



# ASK & LISTEN

One of the most important skills you need as a seller is the ability to ask the right questions at the right time. Questions are tools that allow you to uncover information, unlock insights, understand different types of needs and be more persuasive and influential. And, while doing all of that heavy lifting, they deliver the added benefit of causing people to like you more. The purpose of this tool is to help you capture and organize your best questions, and to use them to listen at all three levels.

## ASK

There are five main types of questions that help us listen and understand, and each type of question plays a different role in a sales conversation. Write down several of each type of question.

### 1. CONNECTION QUESTIONS

*Create a spark. Build trust. Generate positive energy*

Connection questions are designed to provide a spark. Think of when you strike a match. In an instant, you've got a bit of light and heat. This is what a good connection question does. It infuses energy into a conversation. And it's designed to be more interesting than "How's the weather?" or "Did you see the game last night?"

#### Examples of connection questions:

1. What's caught your attention in your industry recently?
2. What are you most looking forward to over the next few months?
3. What's been the best part of your year so far?
4. Have you picked up any new hobbies recently?
5. What's a great book or article you've read recently?

#### Now yours:

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### 2. DISCOVERY QUESTIONS

*The usual suspects. Gain information. Understand functional needs*

Discovery questions are the workhorses of sales meetings. Their main job is to gain information and understand functional needs so we keep the conversation and our sales process moving ahead. They find out a lot. They tend to be easier to answer, and thus they are efficient in getting lots of information quickly.

#### Examples of discovery questions:

1. What are the main reasons people do business with you and your company?
2. As you think about tackling this challenge, what are your main needs?
3. What does success look like for this effort?
4. Why are you addressing this issue now?
5. What do you most worry about in conjunction with this project?

#### Now yours:

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### 3. QUALIFYING QUESTIONS

*Determine importance. Gain buy-in (or out). Understand whether this conversation is worth having*

Qualifying questions often come very early in the sales process and never stop. Use them to determine whether the prospect can - and will - do business. A yes or a no is what we want, and we want it fast.

#### Examples of qualifying questions:

1. How is the budget established for a project like this?
2. On what timeline will you reach a decision?
3. What is your role in the decision?
4. What has the CEO hired you to accomplish?
5. How do you measure success against those expectations?

#### Now yours:

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### 4. CLARIFYING QUESTIONS

*Seek to understand. Gain confirmation. Dissipate heat*

Clarifying questions are different from discovery and qualifying questions, and thus they are powerful for a different reason. As the name suggests, these questions gain clarity where things may be blurry or vague or simply not well thought out.

#### Examples of qualifying questions:

1. It sounds like you are saying that the most critical priority for you right now is cost savings, is that right?
2. If I play that back, what I hear you saying is that you are moving from X to Y on this, is that right?
3. Why do you say that?
4. When you say X, do you mean immediately or over the long term?
5. Would you please go a layer deeper on this so I understand better?

#### Now yours:

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### 5. IMPACT QUESTIONS

*Unusual. Gain insights. Understand social and emotional needs*

Impact questions go deeper and broader than other forms of questions. They are our most powerful tool to question our going-in assumptions and reveal what's really going on. Why? Because they are used to gain insights, and uncover other types of needs that go beyond functional needs. Impact questions often reveal the social and emotional needs of our customers because they cause people to really think.

#### Examples of qualifying questions:

1. What characterizes the best partner you've ever had? What did they do differently?
2. What's your North Star metric...the one you track religiously? Why?
3. What is the smallest action you could take today that would have the biggest impact?
4. Who was your favorite boss, and what did they teach you?
5. What is one skill or discipline you've acquired over the past three months that has made it easier to be your customer and harder to be your competitor?

#### Now yours:

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Begin NOW collecting and curating all five types of questions, with a particular focus on collecting that rarest of species...impact questions.

## ASK NOT TELL



# ASK & LISTEN CONT'D

## Designing impact questions

Impact questions turn peoples' heads and make them think. We can design an impact question to stop someone in their tracks, make them really think, and thereby go deeper into the conversation about their needs, their pains and gains, and hopes and fears.

### DISCOVERY QUESTIONS

Answer is front of mind  
The 'usual suspects'  
Yields information

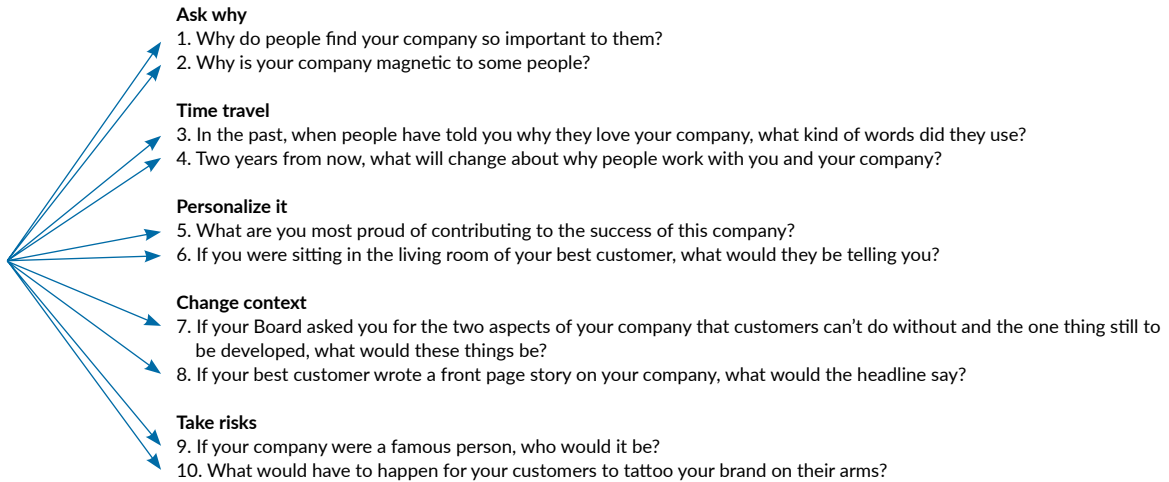
### IMPACT QUESTIONS

Turns heads  
Zooms in on beliefs, goals, values  
Uncovers insights

Often, a good old discovery question can be re-constructed and transformed into an impact question. Here's an example: **What are the main reasons people do business with you and your company?** This is a good, solid discovery question. People will answer it, and it will yield information. But it will not cause them to think deeply. How might we gain more insights - and more influence - by transforming it into an impact question?

There are several frames you can put around your question to heighten its impact:

## TURNING A DISCOVERY QUESTION INTO AN IMPACT QUESTION

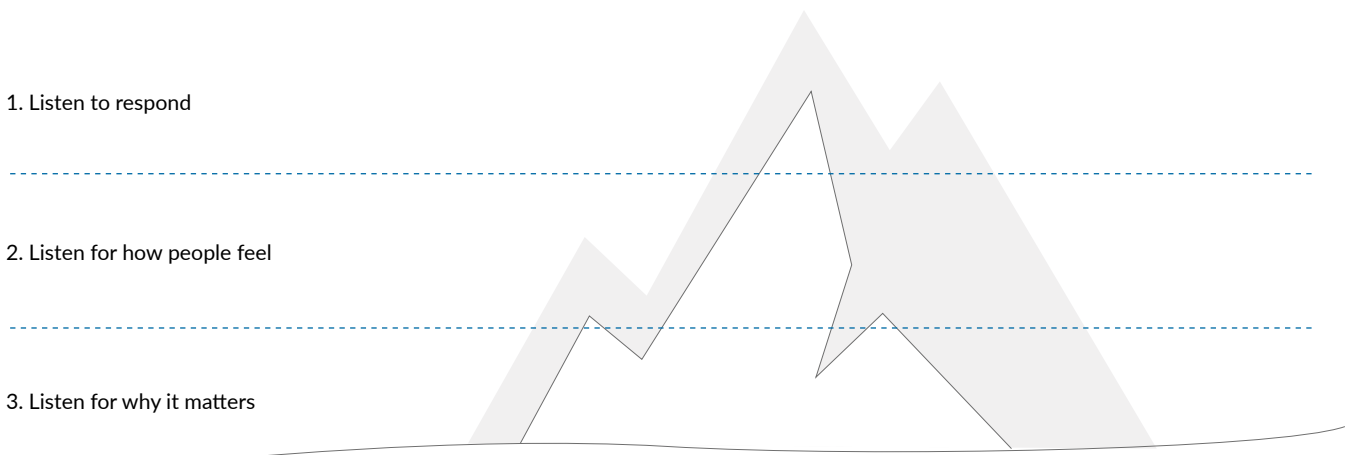


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## LISTEN

Most people listen at level one...listening to respond. And, as our conversation partners are speaking, too often we are formulating our response rather than listening and absorbing what's being said. Use the questions you've designed to stay in the question, go deeper and listen at all three levels. It takes discipline to pause and resist formulating a response and skill to use different types of questions to move with agility through these levels.



THERE'S A KEY FOR EVERY LOCK