

# *Sales Discovery Guide*

*High Yield Questions to help you **WIN!***

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# High Yield Questions

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*Introduction*

# *High Yield Questions*

## *Get the Most from Every Meeting*

Effective selling is all about having the right conversation, with the right people at the right time. Discovery questions guide meaningful dialogue when they are designed to clarify, correct and confirm customer/prospect information and facts.

Using the correct discovery questions at the right juncture within the sales process means every conversation will yield valuable information to help you develop and present a differentiated value proposition. M2Execution has defined 4 types of discovery questions as best practice in terms of helping achieve desired outcomes at each sales stage, and validating qualification throughout the process.

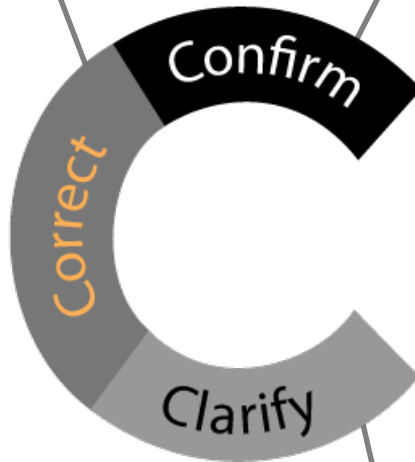
## **The 4 types of Discovery Questions**

- 1. Current State Questions**
- 2. Future State Questions**
- 3. Pain Point Questions**
- 4. Decision-Making Process Questions**

This E-Book will introduce you to each type of discovery question and provide examples that you can immediately put into practice in your current pursuit efforts. Leveraging this guide will help you elevate your customer conversations into meaningful, information packed dialogue.

Thoughtful, specific questions, such as those found in this guide, help you quickly determine the scope of opportunities, pinpoint priorities and uncover pain points and consequences. As you capture valuable information at each stage, you will help accelerate your win or learn that you need to walk away from a bad deal.

Discovery questions can help you to **correct** any misinformation or confusion the buyer may have about your company, products and services.



Use discovery questions to **confirm** your understanding of the buyer's current or desired future state.

Discovery questions allow you to ask the buyer to **clarify** information they share so that you can dig into topics at a detailed level.

“

***If I had an hour to solve a problem, and my life depended on the solution, I would spend the first 55 minutes determining the proper question to ask. For once I know the proper question, I could solve the problem in less than 5 minutes.***

”

**Albert Einstein**



# Current State Questions

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## *Chapter 1*

# *Current State Questions*

*Get a Holistic View of The Buyer's Current State*

*Current State questions are focused on capturing information about where your buyer is today with regard to the various areas that your solutions address. They allow you to understand the context in which you will be selling so you can continually tailor your talk track.*

*Using these questions helps you to uncover and selectively expand upon the buyer's specific challenges, changes and barriers that align with your products/services.*

*The following page includes various Current State discovery question examples or dialogue starters that can be used to help you create a holistic view of the buyer's current state.*

*Ch 4*

*Ch 3*

*Ch 2*

*Ch 1*



# Current State Questions

## Objectives & Initiatives

*What are the top business objectives for your organization this year?*

*What are the key initiatives aimed at helping achieve them?*

*What resources are required to execute on these initiatives?*

## Process & Roles

*Help me understand current situation of... {contextual information}*

*Walk me through the process for {contextual information} as it is today.*

*What's your role in the process?*

*What is your current strategy for process improvement?*

## Challenges & Obstacles

*What types of challenges are preventing the execution of your strategy?*

*Currently, how do you address these problems or challenges?*

*What has caused you to focus on solving these challenges and problems now? What has changed?*

## Preferred Providers

*How is your current provider helping you to address your challenges?*

*What are the requirements of your current provider?*

*How satisfied are you with the current provider? Why?*

*Based on your experience, what characteristics do you feel are crucial for your providers to have?*



# ***Added Benefits of Effective Discovery***



- 1. Asking questions and empathetically listening to prospect/client answers quickly builds trust and rapport with them.**
- 2. Detailed, industry or business specific questions show knowledge and preparation enabling you to effectively establish credibility early in the sales process.**
- 3. Clients prefer conversations *NOT* presentations and thoughtful discovery drives engaging, high value conversations.**



# Future State Questions

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## *Chapter 2*

# *Future State Questions*

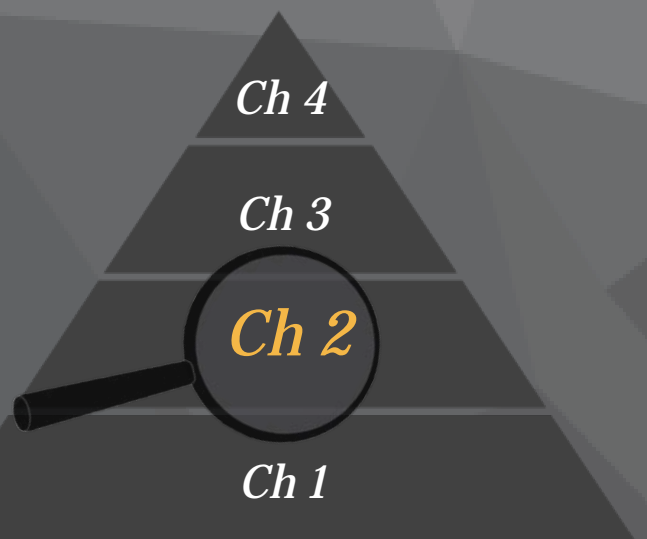
## *Envision the Successful Outcome*

*Future state questions aim to uncover the buyer's desired end state with regard to your product or solution.*

*These questions will focus on their initiatives, priorities and desired outcomes and determine what challenges and barriers are preventing them from achieving those results.*

*You can also leverage future state questions to get a better understanding of your buyer's personal motivation and aspirations, which will help you to effectively articulate your value proposition.*

*The following page includes various future state discovery question examples or starters to help you guide a conversation where you gain insight into the buyer's idealized future state within the context of what your products/services can deliver.*



# *Future State Questions*

## **Performance & Results**

*Please describe any metrics, KPIs and/or SLAs that you need to achieve.*

*Where would you like your metrics to be?*

*What reward will you receive if your team achieves them?*

*How do you want your team to be perceived?*

*How do you wish to be perceived in your organization?*

*How important is the initiative to your team? Why?*

*How important is the initiative to you personally? Why?*

## **Preferred Providers**

*How might a more effective provider help you achieve your organization's mission?*

*How might a more effective provider help you improve your team's metrics?*

*What risks do you envision with regard to working with a provider on this initiative?*

*What are some characteristics of a strong partner for you?*

## **Personal Objectives**

*Once the process for {use contextual information} is successfully implemented, how would that benefit you?*

*What impact would success have on your team?*

*What impact would you anticipate on your career if you are successful with this initiative?*

# Sales Discovery



## Do

- Your research before the Discovery Meeting.
- Practice Empathy & active listening to foster trust.
- Be humble, curious and ready to learn.
- Get clarity by asking clients to elaborate on their answers.
- Ask details about their buying process and stakeholders.
- Tell short, relevant stories from your experience with similar clients.
- Be comfortable saying “I don’t know, but I will find out for you” when asked a question outside of your area of expertise.



## Don't!

- Wing it – be prepared by doing research and planning your questions.
- Be late for the meeting or let it run over. The client will feel that you don’t value their time.
- Skip the difficult questions because you are afraid of not being liked. It’s more important to be respected.
- Act like you know more than you actually do about their business.
- Derail the conversation by positioning products – this is a NO PITCH conversation!
- Bad mouth competitors.
- Make promises you aren’t sure you can deliver on.



# Pain Point Questions

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## *Chapter 3*

# *Pain Point Questions*

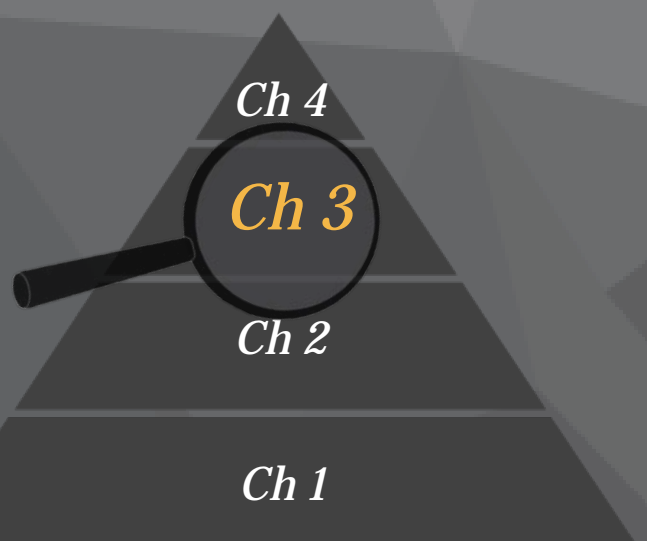
## *Create a Sense of Urgency*

*Pain Point questions take your sales discovery conversation a step further by drawing out specific pain points the buyer is experiencing and their consequences.*

*So, the Pain Point questions create a sense of urgency and help the buyer to see and feel the risk associated with not making a change. Pain Point questions bring to surface the various reasons that status quo is no longer an option.*

*The following page lists various Pain Point question examples to help you guide a conversation that create a sense of urgency in the mind of your buyer which can help accelerate their buying process.*

*Finally, the information gleaned from the answers to Pain Point questions will be crucial input later when you define and articulate your differentiated value proposition.*



# Pain Point Questions

## Sense of Urgency

*You mentioned “X” as being a significant challenge for you and your team, in what ways does it impact the business?  
How does the challenge impact your team? How about you?  
What level of urgency exists around this challenge resolved?  
How do you plan to elevate the sense of urgency in order to get your challenge resolved?*

## Impact of Challenges

*If the challenge doesn't get addressed, how will you recover from the negative consequences?  
How realistic do you think that recovery is based on your current resources and tools?  
How will you manage your day to day and the negative impact of these challenges all in the same timeframe?  
How is this unresolved challenge impacting your performance, professional image and career?*

## Consequences on Growth

*If you don't make a change, what impact will that have on your competitors?  
How is this affecting your relationship with your loyal customers?  
If you don't address these pains, how will it limit your ability to grow your business?  
What will the direct and indirect financial impact be if you maintain status quo?*





# DITCH THE "PITCH"



Customers *DON'T* want to hear all about your company and products. If you want to engage prospects, use a **DISCOVERY CONVERSATION**, instead!



THEY THINK YOU DON'T GET IT...

## 24%

of sales people are knowledgeable about their business but

## 88%

are knowledgeable about Products



## 77%

of Executive Buyers felt that vendors didn't understand their business and how they could help them

STRONG DISCOVERY QUESTIONS PROVE YOU DO



Strong discovery and follow on questions show you are trying to understand their business so you can help them succeed!

Asking questions and actively listening build **trust** and **credibility**



NEEDS DISCOVERY HELPS YOU CLOSE

Sales efforts without needs discovery are **73% LESS LIKELY TO CLOSE**



Use this Discovery Guide to help you...

Gain deep knowledge about your prospect's business



Use the knowledge to differentiate your value proposition!



# Decision Making Process Questions

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## *Chapter 4*

# *Decision-Making Process Questions*

## *Know the Road to Close*

*The last of the 4 Discovery Question types involves understanding the client or prospect's decision making process. The unique nature of each client's organizational procurement process necessitates that you be diligent with asking the right questions to capture every requirement and detail.*

*Today, there are more stakeholders involved in purchasing decisions than ever before. This means you also have to learn who plays what role in the process and any requirements they have.*

*The following page includes a list of Decision-Making Process question examples to help you learn the buying criteria, process, key stakeholders, influencers, and the competitive landscape you will have to navigate to win the business.*

*Being well prepared and thoughtful as you go through these discovery questions with your client will help ensure there won't be any showstoppers that could delay or derail your opportunity.*



*Ch 3*

*Ch 2*

*Ch 1*

# *Decision Making Process Questions*

## **Stakeholder Identification**

*Other than you, who else shares an interest in this initiative and why?*

*What revisions do I need to make to the proposal and why?*

*Is there anyone else we should ask to review the proposal for us and provide feedback?*

*How shall I communicate the changes and to whom?*

*Who do we need to include in our final proposal presentation and review to ensure all stakeholders have the information they need?*

## **Decision Process Questions**

*Can you describe the purchasing process to me?*

*Specifically, I'd like to understand:*

- The process*
- The people involved and their respective roles*
- The various requirements for us throughout the process*
- The timeline for the process overall and for any specific requirements within the process*

## **Finance, Legal & Signature**

*How important are the finances as part of the overall decision making process?*

*How will the legal reviews/redlining work? Who are the legal contacts that we will work with?*

*Who ultimately makes the decision for/ will sign for this purchase/Solution?*

# Discovery Checklist

Did you confirm the following... if not what do you need to clarify?

- Background and current state
- Organizational goals and priorities
- Personal motivators
- Challenges and barriers
- Decision-making process (criteria, timetable, players)
- Key players (decision-makers, influencers, end users)
- Timeline
- Resources required to advance opportunity
- Consequences of them maintaining status quo
- Level of commitment to move forward (low, medium, high)
- Client request for additional services

This checklist serves as a debrief tool to validate what was confirmed during the call and help you prepare your next conversation. As you work through the new business development process, you can analyze this information to further refine your call plan for your next conversation.

# *Food for Thought*

*“Most people think ‘selling’ is the same as talking. But the most successful salespeople know that listening is the most important part of their job.”*

*-Roy Bartell*

*“By Far, the best way to influence people is to listen to them.”*

*-Charles H. Green*

*“In selling, as in medicine, prescription before diagnosis is malpractice.”*

*- Tony Allesandra*



There's More

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*Conclusion*

# ***There's More...***

***You've Had Just a Taste of the Secret Sauce***

*We've established how important it is to be thoughtful and disciplined about the discovery process and how to use various types of questions to determine if you can win fast or should walk away.*

*The discovery questions shared in this E-Book are just one component of our comprehensive, customized Sales Playbook. A Sales Playbook that incorporates all your key sales content can increase efficiency, eliminate pipeline fiction and enable more effective sales conversations.*

*An M2Execution Sales Playbook helps sales professionals take control of the opportunity lifecycle while providing the client the right information based on where they are in the buying process.*

***Our Sales Playbooks are customized with information such as:***

**Sales Process**

**Sales Call Model**

**Pre-Call Planning**

**Key Account Profile**

**Proprietary PUB Dialogue Technique**

**Objection Handling**

**Blueprint for Effective New Business**

**Development Conversations**

**Tailoring the Value Proposition**

**Post Call Analysis**



# *Let's have a Dialogue*

M2Execution can help you leverage the 4 types of discovery questions, Sales Playbook and several other proven tools and training programs to help you win more deals, faster and with a positive customer buying experience. Click below to schedule a complementary 30 minute introductory consultation call. Let's see how we can help you GROW!

***I am ready for my  
complementary  
Consultation***

