



# WRONG SALES QUESTIONS

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# INTRODUCTION

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One of the biggest challenges for most Sales Professionals, Entrepreneurs and Small Business owners is making cold calls to new sales prospects.

These calls are the first step in your sales process, and it's important to make a good first impression on your potential customers.

But unfortunately, lots of Professionals unwittingly sabotage their sales relationship before it starts by asking Wrong Sales Questions to Customers. Most of the time, they don't mean to, even if you're just trying to be friendly to customers and sound natural on the phone, you might be asking questions that are derailing your sales process.

After through Research and Practice, we have identified Top 14 Sales Questions that shouldn't be asked to customers as they ruin the Relationship and take away your chances of building a relationship and winning his/her business.

# 1. HOW ARE YOU DOING?

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You might think it's a good idea to open your sales call with a simple conversational greeting like "how are you doing" -- it sounds warm and fuzzy, right? Unfortunately, this simple question often confuses your prospects because it suddenly puts a burden back on them. They might think they should already know you. Or they might get defensive -- maybe they're having a bad day and you caught them at a terrible time. Or they might pause and search their memory for whether or not they actually DO know you. Either way, this is a bad way to start your sales conversation.

**What to say instead:** "Hi, this is Bob Smith calling from ABC Digital. We work with local retailers to improve their online presence." You are very quickly letting the prospect know who you are and why you are calling. No need to act like acquaintances at this point, as you have not yet established a relationship, and it comes off as a little too aggressive and insincere.

## 2. IS IT A GOOD TIME?

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In business, virtually every decision maker is busy all day long, so asking someone if it's a good time, or if they have a moment to talk is pretty useless. Even if they do, you're portraying the stereotype of the disingenuous sales person by asking the question. Instead, focus your script on showing value that will grab attention and hold it long enough to either speak at length now, or schedule a followup call.

**What to say instead:** Best thing you could do if assume you have limited time to say, skip the permission part and jump straight to mentioning the Agenda or Reason of the Call.

### 3. ARE YOU THE DECISION MAKER?

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One of the hardest aspects of B2B sales is that sometimes you have to spend time and resources upfront just identifying the right decision makers and influential leaders within the prospect's organization.

So it might sound like a great idea to just come right out and ask if the person on the phone is the right person for you to be speaking with.

However, this is often a turnoff for your prospect. Asking this type of question is like asking someone if their friend will go on a date with you; like "if you don't like me, could you introduce me to your friend?"

Typically, if someone is not the decision maker, they will let you know. And if you've done a good job of building credibility with them and they like what they've heard so far, they will often help point you in the right direction or give you a name and number of the correct contact person.

**What to say instead:** Assume he is the decision maker and mention the Agenda of the Call to Build Credibility and you can ask "Are there other people or departments who we might want to include in next conversations?"

This is a softer way of asking the question, and it shows respect for the expertise and connections of the person on the phone with you. It's also a good way to open up the conversation a bit more and see how the solution or service that you're selling might affect other areas of the prospect's organization.

### 4. HAVE YOU HEARD OF US?

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- Unless you work for the most-recognized company in your industry, or work for Amazon or Facebook or one of the other biggest companies on the planet, most people on your prospecting list might not have heard of your company before. But that's OK! Especially if you're a solopreneur or a new startup, don't remind them of the fact that they might not have heard of you. After all, if they haven't heard of you, they might not trust you. If you are asking this question, they probably haven't heard of you, and you never want to have "easy no" questions early in the call. An easy no gives the prospect an out of the call.
- **What to say instead:** "Would you be willing to hear more about a new solution or service that could help your business save money/boost productivity?" Instead of asking if they've heard of you, give them a value proposition so they want to hear more about how you can help their business.

# 5. WHAT DO YOU GUYS DO? WHO ARE YOUR CUSTOMERS?

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These are considered to be the most immature questions anyone can ask customer to build relationship and generate enquiries.

When you are calling someone, it is assumed that you know most of the things about them. If you don't then it is assumed, you haven't done your homework. It is a clear message to the customers that you are not serious about them, their business and solving their challenges.

It is an immediate 'Turn Off' for any person in professional or personal space. Avoid this question at all cost. Instead, do a bit of research and gather this information from customer's website.



# 6. DO YOU WANT TO SAVE MONEY?

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This is what I call a “duh” question. Because the only reasonable response is a sarcastic “Duh!”

Questions like this insult the prospect’s intelligence, making them less likely to want to do business with you. On top of that, it doesn’t provide you with any useful information. For a better, more helpful response, try asking something like, “Where does saving money rank in your list of priorities?”

- The other killer question similar to the one above is: “Can I help you?”

The answer to this question is typically “No.” Which means you’ve lost all chance to interact with your prospect. Instead, ask, “What brings you in today?”

# 7. WHAT ARE SOME OF YOUR BIGGEST CHALLENGES?

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This is a great question once you already have a sales relationship underway with the prospect and can start to ask more detailed and confidential questions, but it's too big picture for a cold call. This is like taking someone on a first date and, within 10 minutes, asking them about their biggest life goals.

Every prospecting call is intended to introduce yourself, build credibility, generate interest, and finally, to ask for the prospect to commit to a next step. A good next step, depending on what type of solution or service you sell, is to ask the client to agree to set up an appointment for an online product demo or other presentation. This gets the client to commit to a specific action, and helps you know which clients are really interested. Then you can set the appointment, thank the client for their time, and end the call.

**What to say instead:** "Would you be willing to set up another call where we can go over a product demo and further discussion?"

# 8. DO YOU HAVE A BUDGET FOR THIS?

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Ah yes, the dreaded budget question. It's a really bad move to ask about budget too early in the process, and you definitely shouldn't do it on the very first call. It's all too easy for the prospect to say "no" to the budget question if you're selling a solution that is truly new and innovative. Most companies probably don't have a recurring annual allocation for whatever it is that you sell. Prospects also might get defensive if you start prying into their financials during the first few minutes of knowing you. They'll think, "whoa, we barely know each other. Why is this person reaching into my wallet?"

**What to say instead:** "Would you be open to seeing some estimated ROI calculations for this solution/service?" Don't talk to your prospects about how much it costs, talk to them about how much they will earn and save -- the positive ROI that your solution can deliver.

# 9. WHEN ARE YOU PLANNING TO BUY?

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The subtext of this question is, “When do I get paid?” The problem is, prospects can hear that subtext and it causes them to trust you less. They see you as merely another huckster who only cares about getting your hands on their money.

To find out what their decision-making timeframe is without sounding like a sleazebag, ask a question like, “How soon would you like to start using it?” or “Are you working within a deadline?”

OR, another similar question asked is: Are You Prepared to Purchase Today If I Can Show You Value?

There are some industries out there that will sell over the phone which is why I’ve included this particular phrase.

Though assertive and inclusive of a value-oriented message, this question is too pushy and impatient. Go into the sale believing that you can win the opportunity by showing value.

However, this question at the start of the selling cycle projects the wrong image in the buyer’s mind. Start with a customer-centric attitude and focus on building rapport.

Then, ask needs-based questions to uncover the buyer’s central problem and deep pain points.

By showing genuine interest and empathy, you prepare the customer to hear your on-point recommendation of a solution.

# 10. GIVE ME A CALL IF YOU CHANGE YOUR MIND?

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This statement is a common final message after a buyer says, “No” or goes down the dreaded “Send me some information to keep on file” route.

However, it isn’t assertive, and it doesn’t do much to impress a buyer looking to find a confident salesperson.

Instead, ask, “When I call you again in a month (or two or three), what do I need to research or show you to convince you that our solution is a good fit for your needs?”

This question communicates your intent to stick with the opportunity and allows you to gain insight as to how to improve your approach the next time.

It also invites them to talk further about their concerns or issues they may be having, giving you valuable information you may not know.

**That’s It. Wish you All the Success in Sales.**

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