

KEY PRINCIPLES OR TECHNIQUES TO REMEMBER

What leading practices should Sellers keep in mind throughout discovery?

1

Focus on the Buyer

Remember, **this is about the Buyer**, NOT you or your solution.

Ensure you fully understand the “buying committee” (decision makers and stakeholders), and identify pains associated with each of their roles.

2

Lay “Breadcrumbs”

While your solution is not the focus of these discussions, it is appropriate to relay specific, differentiated capabilities related to important problem areas – “breadcrumbs”. These highlight your unique value proposition while building confidence you have done this before, and the Buyers can trust in the approach and outcome.

*Example: “Our research indicates this trend is becoming a requirement for end users when they pick a business partner. **How do you support that need, and what are your plans in that regard?**”*

3

Connect the Dots

Do not just identify issues. Instead, **outline a worst-case scenario** of the impact on the business and Buyer personally if the issues are NOT addressed. The Buyers need to internalize the problems specific to them and their role to create a sense of urgency.

4

Use Open-ended Questions

The purpose of your questions is to understand, not to sell, so ask open-ended questions accordingly. Start questions with **how, what, where or why**. Use why and what questions in particular for exploratory follow-up. Remember, the desired outcome of the discovery dialogue is to trigger a conversation, not launch a presentation.

*Example: “Please describe **how your current process works**. **What happens when that process fails?**”*

5

Leave Space for Answers

Questions should **encourage Buyers to pause and reflect** – allow them to think their response through, not just react.

Remember, the answers you receive will likely not be facts. Rather, they will be insights that uncover improved outcomes the Buyer is seeking. Do not be afraid to dig deeper and ask for more detail.

6

Act as a Trusted Advisor

Build on your position as a trusted advisor during the discovery. Use reference industry knowledge and / or client examples to open-up dialogue with the Buyer. Phrase questions in a way that makes it clear your **objective is to help (seek to serve), not manipulate**.

*Example: “**We have a number of clients that are actively engaged** in implementing solutions for this coming regulatory requirement. **What is your strategy for addressing that need? What concerns do you have in meeting the timeline?**”*

7

Gain Broader Access

Gaining access to other potential members of the Buying Committee and to information providers within the Buyer’s own organization can provide opportunities for gathering a better analysis of the current situation and broaden your reach and perspective. It is critical to avoid becoming single-threaded – instead gaining early access to additional stakeholders across the organization.

8

Discovery Never Stops

During the whole sales cycle, discovery is a crucial instrument to win the deal. Your Buyers get better informed at each stage, while competitors will bring new insights and try to break your carefully executed strategy. Continue your discovery questions and seek confirmation about the Buyers’ needs and desired outcomes.