


Questioning & Listening


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Purposeful Questioning

- The goal is NOT questioning – the goal is **UNDERSTANDING**.
- But the tools are questioning & listening, or specifically....
 - Repertoire of Good Questions
 - Active Listening Skills
 - A Structure to the Questioning Approach


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Good Questioning Technique

- **Ask questions in the customer's language**
 - Jargon and “fancy” wording may sound impressive, but that isn't your goal.
 - Exception is when jargon is expected and has a credibility connection (but don't make this your base assumption)
 - “Should I adopt a pedagogical approach focused on distributive or integrative negotiation outcomes?”
 - “Do you want me to teach negotiation focused on a win-win or a win-lose approach?”

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Good Questioning Technique

- **Ask Questions One at a Time**
 - If you want to inquire about multiple issues, set that up with an introduction, and then ask the questions one at a time.
 - “I would like to find out about your hotel room needs, your food needs, and your meeting room needs, but can we start with your hotel rooms

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Good Questioning Technique

- **Keep Digging**
 - Keep digging until you achieve understanding
 - Thus, when in doubt... keep questioning
 - This may take multiple questions and lots of time
 - Failure to dig leads to **SELLING BLIND**
 - We have to insert our assumptions into the gaps we left, and often our assumptions are wrong
 - Then we present the wrong facts & solutions
 - Digging requires patience and focus.

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Good Question Technique

- **Isolate**
 - Identify or suggest the issues systematically
- **Elaborate / Comprehend**
 - Dig on each to create a richer understanding
- **Confirm**
 - Use active listening technique to confirm you do understand the buyer

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Repeat for each issue that needs to be discussed. This may be many, or it may be a few.

DO NOT present until you have gained a full understanding

Good Questioning Technique

- **Facilitate:** To make something easy for another
 - Use introductions, transitions, and summaries to help your customer follow along.
 - Quick Change Problem
 - Lost Problem
 - Be transparent with what you are doing
 - People will respect the process if they are aware of it

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The Toolbox of Questions

- **OPEN:** Ask the buyer to tell their story
 - **MAGIC WAND**
 - Goofy – but it works
 - **BEST/LEAST**
 - Good if they have an existing solution they are focused on.
 - **CATCH-ALL**
 - Verify that there are not still uncovered issues
- **CLOSED:** Ask for or confirm specific info
 - **CONFIRMING**
 - Used constantly to verify understanding
 - **PRIORITY**
 - Get buyer to rank issues for you
 - **PERMISSION**
 - Polite way to move to a new topic (often actually used as a direction tool)

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Applying Smart Persistence... Questioning Technique

- **The MOST IMPORTANT place you can apply smart persistence is when questioning.**
 - Some questions take courage
 - Some questions take sophistication
 - Some questions just need to be asked
- If you wait till closing to try and be persistent you are way too late.

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Good Listening Technique

- **Take Notes**
 - Our memories are not as good as we think
 - You are not listening if you are not taking notes
- Focus on efficiency: KEY WORD NOTES
- Circle or Highlight the most important Issues

Dealing with Multiple Facets to An Issue
Immediately write "1., 2.,3...." and then ask what each are. Get them all identified first, then go back and dig each of them.

Returning to an Issue
Immediately write a quick key word it and "mark it" then when current conversation is complete, return to that issue.

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Good Listening Technique

- **Silence is Golden**
 - **Why ask a good question, if you are too impatient to wait for a good answer?**
 - Practice saying nothing until you get an answer
 - "Like I was Saying....." or "Well, Because....."
 - **We talk too much to.....**

The Buyer
We don't dig deep enough, or we re-ask questions, or we just move on after a short moment of silence. All cut listening short. (Discipline is the cure!)

Ourselves
We hear something and it triggers an internal conversation that drowns out what the customer is saying. (Notes are cure!)

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Good Listening Technique

- **Mechanics of Active Listening**
 - **Rephrasing**
 - Restating what a customer has said in order to ensure mutual understanding
 - **Confirming**
 - Specifically clarifying a point before moving on
 - **Summarizing**
 - Encapsulating a bunch of information to ensure mutual understanding

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Final Thoughts



- Ask questions and listen to ACHIEVE UNDERSTANDING
 - Never to manipulate
 - Understanding makes presenting relevant and persuasive arguments significantly easier
- Practice – Practice – Practice

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