

Identifying & Developing Needs with Effective Questioning

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TLI 106



"Inspiring Dreams, Realizing Potential"

Identifying & Developing Needs with Effective Questioning

WELCOME

Uncovering a client's needs is one of the single most important ingredients in the sales process.

It does not matter...

- what you have to offer
- how enticing your rates are
- how dramatic the latest readership survey is
- how well you know your closing techniques.

You cannot successfully manage the sales process nor can you relate how your client will benefit from your product without first understanding their *need or problem*.



Our objective

Today's Topics Include:

- 1. Developing the skill of probing to uncover the client's need.**
- 2. Discussion of the types of questions to be used.**
- 3. How to prepare the questioning portion of the sales call so we can fully understand the client's business situation**

Uncovering
needs and
problems



Let's start with a question

True or False?

The bigger the problem or need,
the more anxious we are to find a
solution.

Answer: True!

Size matters



Getting beyond what “I” want

ANXIOUS = Your needs and problems

PATIENCE = The customer’s needs and problems.

You want the sale and you want it now.
Move past what you want in order to truly get
what you want!

You must always **TLC**:

Think Like a Customer!

“Every sale is an
emotional one.” -
Tom Hopkins



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Shameless self-promotion

Through the interview process, you are positioning yourself as a problem solver! Information provided gives you insight in the customer's "Hot Buttons," and allows you to answer the customer's ultimate question,
"What's In It For Me?" (WIIFM)

Be certain to check out:

- TLI105 - Communicating Through Listening
- TLI107 - Making Recommendations using Features, Benefits & Value

...to turn the findings from your questioning into a great recommendation!



And now back to our program...

The questioning process has three main goals:

1. Gather information
2. Direct a thought process
3. Build credibility

Good questioning requires good listening

Listening builds trust – it shows you genuinely care and have a sincere desire to understand the customer's problem or need.

Listen...do you
want to know a
secret?



Let's play doctor...and ask questions!

Think of your sales call as the exact same scenario as the patient- doctor relationship.

Ask questions to gain more information about the customer's circumstances (*find the pain*).

Ask questions to clarify what you believe the customer is saying.

Ask questions to gain insight into what really matters to our client.

**Ask questions to get them talking about their favorite subject—
Their Business!**



People are more apt to buy when they are talking, and are less apt to buy when you are talking.



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Uncover needs to provide the right solution

**This is an interview, a conversation...
Not an interrogation!**

**Think ahead – know the most common areas where
business marketing problems lie:**

- **Poor name recognition**
- **Competition**
- **Image (good, bad, need a change?)**
- **Target a new demo or market***
- **Reduce inventory**
- **More traffic (not the same as more business)**
- **Customer awareness***

** Poorly designed previous advertising campaigns*

The greater the
pain the greater
the interest in
finding and
implementing
the cure



Uncovering problems

So how do we uncover these problems?
By asking **QUESTIONS**, of course!

The QUESTION is the answer!

Most of the questions we'll ask will fall into 4 main categories:

- 1. General Business**
- 2. Advertising**
- 3. Competition**
- 4. Budget**

Start with
simple
questions...
build to probing
questions as
you develop
trust



Recognizing a specific problem

Competition as a problem poses a very specific issue...

Who in the market has the:

- Best Product
- Best Service
- Best Price

Use a Market Model approach to get your customer to **TLC**:

Think Like Their Customer!

Use a marketing model approach



“Don’t sell me...listen to me!”

Questioning in these 4 areas:

1. General Business
2. Advertising
3. Competition
4. Budget

Will not only help you with uncovering the client’s needs, it will also help with the following:

- Building rapport
- Understanding the client’s short and long-term goals
- Help you design an effective advertising campaign
- Locate an appropriate budget
- Setting appropriate expectations

Additional
benefits



Let's build some questions

- **General Business**
- **Advertising**
- **Competition**
- **Budget**

Don't be:

- Vague
- Disjointed
- A time waster



YES



NO



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Sample questions

General Business

- **Tell me about your Products & Services.**
- **What do you sell the most and what is your most profitable item(s)?**
- **What is your average sale?**
- **How often does that occur?**
- **Margin on the sale?**
- **Where do your customers come from?**
- **Who are your customer(s)?**
- **What keeps you up at night about your business?**

**Don't forget to
listen!**



Sample questions

Competition

Where does your customer win:

- Best product
- Best service
- Best price

- **Who is your competition?**
- **What sets you apart and makes you unique?**
- **How much of the market are you currently capturing?**
- **Who do you consider to be your strongest competitor?**
- **Does online pose a threat?**
- **Is competition increasing or decreasing?**



Sample questions

Advertising (*You may already be familiar with some of their advertising through your initial prospecting.*)

Never negatively question...or insult previous advertising choices.

- How are you currently letting people know you're the best in the area?
- What types of print media are you currently using?
- What size(s) are your current ads and are they in full color?
- What's the frequency of your advertising?
- How long is your advertising scheduled to run?
- What do you like about your advertising? What would you change if you could?



Sample questions

Budget

- Do you have a budget you would like to work within?
- What would you comfortable investing on a weekly/
monthly basis to let people know you are the best
(fill in the blank) in the area?

**Understand Low trust vs. High trust
& know how to bracket**

Be armed with
prior knowledge



Wrapping it up

CONCLUDE THE EXAMINATION

As you uncover the customer's needs, you should:

1. Get agreement on the two or three major needs you identify
2. Confirm that the customer wants to do something about their situation.

**THE BIGGER THE NEED, THE MORE
EAGERLY THEY WILL SEEK A SOLUTION!**

Gain access to
the next step of
the process



Summary & Review

Remember the following key points when questioning a potential or existing customer:

- Your questions should focus on uncovering the customer's needs
- Like a doctor, you cannot make an effective recommendation until you question thoroughly.
- Focus on developing questions on 4 areas: General Business, Competition, Advertising, and Budget.
- Don't interrogate—interview.
- Once you are satisfied you understand the customer's situation, recap what you believe to be the customer's greatest need(s).
- Utilize your recommended question list to fully develop your questioning skills.

WELCOME



Thank you!

QUESTIONS & DISCUSSION

On behalf of The Leadership Institute, thank you for attending this class. We believe that the continued growth of the free paper industry begins with a well-trained, energized sales force.

For more information on TLI's course offerings, check out afcp.org and the Online Learning Center (Click on "Member Benefits")

***"The important thing is not to stop questioning; curiosity has its own reason for existing."
-Albert Einstein***



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