Mini-Deal Breakers Audit

Four questions. Ten minutes. One live deal.

Every vendor who has lost a sale has received a version of this.

"Other vendor solutions aligned better with our needs."

"Their timeline was a better fit for us."

"Your proposal came in above what we'd budgeted."

Think of the last one you got. It probably said something close to these.

Not one of those reasons is about your product, its features or its benefits. Every one of them is something the buyer knew and you never got to discover.

Deals are won and lost on how well the seller understands **what is important to the prospect, why it matters to them, and how they weigh the safest option.**

60% of buyers say the seller never uncovered their real problem.

INSTRUCTIONS

Pick one live deal and one person: your champion, the one on that account you know best and speak to most. Everything below is about them.

Answer the four questions in their words. You may not have all of it written down anywhere, and that is expected. No sales process has a step that asks for these. Fill in what you have.

If you cannot answer one, the steps at the end of this page tell you how to go get it.

HERE IS ONE FILLED IN

CHAMPION Dana Reyes, VP Sales

1 "We need marketing to generate leads for our sales team."

2 Descriptor: **generate**. Subject: **leads**.

3 Dana defines generate as taking inbound from 7 a week to 18 a week, and a lead as someone in their defined ICP who needs to buy a solution like theirs within six months.

4 It matters to Dana because she lost two reps last quarter and told the CEO she would not need to backfill them until inbound is filling the pipeline. Too much outbound is what burned them out.

WHY THIS IS THE CRITICAL PART

The descriptor and the subject feel like words you already agree on. That is what makes them dangerous. You cannot know unless you ask, and Dana could just as easily have meant any of these.

Generate — a number per month. Or consistency instead of volume. Or from a particular source: paid ads, webinars, events, partner referrals. Or the same volume for less spend.

A lead — a phone number. Or anyone who downloads something. Or a name that fits the ICP with no timing attached. Or someone with budget, authority and a signed business case.

Each one is a different project, a different proposal and a different price. If you do not know which one she meant, how can you show that your solution aligns with the problem the way she sees it?

That is what this form prevents. It keeps you from becoming one of the sellers buyers are describing when they say the vendor never uncovered their real problem, meaning the problem as they see it. This is one piece of the full audit, done for one person.

YOUR TURN

CHAMPION NAME

1 What did they say is the problem they need solved?

Their words, not your summary.

2 Pull out the two words carrying the most weight.

The descriptor is the change they want. The subject is the thing they want it done to.

DESCRIPTOR

SUBJECT

3 How does your champion define each of those words?

This is the hardest line on the page and the most valuable one to have. Sellers who can fill it in are working from their prospect's definition instead of their own, and it shows in what they propose.

THE DESCRIPTOR, AS THEY DEFINE IT

THE SUBJECT, AS THEY DEFINE IT

4 Why does it matter to them?

To the person you named at the top, not to the company. People defend what matters to them personally. Nobody fights for a company initiative.

YOUR DEAL IS AT RISK IF

- you could not write how your champion defines either word
- the sentence in question 1 could describe any other account in your pipeline
- question 4 describes the company instead of the person you named

A blank does not mean you are losing. It means there is something you do not know yet, on a deal that is still open, which is the only useful time to find out.

HOW TO GET WHAT IS MISSING

1 Could not write what they said.

Find out how they describe the problem by asking them, so you capture their words instead of yours.

2 Could not pick out two words.

Share your summary with them and ask how they would say it.

3 Could not define either word.

Ask them directly: "When you said you needed to [descriptor] [subject], how would you define each of those?"

4 Could only describe the company.

Confirm the company reason first: "Is it accurate to say this matters to the company because [their reason]?" Then separate them from it: "Where does that land for you? You could have left this alone. What made you the one to pick it up?" The company reason explains why the project exists. Theirs is what makes them defend it when someone pushes back.

Deals are won and lost on how well the seller understands what is important to the prospect, why it matters to them, and how they weigh the safest option.

I hope this was useful for working out how well you understand your prospect's problem the way they would describe it. If you define it differently than they do, you are also proposing a solution that does not solve their problem. You might be close, and close does not win the sale.

This was one piece of the full audit, for one person. The full audit is more comprehensive and is customized for a multistakeholder committee or a single decision maker, depending on your industry and how many people are involved. It shows where their definitions differ from each other and which difference stops the deal.

You can also run this form on a deal you already lost, to see whether the definition of the problem was the reason your solution did not fit.

The deal you just looked at is still open. Every answer you could not write is still sitting with a person who will still take your call. That is the only thing separating this deal from the last one you lost, and it does not last.

If you want help finding what is missing while that is still true, here is the link to schedule a meeting:

https://wiittselling.com/#0c2475dc-03a9-4af7-a111-53483dc9744e

You can also reach out to me at jeffrey@wiittselling.com · www.wiittselling.com

Source: A Sales Growth Company B2B buyer survey.