



# Consultative Selling Skills

Mentor Group Ltd

# Objective and agenda

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## Objective:

To provide a framework for consultative selling to enable participants to more effectively engage their target clients.

- What is Consultative Selling?
- Preparation and research.
- Approach, access & personal credibility.
- Planning the initial customer meetings.
- Qualifying questions.
- Consultative questioning techniques.
- Tailoring & proposing solutions.
- Handling objections, negotiation & closing.
- Real play.
- Call to action.



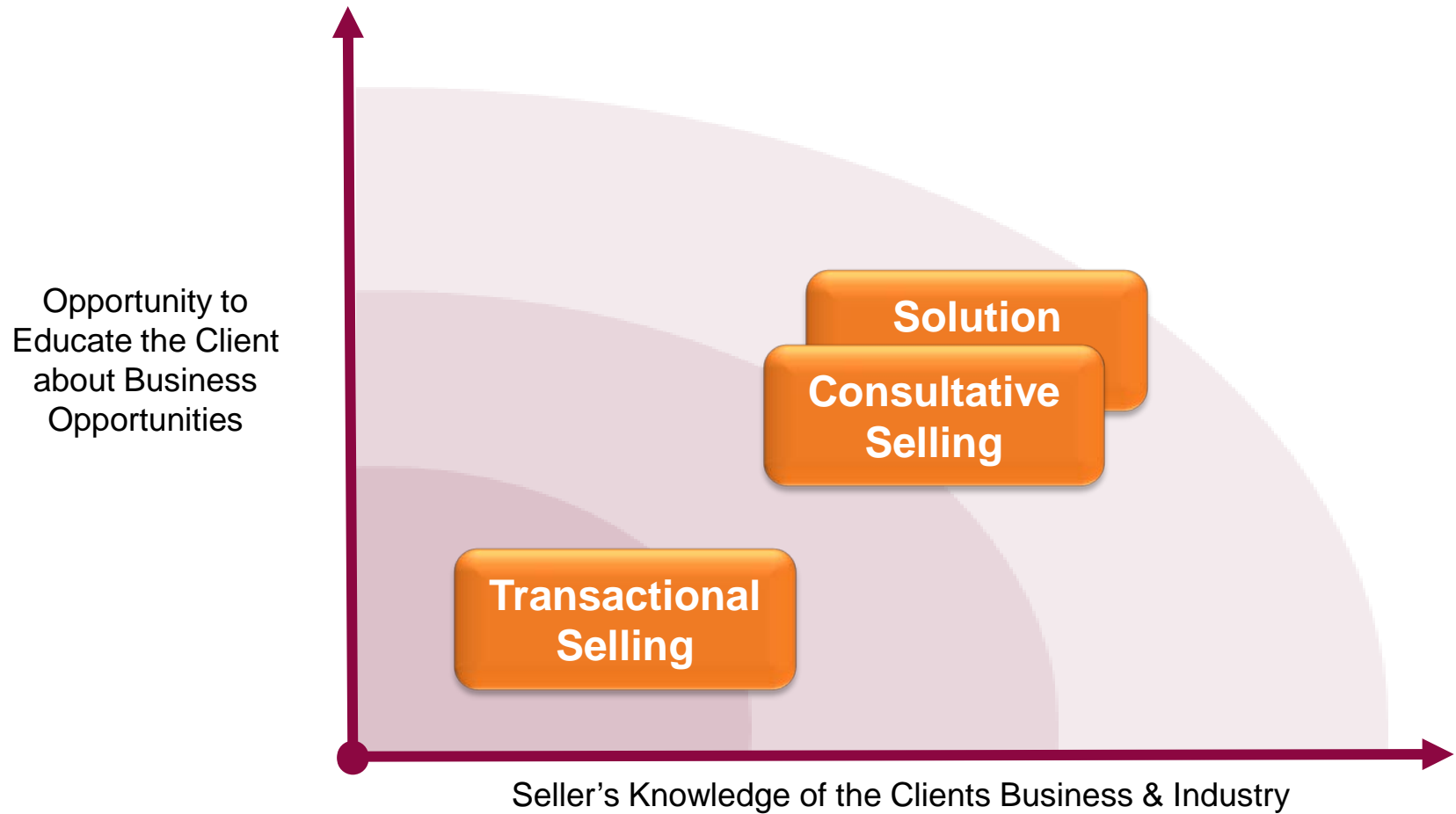


## **What is Consultative Selling?**

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# **Consultative Selling Skills**

# Selling styles



# Sales process

## 1. Educate

To gain a view of the key business drivers and initiatives that are driving the customer's organisation. To understand the scope of how your company's capabilities can add real value to the customer by helping them achieve their goals and objectives.

## 2. Plan

To stimulate interest and to obtain confirmation of business challenges or opportunity.

## 3. Approach

To gain confirmation as to the level of dissatisfaction or pain being experienced by the owner / sponsor of the business challenge or opportunity.

## 4. Discover

To gain an understanding of the needs of all people involved, to uncover and influence the customer's decision criteria and to understand the process the customer will go through in order to make their decision.

## 5. Qualify

To demonstrate to the customer our ability to deliver to their needs and add real value by helping them achieve their goals and objectives. Work with customer to prove the business case that demonstrates clear justification for investment and return on that investment.

## 6. Prove

Uncover & address any final issues or concerns that the customer may have that will stop them from moving to final agreement. Also reach a mutually beneficial agreement that provides maximum value to both parties.

## 7. Negotiate

To obtain signed contract so as to commence implementation of solution.

## 8. Close

To ensure a successful and efficient implementation of the solution so as to accelerate the value and return of the customer's investment. Also help customer evaluate the whole process and to seek other business opportunities.

# Customer buying process

## 1. Understand business process

Something of sufficient interest to grab attention, recognition of a problem, need, want or desire. Find out any dissatisfactions.

## 2. Current & future business requirements

Does the customer have a problem? How big is it? Does it justify action? Does customer accept the problem is severe enough to justify change and therefore decides to take action?

## 3. Discuss requirements with vendors

What criteria will the customer use to make a decision? Which offering best meets their criteria? Customer has a clear decision process in place and has started to make choices on who to proceed with.

## 4. Explore potential options

What are the risks of going ahead? What if it goes wrong? Can we trust these people? Customer makes the decision to enter into final negotiations with you.

## 5. Qualify & commit to act

Could still be some reservations about making a final commitment, these could be around price, and delivery resourcing. These concerns will often be in the form of objections, these must be understood and dealt with, typically these can be unvoiced worries.

## 6. Compare, capability, credibility & cost

Are we getting value from this decision, how quickly will we see results? New needs and dissatisfactions can arise.

## 7. Negotiate, best rate & terms

Are we getting value from this decision? How quickly will we see results? Are we working with the best vendor?

## 8. Commit & contract

Are we getting value from this decision? How well is your company working with us and following through against actions?

# Sales & customer's process alignment

**1. Educate**

**2. Plan**

**3. Approach**

**4. Discover**

**5. Qualify**

**6. Prove**

**7. Negotiate**

**8. Close**

**1. Understand business process.**

**2. Current & future business requirements.**

**3. Discuss requirements with vendors.**

**4. Explore potential options.**

**5. Qualify and commit to act.**

**6. Compare, capability, credibility & cost .**

**7. Negotiate, best rate & terms.**

**8. Commit and contract.**

# Common sales mistakes made in the buying process

## 1. Educate

1. Understand business process

Pushing a solution too quickly, in reactive mode, do we understand customers needs and the priority order of these? Do we understand the level of 'pain' or dissatisfaction? Do we know what is going on in the vertical or industry? Research undertaken?

## 2. Plan

2. Current and future business requirements

## 3. Approach

3. Discuss requirements with vendors

Failure to investigate/develop customer needs. Propose product/solution too early.

## 4. Discover

4. Explore potential options

Failure to uncover customer's key criteria. Little attempt to influence or change the stated criteria.

## 5. Qualify

5. Qualify and commit to act

Ignoring risks and concerns in the hope that they will go away pressurising the customer to make a decision.

## 6. Prove

6. Compare, capability, credibility and cost

Focusing on price and not 'value'.  
Uncover any last minute concerns and deal with them  
Failure to negotiate .

## 7. Negotiate

7. Negotiate, best rate & terms

## 8. Close

8. Commit and contract

Failure to treat implementation as a sales opportunity  
Failing to anticipate vulnerable implementation points  
Deal with 'buyer's' remorse.





- What is Consultative Selling?



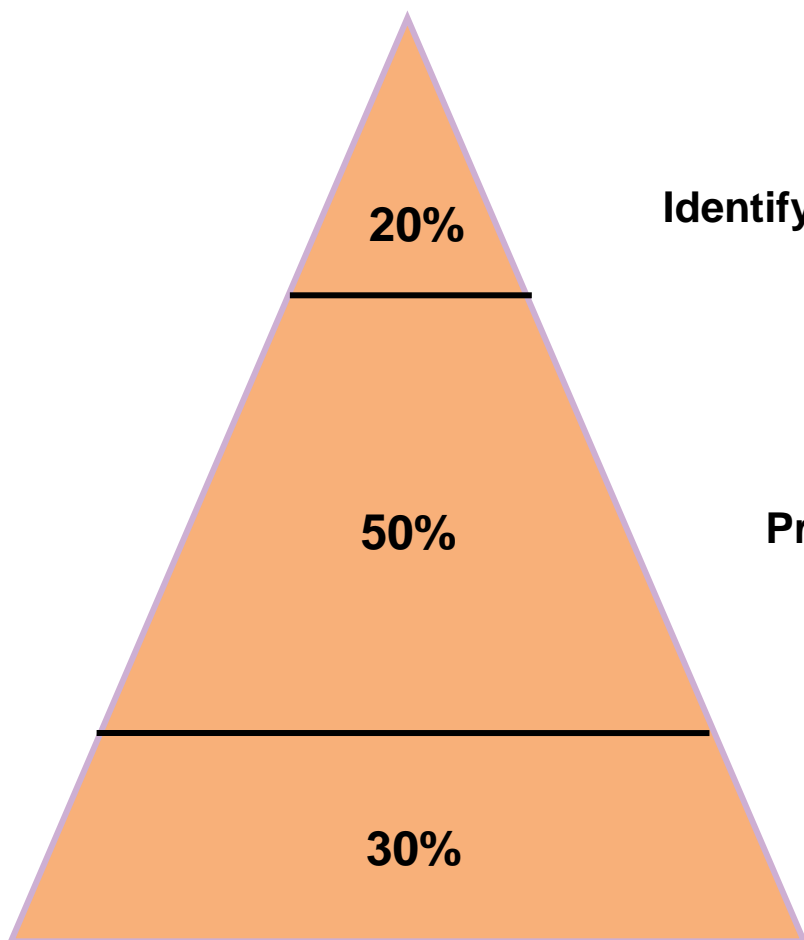
### **Preparation and research.**

- Approach, access and personal credibility.
- Planning the initial customer meetings.
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- Real play.
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# **Consultative Selling Skills**

# Sales structure

## Transaction

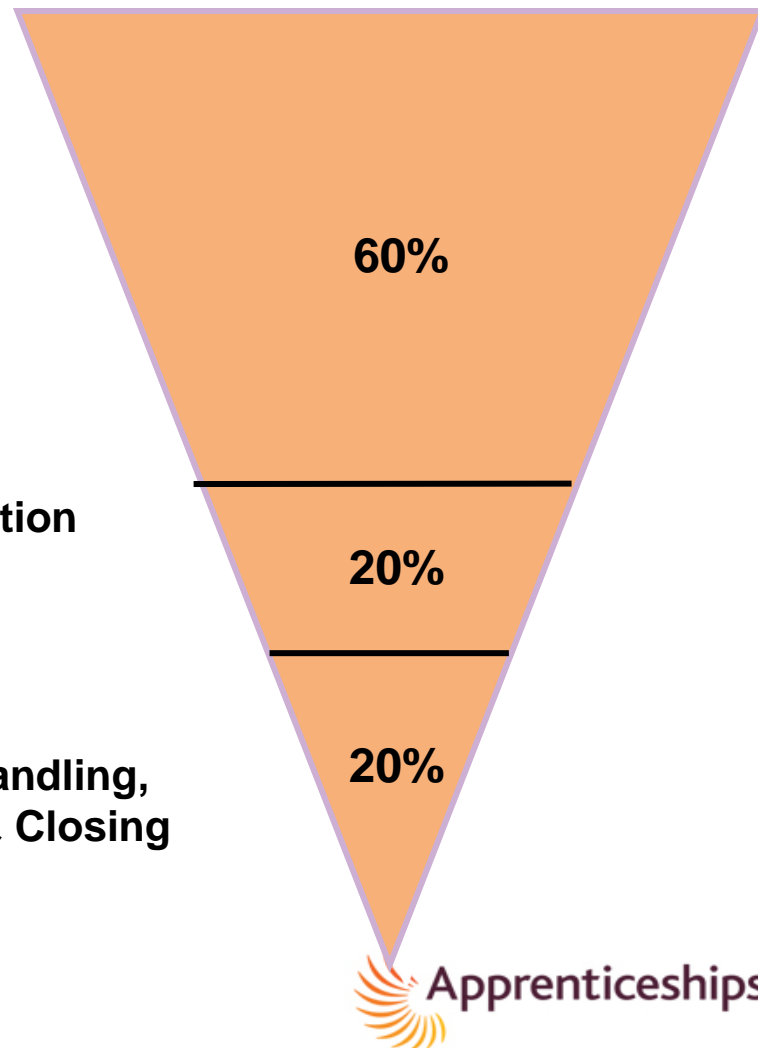


Identifying needs

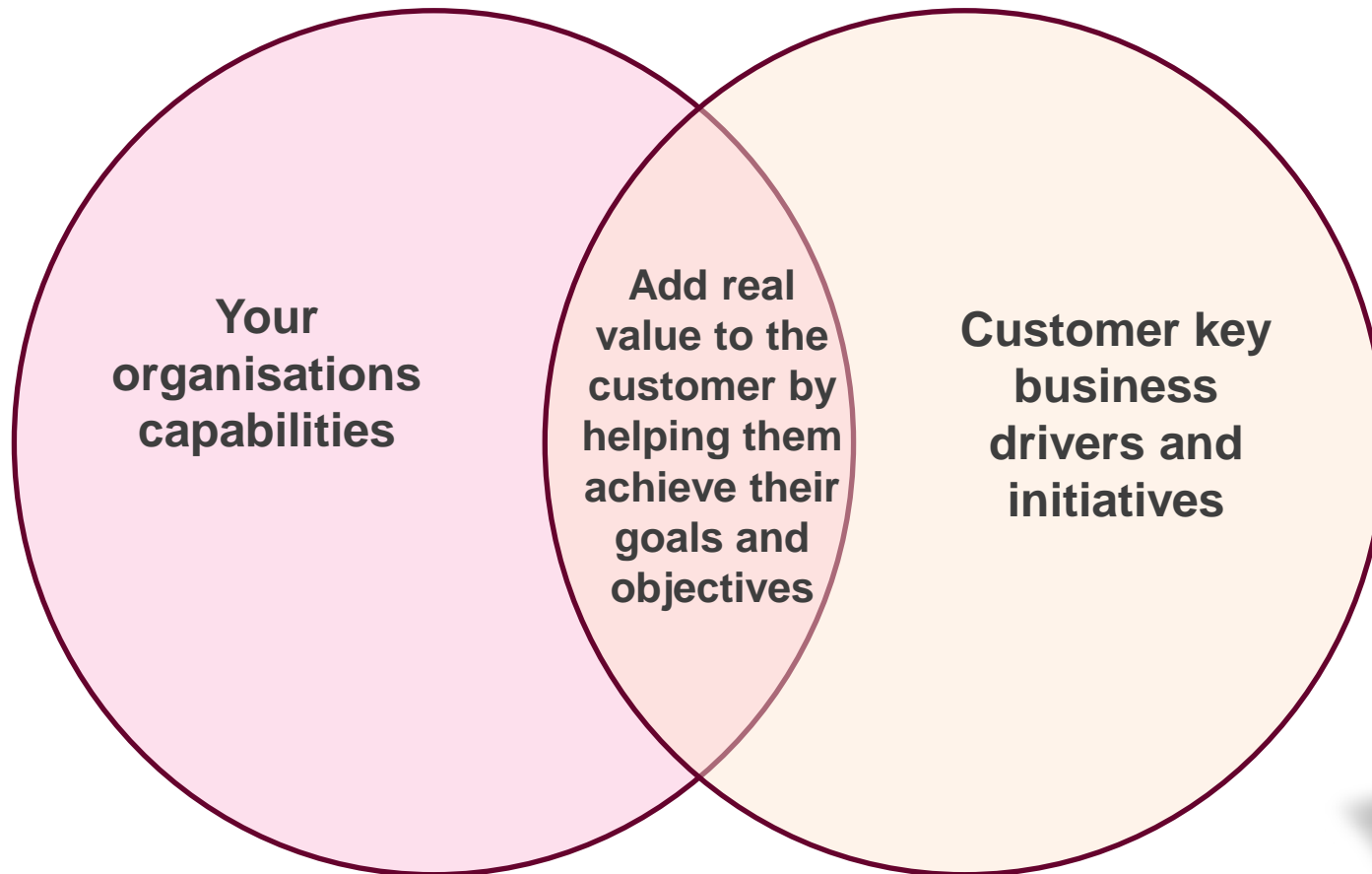
Presenting solution

Objection Handling,  
Negotiating & Closing

## Consultative



# Research



# How to create effective conversation topics

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- Industry trends.
- Recent company news
- Website.
- Annual report.
- Other companies in sectors.
- Market reports.
- Analysts reports.
- Web search.
- Press.
- Peer group conversation.
- Personal network.



# Google alerts and Newsnow.co.uk

Google Alerts - Monitor the Web for interesting new content - Internet Explorer provided by Dell

http://www.google.com/alerts?hl=en

File Edit View Favorites Tools Help

Norton Norton Safe Search

Google Search

Google Alerts - Monitor the Web for interesting new content

Web Images Videos Maps News Shopping Mail more

Google alerts beta

Search terms: Sony UK professional services [Preview results](#)

Type: News

How often: once a day

Volume: Only the best results

Deliver to: david.graham@mentorgroup.co.uk

Create Alert

Monitor the Web for interesting new content

Google Alerts are email updates of the latest relevant Google results (web, news, etc.) based on your choice of query or topic.

Enter the topic you want to monitor

- monitoring
- keeping up to date
- getting the latest news
- keeping track of a company

You can also click on the topic you want to monitor

NewsNow.co.uk > The UK's #1 news portal - Internet Explorer provided by Dell

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BT

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# General value proposition template

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**General Value** - A general and compelling statement of the proven value your company can bring to a client based upon market-level understanding of needs and opportunities; can be used for positioning your company or for generating interest.

Your company provides XYZ which enables customers in the ABC market to BENEFIT

**Example:** We provide flexible and scalable training solutions which enables customers in the financial services markets to reduce their training costs, improve staff productivity and retention.



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- Preparation and research.



**Approach, access & personal credibility.**

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# Consultative Selling Skills

# Power phrases that establish credibility

## Your title / role

Experienced / senior  
account manager  
Relationship mgr

## What you actually do?

My job is to  
Focus on  
Responsible for  
Specialise in

## Your experience

More than x years  
Worked on

## How you can help them?

Help clients like you  
Enable you to  
Facilitate resources

Best possible solution  
Increase revenue, efficiencies  
Control, save, reduce costs  
Offer best value





# Delivering the message – phone & email

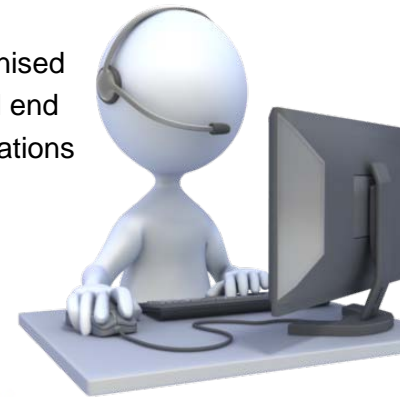
## Phone



- **Tone:**
  - Enthusiastic, energetic, professional
  - Approachable, not too formal, relaxed, natural, conversational
  - Confident, authoritative, direct, not apologetic or tentative
  - Pitch is comfortable, not too loud or soft
  - Balanced inflection
- **Word Choice:**
  - Organised, excluding non-words, stuttering, slang and weak words
  - Concise, succinct and articulate
  - Creates a visual image
  - Articulates clearly and crisply
- **Pacing:**
  - Strong, steady pace
  - Captures attention and creates a sense of urgency
  - Aligns well, not too slow or too fast
- **Organisation:**
  - Has clear and organised call objective
  - Sets expectations in speech pattern

## Email

- **Tone:**
  - Sales-friendly, professional
  - Avoids shouting, uses humour
  - Conversational, not too formal
  - Confident, direct, not too apologetic or tentative
- **Word Choice:**
  - Organised, concise, succinct and articulate
  - Uses strong and direct words and not weak words
  - Has correct spelling and grammar
- **Pacing:**
  - Uses punctuation, watches for run-on sentences
- **Organisation:**
  - Formatting is clear and organised
  - Has a beginning, middle and end
  - Subject heading sets expectations



# Compelling engagement message

## Why Talk to Me? Opening, Compelling Statement.

10 to 15 sec

- Your voice tone has to be mirrored
- Your key words must be powerful
- Be 'up' but calm
- Your opening statement must be compelling enough to gain your 30 second credibility pitch

## Why Use Us? Prove your Value

30 to 40 sec

- Who we have helped
- Highlight benefits they gained
- Why it worked so well
- Why they need to be working with your business
- Prove it's a worthwhile investment

**Conversation can and  
will take its own form.**



# Examples: What we can say in the first 10-15 seconds

I am calling from the business development team, my role is to contact our existing customers to help grow and improve the level of service that you currently receive...

When you took out your last phone contract, we promised you a call back when you next became eligible for our new promotion packages and discounts...

Hi my name is David and I am calling from your network provider. I am calling today to make sure you are up to date with products and services available to you...

I am keen to share the benefits that other customers have gained by working closer with us...

You are a high value customer and we want to make sure that you are not missing out on anything that other customers may be taking advantage of...

We are calling to get a better idea of what you do as a business and what we can do to help you with your business.

The reason for my call is because of your spend over the last few months, this has qualified you for some fantastic new packages to help you and your business.



- What is Consultative Selling?
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A small, stylized illustration of a hand with the index finger pointing towards the text.

### **Qualifying questions.**

- Consultative questioning techniques.
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- Real play.
- Call to action.

# **Consultative Selling Skills**

# Exercise: Qualification

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What factors do you use when qualifying an opportunity? What priority would you put on each factor?

# Qualification - BANT

# B

Budget



# A

Authority



# N

Need



# T

Timeline





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# Consultative Selling Skills

# Question style & techniques

## Open-Ended Questions

Most useful for gathering new information and getting the customer to talk in more depth. Vary your questioning methods and move away from the traditional five 'Ws', use more visual questions "please tell me about....", "describe for me....", "walk me through..."

## Precision Questions

This reveals your customer's true needs and helps you understand the issues they raise.  
"so, how specifically do you value training?", "what exactly is your goal?"

## Paraphrase Questions

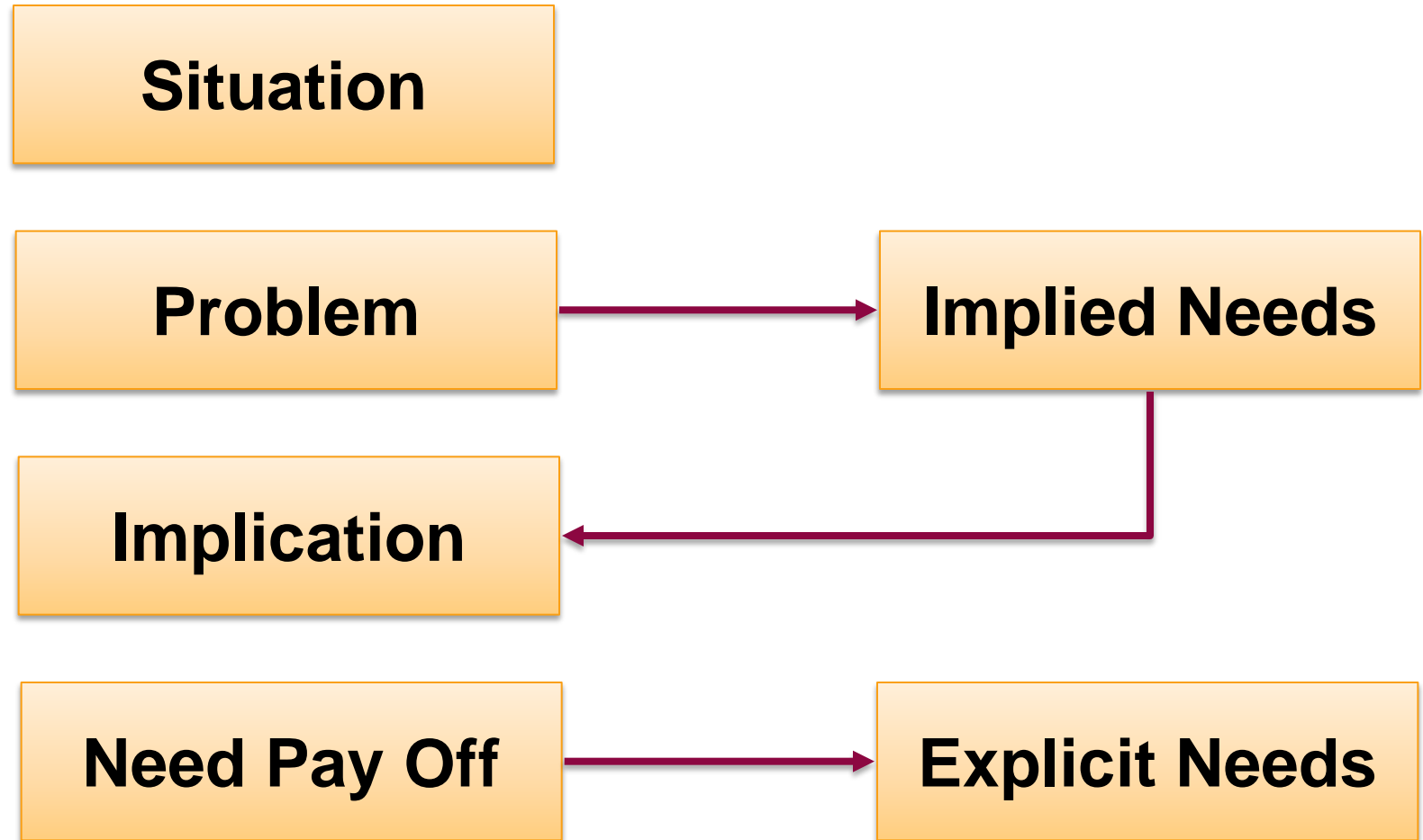
Will confirm that you have heard and are obtaining the correct information. .. " if I understand you correctly...", "what I hear you saying is....."

## SPIN Questions

See Next slide .....



# SPIN questioning technique



# Business impact questions

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- **Outcome focused**
  - How will this solution impact you/your organisation/your customers?
  - What will good look like if this solution works how you expect it to?
  - How will this impact you in your day-to-day role?
  - In what ways will this solution benefit your customer?
  - How will this solution improve your business efficiency?
  - What benefits would your end users expect to get from this solution?
- **Consequence of no change**
  - What happens if you don't change?
  - What will be the consequence of this solution not being delivered on time?
  - What will be the impact of not having this new solution?
  - How will you compare to your competition in 12 months time if you do not implement this solution?

# Structured questions - funnelling



**Ask .... Clarify .... Priorities**

**Start next topic with open questions**

# Questioning rules

## What are the 7 'accepted' questioning rules?

### 1. Do not call without a plan

Before calling a customer, have an objective that you want to achieve during the call, review the relationship with the customer and identify gaps in your understanding of the customer business. You do not know everything that has happened since your last sales call.

### 2. Do not become mechanical with your questioning

Do not read out pre scripted questions as these can make you look and sound amateurish, best to have a topic of conversation as a key reminder, which will allow a conversation to evolve naturally.

### 3. Try not to give the third degree

Customers don't want to be on the receiving end of an inquisition, be conscious that you may not be able to find out everything in one call, maybe two lines of inquiry for each call, for example, on the first call focus on understanding what the rewards and business challenges are.

### 4. Right balance – listen more than you talk

Sales reps like questions and answer sessions to move quickly so that the conversation can move to the deal-making. But what's the point of asking effective questions if you're not going to listen to the answers? Listen to the customer, then pause to think about what the customer said, then decide where and how to react.

### 5. Be careful of asking leading questions

In sales we are taught to ask questions that lead the customer towards whatever we are selling e.g. example: "How can our company help your business?". Instead, phrase your question in neutral terms that allows the customer room to give you the information that you need. Example: "In a perfect world, what would your vendor be doing for you?".

### 6. Always invite customers to speak their mind

As early as possible in the conversation invite the customer to speak about whatever is on the customer's mind. Example: "Yes, I'm here to talk about our XXX. But what's going on with you? How did that big project turn out?", you'll find out more from that conversation than any number of pointed queries of your own.

### 7. Ask open-ended questions

A lot of the questions you ask the customer should begin with "How...", "What..." or "Why..." . Don't worry about asking a question that's too open-ended. If your question isn't specific enough, the customer will ask you to clarify and then you're already in a conversation, which is essential if effective questioning is to take place.



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# Consultative Selling Skills

- **Feature** – a characteristic of you, your company, or your product/service
  - “so that...” or “in order to...”
- **Advantage** – what your feature does
  - “what this means is...” or “the benefit is...”
- **Benefit** – how it impacts the customer
  - “what that means **to you...**”

# FAB example

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- **Features**
  - We have an average points score that puts us in the top 3 nationally.
- **General benefit (advantage)**
  - We attract good students and deliver a high level of tuition quality.
- **Specific benefits**
  - You said you needed to have good quality students who could quickly become valuable employees. We are able to deliver amongst the best trained candidates in the UK.



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# Consultative Selling Skills



# Objection handling 5 steps

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- Engage: encourage, don't react
- Listen: question to clarify and 'empty the bucket'
- Confirm: understand, emotion vs. facts
- Resolve: think, answer/defer, check and agree
- Deliver: execute, follow up and learn





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# Summary

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**2. Plan**

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**5. Qualify**

**6. Prove**

**7. Negotiate**

**8. Close**

**1. Understand business process.**

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**3. Discuss requirements with vendors.**

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