

Let the Customer Talk

The chances of closing a deal are generally commensurate with the amount of time the prospective buyer spends talking.

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A rule of thumb: Let the customer talk 80 percent of the time. You fill in the remaining 20 percent with insightful questions and solutions.



To prompt your prospect to talk, you must start peeling back the layers, much as you would with an onion. Come up with at least six effective questions to ask that will help you strip away the outer layers until you reach the core.

It's really a two-part process. Start with the basics about the customer's company and then move into the problem areas.

Part 1: The Basics. Ask open-ended questions that elicit more than one-word answers:

- Tell me about your products and services.
- Where are your businesses located?
- How did you get started in business?

Part 2: The Problems. Focus on where the prospect needs assistance:

- What are the biggest challenges you face running your company?
- What types of business worries keep you up at night?
- How frequently do production problems occur and how do they affect your company?



Caution: When you hear a problem, it's normal to want to solve it. Don't fall into this trap. A better approach is to continue the questioning to get even *more* information. The more answers you have, the better your chances of closing the sale.





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