

## 4 Secrets to Highly Successful B2B Sales Conversations

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Sometimes you or your reps end a call with a prospect or customer and just wonder, “What went wrong?” If that has ever happened to you (and it’s probably happened to anyone who has ever made a sales call), keep the following tips in mind.

In summary, to ensure more successful sales conversations, ask yourself if you're talking too much during sales calls. If so, build your curiosity, ask more questions and learn to listen. Make sure you ask questions that spur conversation and help you to gain an understanding of their situation. When you talk, translate your product's features into their benefits to illustrate how they will make your prospect's life better. And finally, explain how the buyer will be better off purchasing your product rather than your competitor's.

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- **Do the Right Amount of Talking**

After tasting porridge from two bowls, one that was too hot and one that was too cold, Goldilocks tasted porridge from the third bowl and announced, "Ahh ...this porridge is just right." She ate it all up.

In the same way, when you have a sales conversation with a prospect or customer, you can talk too much, too little or just the right amount. That, of course, begs the question, "How much is just right?"

Let's start with how much talking is too much. Not surprisingly, recent research shows that salespeople like the sounds of their own voices. They dominate conversations, on average talking 75 percent of the time. That's too much!

The same study showed the top salespeople are less vociferous, speaking just 43 percent of the time. Star performers make the customer the star of their conversations. They do so by asking questions, listening and learning about the buyer and their needs. This process enables them to develop rapport and tailor a solution to the customer's requirements. They add a human touch to the sales process that substantially increases their ability to seal the deal.

- **Ask Questions that Help Navigate the Sale**

For this process to work, you need to ask the right questions. For the most part, they should be open-ended — those a prospect cannot answer with a

“yes” or a “no.” Such questions allow them to talk while you listen.

For instance, ask “What are your objectives?” or “Who is involved in the decision?” The answers to these types of questions can reveal crucial information about the prospect’s problem and allow you to discover how decision making works in their organization. All of this is essential in helping you to steer your way to the sale.

Importantly, these questions also enable you to move to the right end of the talk-to-listen spectrum.

- **Help the Buyer Visualize the Solution**

It’s not all about listening. Having asked relevant questions that reveal the buyer’s pain and their objectives, put yourself in the buyer’s shoes. What does the buyer want their situation to look like after overcoming the problem? Paint a picture that enables the buyer to envision what life could be like if they purchase your product or solution. Also, explain the dangers of not solving the problem.

For instance, let’s say you’re selling a buyer-intent data solution to a marketing executive who has struggled to generate enough leads. You want them to envision being able to create online media campaigns targeted to people already searching for their product — and to find these individuals before their competition knows they even exist. If they fail to buy the solution, they’ll be stuck on the never-ending treadmill of always searching for leads. They also risk falling behind the competition. The dangers of doing nothing can be the most significant motivators to action because that’s the pain your buyer wants to avoid.

- **Define Your Differentiator**

You need to go further than painting a picture of how your prospect’s life will be better after they’ve purchased your product. They must understand what makes your product or service different and *why that difference matters*. In other words, you need to answer the question, “Why will I be better off if I buy from your company than if I buy from competitor XYZ?”

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