

A Questioning Technique with a Hidden Benefit

By Stephen Craine

This sales tip shows how to use a simple questioning technique that yields essential information about your prospect's needs, and a subsequent hidden benefit that will make you want to use it more.

Sales professionals have an understanding of how to ask sales questions. We all know how to structure this stage of the sale by asking open questions first. Then using alternative and closed questions to get more detail and gain agreement from the prospect. Many sales people will also have heard of dissatisfaction questions, where the seller asks the prospect what they are not happy with in relation to their current product or service. But how many sellers really understand how to use this questioning technique to its full potential?

When you ask your prospect what they are dissatisfied with, you get great information that you can use to form your sales presentation. Make no mistake, this information is valuable, and it can easily be turned into benefits that the prospect wants, is not getting, and that you can give them when they buy your product. The information that they give you will be related to the products or services that they currently use and that you are trying to replace. They may also tell you about their current situation and what the products and services *don't* do to improve that position.

One of the best tips on asking dissatisfaction questions is: Keep the prospect talking; get as much information as you can on their dissatisfaction. Not only will this give you plenty of information on what features and benefits to put into your presentation, but there is also another reason which is part of the hidden benefits of this sales questioning technique, and we will come to that in a moment. To keep your prospect talking and [providing] this valuable information, use the same structure as you do for your other sales questions.

Start off with a wide-open question. No, not one that starts with: Where, What, Who, When, or How. These can get the prospect talking, but they can also be answered with short replies—and that's not what you want. Leave these in the sales training classroom because they don't work in the real world. Start your dissatisfaction questions with: Tell me about, Explain to me, or Give me a picture. It is very difficult for even the least responsive buyer to answer these open questions with just a short sentence. These are the real wide-open questions that get lots of information, and that successful sellers use every day. After the open questions, move on to alternative-answer questions to get more detail, and then to closed questions that require a yes or no answer to gain agreement. Use this structure for asking sales questions, and your prospect will give you so much information that they will almost write your sales presentation for you.

I said at the beginning of these sales tips that there is a hidden benefit that you gain when you use dissatisfaction questions. This extra benefit is another reason why you should use this sales technique. The hidden benefit to you is: The prospect will be criticizing their current product, service, supplier, and maybe even their own past purchasing decisions. This is something that you should never do. Sales professionals should never be negative about the prospect's current products or their [buying] decisions. By using this questioning technique, you get the prospect to do this for you. It has a far greater impact, and will help you to give a great sales presentation and close the sale.

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Stephen Craine is a successful working sales manager and trainer for a major international company. He has combined 20 years of sales and sales management experience, with a wide range of training and coaching disciplines. Imagine having a whole repertoire of proven techniques for each stage of your sale, and be shown how to use them with your current skills. You can see the sales training course that will give you exactly that, as well as step by step instructions on how to put the techniques into action today. Make a difference today by opening <http://www.sales-training-sales-tips.com/sales-training-course.html>

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