

The Credibility Letter™

—Mental Stimulation for Outwardly-Focused Professionals—

Principles, Practices, and Tools That Help You
Close More Deals by Setting Yourself Apart as a Trusted Advisor

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3 Big Problems with Asking Questions When Selling

Friends & Associates,

We're all taught to ask questions in the selling process. **This is good advice.** Unfortunately, done wrong, asking questions can push prospects and clients away instead of drawing them closer.

Here are **three common problems** many of us run into in the sales process (along with their solutions) when trying to do the right thing by asking questions:

Problem #1: We ask questions in such a way we assume our prospects already know what they want

Most salespeople take whatever their prospects say they want at face value and begin the process of showing those prospects why their solution is the best fit. This can be a big mistake.

Often, our prospects don't have the expertise to clearly see the link between **their desired outcome** and **their proposed course of action**. Because of this, they waste large amounts of time and money going down paths that don't ultimately lead them to a destination that meets their needs.

Take time to assess why a prospect thinks he or she wants a given product or service. Discover their ultimate desired outcome. Get to know their background. You'll find often that you can help steer them in a better direction from the outset—something for which they will be very grateful, helping you achieve the status of trusted advisor with them.

This results in shorter sales cycles, more repeat business, and better (even unsolicited) referrals.

Problem #2: Our questions begin to sound like an interrogation

Asking the wrong questions, or asking our questions the wrong way, can make our prospects feel more like they are in an interrogation than being served by an expert and advocate.

There's a simple fix for this.

As you listen to prospects, **identify the key words** in their statements and questions. Then **drill down** on those key points.

When we ask a question, get an answer, then ask a seemingly (to the prospect) unrelated question, it feels like an interrogation. When we ask a question, carefully analyze the answer, then ask another question that drills down on the key point of the prospect's response, **we are seen as savvy advisors** who really listen (because we do) and know what we're talking about.

Drilling down five, six, or more levels is often required to get to the core of what is really in the mind of your prospect. Often, you will both be pleasantly surprised at where your questioning leads you; realizing you've **uncovered previously unseen realities** that are **beneficial to the prospect**.

Problem #3: We tend to ask questions that lead people to the conclusion WE want

Many would-be credible advisors can't seem to leave "salesperson mode" even though they ask questions. Their questions are not tailored to their prospects' comments, but are blatantly scripted attempts to appear to be assessing needs while aggressively pushing the prospect toward the desired outcome of the salesperson.

Learn to **really listen**, to **help people discover the core desire** behind their pursuit, and to **find the best solution** (for them) to achieving that desire—EVEN IF THIS MEANS YOU DON'T GET A SALE OUT OF THE DEAL—and you'll find you're closing deals like never before (really, I promise) while spending minimal time with those who are not on the path to becoming your client. Everyone wins.

It may not seem natural to make these changes, but they are worth the effort. Why spend one more day being seen as a pesky salesperson when you can begin the transformation to being a sought-after trusted advisor?

To your success,



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