

Value Selling - 5 Whys & 5 What-Ifs

Continuous Improvement is enabled through monitoring and adjusting the levers of metrics that are aligned to what the owners want. The result is enhanced competitiveness in terms of price, cost, functionality, quality, etc. In various initiatives such as Kaizen, Lean, 6 Sigma, Total Quality Management, Toyota Production System – a technique of **5 Whys** proves useful at identifying cause-and-effect relationships underlying imperfection and getting to the root cause in order to improve. An example might be:

1st Why - “*Why is lead time so long for a product?*”,

2nd Why - “*Why does the part sit on the floor in queue 95% of the time?*”,

3rd Why - “*Why do we run such large batches of the part at each machine?*”,

4th Why - “*Why are the setups so long?*”,

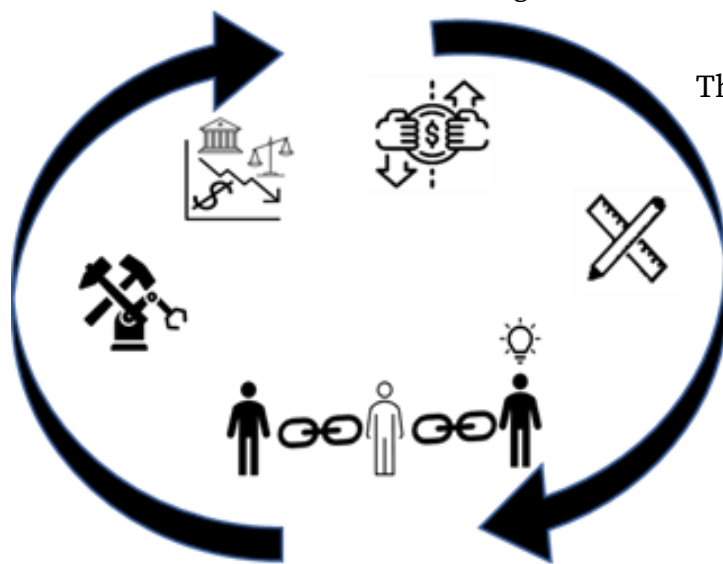
5th Why - “*Why are the machine fixtures & tooling so part-specific?*”

This is an introspective and historical review.

When engaging with a prospect our Value Selling approach needs to reflect an external, forward-looking perspective. Things are always changing, and there are considerable outside influences. The challenge is to create an advantage from the uncertainty. Let’s explore a conceptual method that we’ll call **5 What-Ifs**.

You probably are familiar with the analogy of a ¼” drill. As they say, even though we are selling a ¼” drill, our prospect really just wants a ¼” hole. But is it guaranteed that they will always want that ¼” hole? We need to probe further:

1. **What if** our competition offers a better deal (price, quality, durability, features.....)?
2. **What if** the prospect changes their design and needs a different size or shape hole?
3. **What if** the prospect's customer's customer's...definition of value changes?
4. **What if** the technology to produce a hole changes to laser, water jet – or additive?
5. **What if** external factors of regulation/economy impact marketing this product?



The prospect won't value our offering until we offer them value. Asking the **5 What-Ifs** challenges the status quo assumption that our product will always be the right solution - and prepares us to seek Value as our prospects define it. How we deal with Uncertainty will ultimately determine our success