

26 Sales Questions to Create a Sense of Urgency Without Being Pushy

Problem definition is a classic developmental issue for salespeople. Before you can solve a problem, you have to know what it is, how big it is, and how painful it is.

If you don't know how to really dig into a prospect's problem, you'll speak with potentially good-fit customers who run through a standard sales process but end up delaying or not committing to a purchase. Top 2% salespeople can recognize "tells" in prospects that indicate whether they'll move toward purchase or delay the process, and they're able to create a sense of urgency that propels the prospect to commit.

Creating a sense of urgency without being pushy is a learned skill based on conducting good discovery, understanding the needs of the prospect, and asking the right questions of the right people in the sales process.

Remember that most customers buy a product or service for emotional reasons. Even if your product or service is relatively undifferentiated and your prospects are price sensitive, many will still make a decision based on their overall relationship with the salesperson. Especially if you're working with SMBs, a purchase may not be an insignificant decision. Often, it comes directly out of the partners' pocketbooks and will affect their paycheck and bottom line.

Customers rarely understand the extent of your product's value when they engage at the top of the funnel. One of the most important parts of your job is to identify through discovery what your prospect is looking for, how they want to purchase, what the key decision criteria are going to be, and how you can make it easy for them to purchase.

Of course, salespeople can't -- and shouldn't -- try to spur every prospect toward a quick close. We see dozens of examples every month of prospects in virtually every industry who need more nurturing before they're ready to pull the trigger. Some of these are just bad fits. Some shouldn't be talking to Sales at all because they're still in education mode (Sales should let

Marketing handle these leads and make sure you are not engaging too early). But many are a good fit, and are definitely moving toward a close -- it will just take a little longer.

When your prospects are good fits and far enough along in the process that they should be ready to buy, here are 26 questions you can ask to light a fire under them.

How to Create a Sense of Urgency in Your Prospects without Being Pushy

- 1. How big is the company? Revenue? Employee headcount?**
- 2. Is the business struggling, steady-state, or in growth mode? To what extent?**
- 3. What is the problem that you are looking to solve?**
- 4. Have you had this problem before?**
- 5. Is it easy to address or hard?**
- 6. Is this a nagging pain that has been around for years or a new issue? If it's new, what brought it on?**
- 7. Is there a formal plan to address that need?**
- 8. What is the plan and who is involved?**
- 9. How does this problem affect the revenue or profitability of the business?**
- 10. Does it affect a lot of people?**
- 11. Are you tasked with solving this problem as part of your regular job or is this a special assignment?**
- 12. What happens if it you address the problem?**
- 13. What happens if you don't?**
- 14. When do you need to start seeing the results?**
- 15. What is the one thing that, if we solved it, would have the most meaningful impact on you and your company?**
- 16. If we are able to help and get the right results how does this affect you (personally)?**
- 17. How does this affect your boss?**
- 18. What happens if you keep doing what you are doing? Do you need to accelerate your current plan or do you need a new way of dealing with this problem?**

- 19. If we identify a solution that works, can you get started today/this week/this month?**
- 20. If we supply all the information you need in the next 24 hours, will you have time to review it and get started this week?**
- 21. Do you anticipate any curveballs in the process?**
- 22. Describe a recent sales process that went quickly. (Use this question to figure out if you and your prospect can duplicate a past smooth sales process.)**
- 23. Define your timeline for solving the problem.**
- 24. What is the drop dead date that this must be solved?**
- 25. When is your busy season? Do you need to implement before it hits?**
- 26. If we can work out a solution sooner, does that help?**

How do you create a sense of urgency in your prospects?