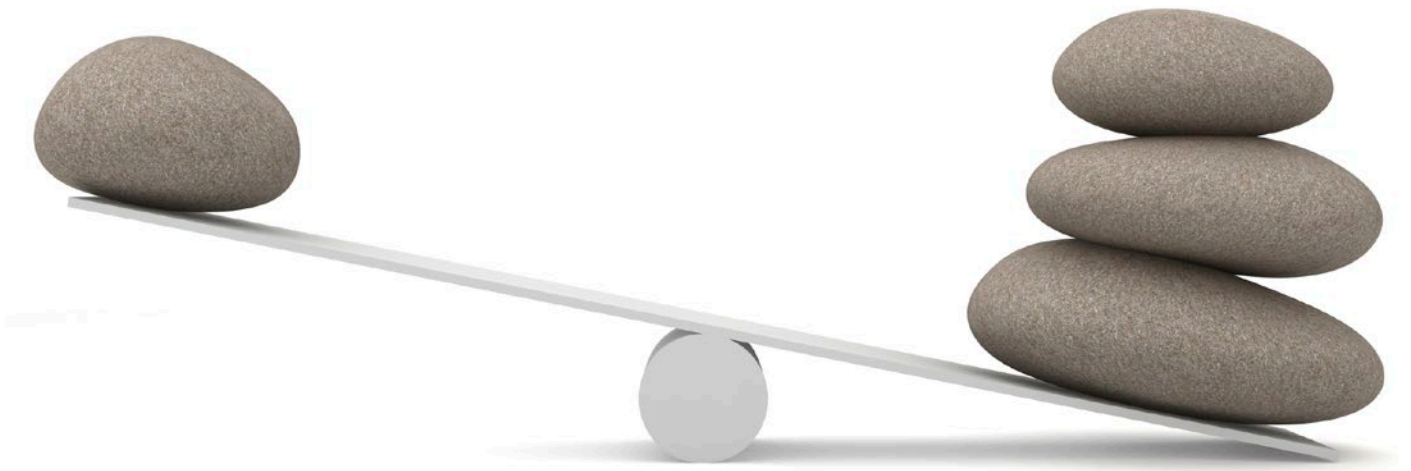
*"So whose signature will I ultimately need to get?"*

*"Is there anyone else you have to get the approval of to get started on this?"*

*"Are you the final decision maker on this?"*

## PAIN, PLEASURE & PAY-OFF

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### Introduction

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During your sales interaction you need to explore the issues and problems that the prospect is facing and the potential upside of implementing the solution.

The objectives of these questions are to build the pain so that they are moved to action and also to build up a picture of the benefits that they will experience by selecting your products and services.

This is a key stage of the sales process because if the prospect does not deem that the issues are serious enough then they will not be compelled to take action.

Be careful when building the pain. If you're talking to an educated and sales-savvy buyer then they will see straight through what you're trying to do if you go over-board on building the pain points.

So weigh up all of the options and build the right amount of pain and future benefits for them.

### Questions

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*"If you could get this under control/sorted what would it mean to your business?"*

*"What problems is the current situation causing you?"*

*"How would implementing these changes affect your competitiveness in the market?"*

*"How would implementing these changes affect XYZ?"*

*"How will you evaluate the success of this project/implementation/product?"*

*"If you don't solve (insert the particular challenge here), what kind of problems will you face going forward?"*

*"You mentioned that you're having issues with your current provider. If you work with us, what are you hoping will be different?"*

*"What would solving this issue/problem mean to you personally?"*

*"If you were to wave your magic wand how would this look now?"*

*"If we were able to solve your problem, what would this mean to your company?"*

*"What's the pay off with this? How much will this make you/save you in the future?"*

*"How severely has your company/department/customers/staff been affected by these problems?"*

*"What is the ideal outcome you'd like to experience?"*

*"What results are you trying to accomplish?"*

*"What better product/service/customer/staff condition are you seeking?"*

*"How will the operation/company/customer experience be different as a result of this?"*

*"What would be the return on investment with this?"*

*"How will your productivity/customer service/staff attrition/etc. be improved because of this?"*

*"What issues and problems would this alleviate?"*

*"How would your value proposition be improved because of this?"*

*"How much will you save when we implement this?"*

*"What will these results mean for your company?"*

*"How will these results impact the bottom line?"*

*"What will happen if you do nothing?"*

*"What is the scope of the impact (on customers, employees, suppliers)?"*

*"Is this a priority right now?"*

*"What outcome/result are you looking for?"*

*"Have you exhausted all options in trying to fix this yourself?"*

*"What could you have done to avoid this?"*

*"Have you made the decision that you MUST do something to address this issue?"*

*"Is there a sense of urgency to fix it or do you have plenty of breathing room?"*

*"How, specifically, will the operation/company be different when we're done?"*

*"What is the rate of return (on sales, investment, etc.) that you seek?"*

*"What performance indicators will increase or decrease if we are successful?"*

*"How will you measure success?"*

*"What kind of payoff will you be looking for?"*

*"What's the value of this problem over time?"*

*"If you did nothing, what would happen?"*

*"Let's imagine the problem is fixed. What would it look like and how would you know?"*

*"What is the date by which you hope to get the results in place?"*

*"Can you see how this issue is costing you money/sales/time/customers?"*

*"So doing XYZ the way you have been, actually costs your organisation X amount of hours every day. That means you are losing £X every day/week/month/ year. Are you comfortable with that?"*

*"Did you realise that you were losing that much money/time/productivity before?"*

*"If you add up the total in annual terms, how much does this cost you?"*

*"How do you/your employees do XYZ now?" (Without your solution. Your objective here is to help the prospect see the deficits they suffer by not having your solution. Once you are able to uncover a problem or problems they suffer by not owning your solution, you can then attach a monetary figure, a cost to that problem.)*

*"Have you ever thought of exactly how much money/time it cost you/your organisation/your employees to do this...this way?" (Without your solution)*

*"So what do your people do when this situation comes up today?" (Without your solution)*

*"How much do you spend on XYZ today?" (Without your solution)*

*"You are spending £X every month. (Without your solution) Have you budgeted for this loss?"*

*"Is losing this amount of money normal?"*



## How will you measure success?

This is an area that needs to be looked at because you both need to be on the same page when it comes to managing expectations.

Therefore, you can really demonstrate your expertise by being proactive by working with your prospect to discuss what key performance indicators you can put in place to ensure that the product or service is a success.

### Questions

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*"What KPI's shall we put in place to ensure this is a success?"*

*"How will you know we've accomplished your goals?"*

*"How will you measure this?"*

*"What indicators will you use to assess our progress?"*

*"Who or what will report on our results?"*

*"What are the standards that we will have to meet?"*

*"What are the immediate benchmarks we need to reach with the service?"*

*"What are long-term benchmarks that we should aim for?"*

*"Do you have a list of objectives the software will have to meet before you may take a look at an enterprise -wide system?"*

*"What departments will be involved in establishing KPIs for the new installation?"*

*"Who are involved in assessing the KPI's of our service?"*

*"Have you established key benchmarks to measure our performance?"*

*"What KPI's do you have in place to evaluate our performance over the next year?"*

*"I really appreciate your confidence. Yet how will you share/report/demonstrate/prove to your boss/supervisor/superiors that we are performing as promised?"*

*"Have you established clear parameters to let us know that we are on target?"*

*"How will we know if we are on target?"*

*"How can we demonstrate that the system is operating up to par?"*

*"What do you consider par performance?"*

*"What numbers will we need to hit to be considered above par?"*

*"Do you have a solid set of goals for us to reach?"*



# ESTABLISH POSSIBLE ISSUES & BARRIERS

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## Introduction

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No matter how much the prospect may want your product or service, there might be circumstances, events or even people that might get in the way of the purchase.

As a sales person you need to get these issues out in the open so you can deal with them effectively.

Internal politics, legacy systems, staff buy-in and attitudes towards change can all get in the way of a purchasing decision.

Their answers will tell you all of the indirect reasons why they may not go ahead so make sure you understand them.

If these issues do not surface then you may find that the prospect will hide behind a timing or price objection when really it's something completely different.

### Questions

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*"What obstacles do you see that would prevent this project from going forward?"*

*"Is there anything we haven't discussed which could get in the way?"*

*"In the past, what has occurred to derail potential projects like this?"*

*"What do you estimate the probability is of this going ahead?"*

*"Have I covered everything you need to know? What, if anything, do you additionally need to hear from me?"*

*"Is there anything happening in the company at the moment that might jeopardise this?"*

*"What are your thoughts so far?"*

*"Do you have any concerns at this stage?"*

*"What are the restrictions on this project, from your side?"*

*"Does what I've said sound like what you have in mind?"*

*"Are there any issues that must be addressed first in order to seriously consider fixing this problem?"*

*"Are there any internal political issues that must be addressed before you decide to change?"*

*"What's your organisation's attitude toward change?"*

*"Are there any competing projects that could take priority over this?"*

*"What has to be in place for this deal to go down smoothly?"*

*"Assuming you make a change, what concerns would you have about the implementation step?"*

*"For all the good you are trying to achieve, do you see any unavoidable negative consequences?"*

*"Are there any issues concerning your current supplier/situation/vendor that I need to know about that may derail us moving forward?"*

*"Are there any personal issues with the current vendor/supplier that may cause us a problem? Relatives, long time friendships, etc.?"*

*"Are there any future plans that may affect the project such as mergers, acquisitions, public offerings, etc.?"*

*"How long have you been working with that vendor?"*

*"Do they still treat you that way they did when you were a new account?"*

*"Now much of what our software does is help you save time. However, many people actually make a living off of wasting time. Is there anyone who may be afraid of the software upgrade?"*

*"This upgrade is going to eliminate a lot of overtime hours for a lot of people. Do you think that may cause a problem?"*

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*"Our installed software is so efficient, it could possibly eliminate a job position or two. Is that going to be a problem?"*

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*"Some people see technological advances as a threat. Do you have anyone like that in your department?"*

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# HANDLING OBJECTIONS

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## Introduction

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In answering objections, the ability to ask some questions back in response is very important. You'll need to clarify certain aspects of what you've said and at the same time clarify exactly what the prospect means.

Objections are not a bad thing.

All they mean is that you have not built up sufficient value in your proposition and that they don't see your products and services as a MUST compared to what they have to pay.

There are two ways to build value. You can either increase the severity of the problem or you can increase the value of the solution.

By asking some well-crafted questions you can get back into either mode quickly and effectively and get the sale back on track.

### Questions

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*"Exactly what do you mean by that?" (Generic response to get further information)*

*"Exactly what do you mean by too expensive?" (Compared to what?)*

*"I understand, but let me ask you a quick question. Do you like the idea/proposal/product? I mean, does it make sense?" (Try to gauge interest by their response)*

*"Can you see how it will save/improve/better your money/time/resources both today and into the future?" (Gauge if you did a solid sales interaction and the prospect can see and believe in the benefits)*

*"Who do you think will lose the most if you do not take action?" (Express the reality)*

*"Why do you feel that way?"*

*"If we resolve this, can we then move forward?" (Isolating the objection)*

*"What were you looking to pay?"*

*"What would satisfy you?" (Make the buyer answer the objection.)*

*"What can we do to overcome that?" (Makes the buyer answer the objection and demonstrates joint accountability.)*

*"When do you think is best to solve a problem like this?"*

*"When you say too expensive/cost too much/etc., are you referring to the price or the cost?"*

*"Are you saying you can't afford to continue paying the cost of the problem or you can't afford the solution?"*

*"I completely understand that you want to think about it. But please allow me to help you with that... what is it that you want to think about? I'll be thinking about it too, and that way we can come up with an answer faster."*

*"Of course, I understand that you want to think about it. Please help me so that I know that I didn't leave out any important information. What is it that you need to think about? (Do not wait for an answer to this question, Instead begin immediately posing possible answers)*

*"Is it the guarantees we offer that you need to think about?"*

*(Pose questions that present the benefits of your solution. For every answer the prospect says is not the thing they need to think about; they help you narrow down the options to get to the real objection and help the prospect see that there is no objection or leave you with an objection you can turn into a positive buying decision.)*

*"I apologise. If you need to think about it, then I must not have given you all of the information you need to make a decision. Let me double check...Did I show you how this solution will solve the problem today and in the future?"*



*"Was I able to show you how our solution pays for itself?"*

*"Did I show you how our solution is custom tailored to your office?" (As before, ask questions that express each benefit)*

*"Did you like what I showed you?"*

*"Was I able to show you that over the next few months you will actually pay the cost of our solution if you don't buy it?"*

*"Can you see that the benefits of the solution will not only save you time/money today, but well into the future?"*

*"I appreciate your concern. Can I tell you how we handled this issue when I worked with ABC Company?"*



## CLOSING & MOVING THE SALE FORWARD

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### Introduction

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If you've done a great job throughout the sales process then closing should be the only logical next step.

There's no real need for gimmicky closing lines or so called tricks that sales people of yesteryear used to come out with.

However, you still need to ask for the business in some way.

Also, at the end of a meeting a "close" might not even be to ask for the order.

Instead, you might be closing for the next meeting or to get in front of the real decision maker.

So depending on what you need to "close on" will determine which line of questioning you'll need to use.

### Questions

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*"How would you like to move ahead?"*

*"When would you like to move ahead?"*

*"Shall I book some time in to kick this off?"*

*"Shall I make the arrangements to get this ordered?"*

*"Is it better to get this started immediately, or wait for XYZ to happen?"*

*"Is there anything at all from preventing us moving forward?"*

*"I can schedule two days next week to make a start?"*

*"Can we proceed?"*

*"What would you like me to do next?"*

*"What are the next steps?"*

*"When are you looking to start?"*

*"When would you like to meet again?"*

*"Have I answered all of your key questions today?"*

*"Shall we schedule a post proposal meeting in the diary?"*

*"Can you see any reason why we shouldn't move forward?"*

*"From your point of view, what are the next steps?"*

*"Realistically, when is the most practical time to start with this?"*

*"From a timing perspective, what makes this a particularly attractive or unattractive time to address this?"*

*"So does the whole proposal make sense to you?"*

*"So does everything look correct from your end?"*

*"So I can set up delivery for next Tuesday or would Thursday be better?"*

*"We can meet so I can present our offer on Monday afternoon, or would you have more time later in the week?"*

*"Does the offer make sense?"*

*"Does that seem fair enough?"*

*"You had mentioned earlier that if everything looked right to you, then our next step would be XYZ. So first, does everything look right to you?"*

*"Great, so what's the best day for XYZ? Is Friday good or would next week be more convenient?"*

*"So have I answered all of your questions?"*

*"So how do you normally handle things like this from here?"*

*"Do you use purchase orders or do you usually just put things like this on a company card?"*

*"So moving forward, will I work primarily with you as my main contact?"*

*"So what do you say?"*

*"So are you ready to start saving money today?"*

*"So are you ready to begin earning more on your portfolio now?"*

*"So, I know your employees are ready to start enjoying the new work area, are you?"*

*"Are you ready to start today?"*

*"So are you ready to let me go to work for you?"*

*"So are you ready for us to start working for your organisation now?"*

*"So how does that look to you?"*

*"Are you prepared to move forward?"*

*"Is your firm ready to go to the next level?"*

*"So are you ready to partner with us on this?"*

## MANAGING THE ACCOUNT

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### Introduction

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Building relationships with your existing customers is vital.

You can do this in your day-to-day dealings with them as well as formal account reviews.

There will be times when you need to sit down with each other and have a conversation about how well the account is being managed and the performance of the products and services.

This is also an opportune moment for you to understand more about them and their company to see if there are any other ways in which you can help and support them with their goals.

### Questions

*"How did we do this year?"*

*"In what ways can we (I) improve?"*

*"What changes do we (I) need to make to ensure greater success?"*

*"What have we done well this year/period?"*

*"Has anything changed since we last met?"*

*"We haven't heard from you in a while. Did we do something wrong?" (If customer is dormant)*

*"What could we have done better this year/period?"*

*"If you could change one thing about our relationship, what would it be?"*

*"What goals would you like to see us (me) accomplish with you in the next 12 months?"*

*"What are your goals for next year compared with this year?"*

*"How's business?"*

*"How else can we help?"*

*"What are the organisation's upcoming goals?"*

*"Are you going to open any new offices/locations this year?"*

*(Remember that any major change in the account presents the possibility that may open the door for more business. Also, the more you know about your clients' plans, the better you are able to be in position to be of assistance)*

*"Are you recruiting any new employees at the moment?"*

*"Please don't just look at me as your (solution specific provider); I'm here to help in any number of ways. I have a vast array of contacts and may be of service in areas other than (solution specific). Are there any other areas which you need help with at the moment?"*

*"So that I can better be of assistance going forward, let me ask you a few questions: What is your long term vision for the department?"*

*"In what other areas could this same problem occur?"*

*"How do we ensure that problems like this never happen again?"*

*"How can I better help you gain an advantage over your competition?"*

*"What would make your job easier? Maybe I can help with them, maybe I can't. However, I will better understand how I could be of help to you"*



# CLARIFYING QUESTIONS

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## Introduction

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All throughout your sales interactions you need to ensure that you fully understand everything that the prospect is saying.

The quality of your listening skills will to a large extent determine your ultimate fate!

Demonstrating active listening skills is far more than just nodding your head throughout the discussion!

Instead, you need to paraphrase, summarise, confirm and demonstrate your understand.

Asking clarification questions fulfils two objectives:

1. They ensure your understanding of what the prospect has said is correct, reducing misunderstanding
2. They reassure the prospect that you are interested in them and are attempting to understand what they are saying

They are, therefore, critical questions that you need to master.

### Questions

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*"So just to confirm, you'd like to take the full package option with additional widget. Is that correct?"*

*"Ok, to summarise your requirements then, you'll looking for an IT system to replace your existing one that will be more reliable with automatic monitoring dashboards so you're notified of problems instead of you finding out the hard way with downtime. Is that right?"*

*"Am I right in assuming that all of your team will need training in how to use the system? Is that right?"*

*"So the way I understand it is that what you really need to accomplish is (Enter in here), is that right?"*

*"Let me make sure I'm hearing you right. You want to shorten the overall hours your north store is open, plus (Enter In Here) do I have that right?"*

*"Let me see if I am reading you right (Enter in here) is that what you are saying?"*

*"So let me double check. What we want to do is (Enter in here) Do have it right?"*

*"Let me just make sure we're both on the same page (Enter in here) Does that sound like I've got it?"*

*"So just to make sure there is no confusion...."*

*"Let me see if I am clear on this (Enter in here) am I on the same page with you?"*

*"I just want to make sure we are together on this. (Enter in here) does that sound like we're together?"*

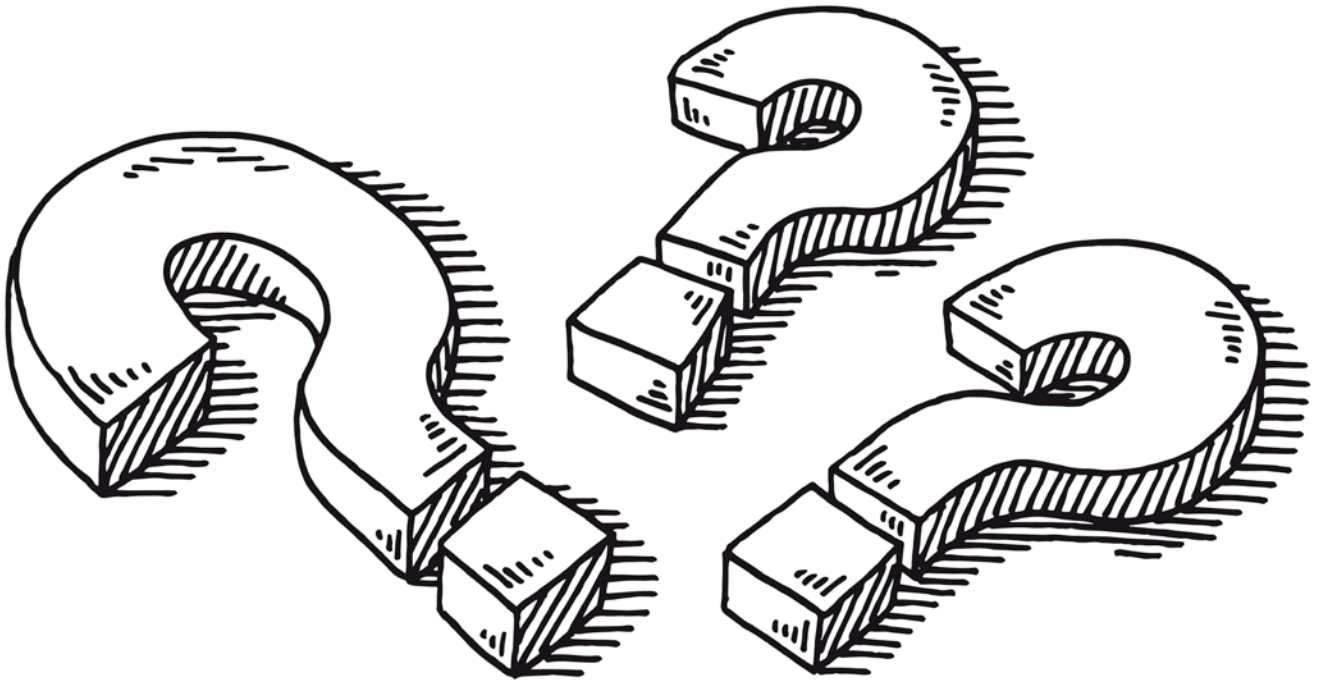
*"Just to make sure I'm understanding you right (Enter in here) Have I got that right?"*

*"Let me make sure I get the idea. (Enter in here) is that right?"*

*"The way I see it is that (Enter in here) Is that the way you see it?"*

# RHETORICAL QUESTIONS

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## Introduction

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Rhetorical questions are asked to keep your prospects engaged. It also helps them to, be more creative and come up with ideas.

## Questions

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*"Isn't this a fantastic offer?"*

*"Isn't this work perfect?"*

*"Don't you like the way this package is set up?"*

*"Do you like to save money?"*

*"Do you like to make more money?"*

*"Do you like saving time and being more productive?"*

*"Does that look good or what?"*

*"To stop losing money is what you really want, isn't it?"*

*"You want to get more business in the door, isn't that right?"*

*"You want to close more sales, don't you?"*

*"You want to get more web traffic don't you?"*

*"This will give you much higher conversion/closing rates and that's the main thing you want isn't it?"*

*"Do you want to outshine your competition?"*

*"If you had the power to (benefits of your solution) you would use it wouldn't you?"*

*"If you could (benefits of your solution) right now, would you?"*

*"Do you want to do XYZ faster or slower?"*

*"Do you want to be more efficient or less efficient?"*

*"Do you want to save time or waste time?"*

*"When is the best time to start saving money?"*

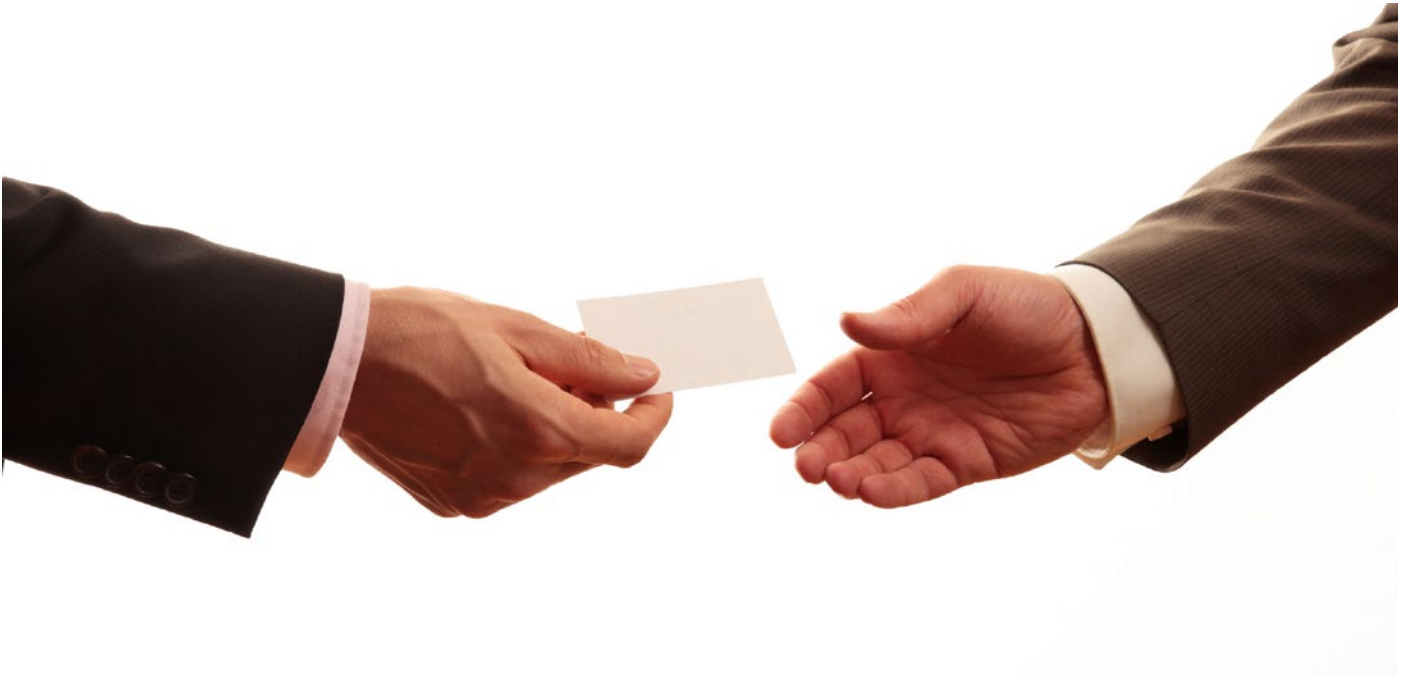
*"If I save you £X over the next month, would you call me for more?"*

*"How many times do you want to earn a huge bonus?"*

*"Do you really want to be the best in the business?"*

# QUESTIONS FOR GETTING REFERRALS

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## Introduction

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Become skilled at getting referrals and your workload, stress and headaches will continually decrease as your income increases.

Not to mention a pipeline that will be bursting at the seams!

Getting referrals is a main key to success.

However, you have to know how to ask for them!

Many sales people feel uncomfortable in asking for referrals because they have no idea about what to say as well as how to say it.



### Questions

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*"Since you are so pleased with our work, would you recommend us to your peers?"*

*"I'm glad you're happy with what we've achieved. Who else in your network might need the same services?"*

*"How many of your peers can I also help to (Enter in here)?"*

*"Who do you know that might also want to (Enter benefit in here)?"*

*"XYZ is a huge company. Is there anyone else internally that might be interested in what we do?"*

*"I'm glad you love the product John. Who else do you know who would benefit from it as well?"*

*"As you can see, what I do is help people with (benefits of solution). Off the top of your head, who do you know that might also benefit from this type of information/product/service?"*

*"The problem we solved for you is one that most people in your industry suffer from. Do you know of anyone else who I could help with this too?"*

*"I'm really glad that you're pleased with our work. I'd really appreciate it if you'd pass my name along to anyone else you know who would be interested in (what you do)"*

*"I'm really glad that you're pleased with our work. I'm always looking for referrals and wonder if you know anyone else who might be interested in \_\_\_\_\_ (what you do)."*

## USEFUL RESOURCES

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### Need Some Sales Training?

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MTD Sales Training have delivered sales training to over 2,500 different organisations. MTD offer both in-house and open training courses including consultative selling, cold calling, negotiation skills, sales management, sales presentation skills, coaching skills, advanced sales, sales for beginners and many more.

Visit: [www.mtdsalestraining.com](http://www.mtdsalestraining.com)

### Want Sean To Speak At Your Event?

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Sean will inform, ignite and motivate your audience. His style is direct, thought provoking, challenging and fun! To enquire about Sean's availability:

Email: [enquiries@mtdsalestraining.com](mailto:enquiries@mtdsalestraining.com)

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