

Roadmap to Success

August 2022

To sell to at your highest potential, it's important to gather as much information from potential customers as possible. To maximize the amount of information you receive, you need to ask the right types of questions.

In my opinion, it's best to start with simple questions to get an idea of what your potential customer's current situation is. These questions could be as simple as:

- "Are you interested in a security system for your home?"

When you begin talking to a prospect, your first few questions should be easy for you to ask and easy for the prospect to answer. After asking the questions that tell you more about the prospect's current situation, you can begin to ask questions related to problem identification. These questions are used to uncover problems, difficulties and dissatisfaction. They should be along the lines of:

- "Do you get a lot of false alarms?"
- "Is your current system difficult to use?"
- "Is there a feature you wish your system could do?"
- "Are you satisfied with your current system?"

Problem identification questions can uncover prospects' implied needs. Implied needs might sound like "our system can't cope with ..." or "we're not happy with ..." Our job as salespeople is to take those implied needs and turn them into explicit needs. Explicit needs sound like a straightforward statement of

a prospect's wants or desires. An explicit need may sound like:

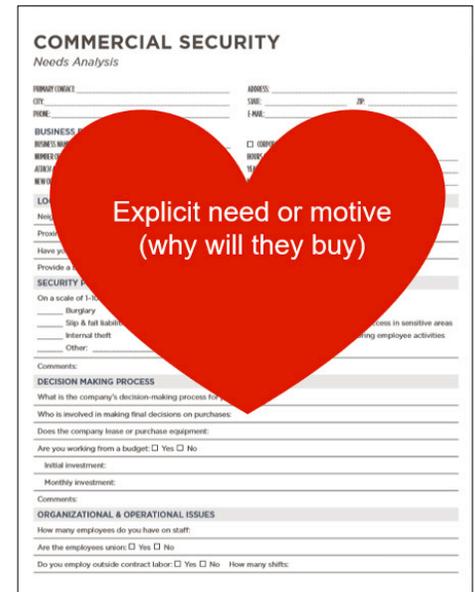
- "We need more security coverage."
- "We're looking for a more reliable system."
- "I must eliminate our shrinkage problems."
- "We want to increase the safety and security of our family or business."

If your prospect has stated an explicit need, you can begin to ask questions with the intent of making their implied needs more urgent. An **implication question** identifies and clarifies the consequences of not meeting an explicit need. It might sound like:

- "How much do those false alarms cost?"
- "What effect does the situation cause?"
- "Could your unreliable system lead to increased cost?"
- "If you don't harden your defenses against this situation, what do you think the future will hold?"

Once the buyer agrees the problem is enough to justify action, a successful salesperson asks **needs-payoff questions** to encourage the prospect to focus on solutions and describe the benefits the solution brings. These questions ask about the value of solving the problem and could sound like:

- "How would eliminating those false alarms benefit you?"
- "Why is it important for you to solve this problem?"
- "How would changing the situation help you?"



The psychology behind the need-payoff questions is to get the prospect to talk about the benefits of solving the problem. These questions help reduce objections and focus the customer's attention on the solutions rather than problems. Rather than you repeating the benefits of your system to the prospect, these questions allow them to come up with the benefits of purchasing from you on their own.

To sell to your highest potential, you need to ask the right questions and learn to guide the prospect toward their own conclusions. As always, feel free to reach out to me with any sales-training related questions or concerns.

And always remember, if you don't make the sale, you work for free.