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Most people sell in the wrong order.

They start with what they do.

They explain their process. They list features. They talk about their experience. They explain why their product, service, software, or course is better than the other options.

Then they wonder why the customer seems interested but does not move forward.

The issue is usually not that they need a better pitch.

The issue is that they started by talking about themselves instead of the problem the other person is already trying to solve.

Nobody wakes up in the morning excited to buy your service.

They wake up frustrated that their website is not bringing in leads. They are tired of fixing the same issue over and over. They are worried their competitors look more credible. They are losing time, money, sleep, or confidence because something is not working.

That is where the sales conversation should begin.

A simple sales process looks like this:

1. Discover their pain.
2. Ask questions about it.
3. Sell them on the desired state.
4. Tell them the price and stop talking.
5. When doubt comes up, go back to the questions.

It works because it keeps the conversation focused on the buyer, not the seller.

Start With the Problem, Not the Product

Your product is not the point.

The point is what changes for someone after they use it.

Some Examples

A new website is not really about a new website. It may be about getting more qualified leads, looking credible enough to win larger jobs, reducing the number of people who call with the wrong expectations, or giving a sales team something they are proud to send prospects.

SEO is not really about rankings. It may be about no longer depending entirely on referrals, getting found by people already looking for help, or creating a more predictable pipeline.

A CRM is not really about software. It may be about fewer leads falling through the cracks, faster follow-up, clearer accountability, and knowing whether marketing is actually producing revenue.

The person you are talking to may not use those exact words. That is why you need to slow down and uncover what is really bothering them.

A useful question is:

“What made you start looking into this now?”

That question often gets you closer to the truth than, “What services are you interested in?”

Those Answers Might Be:

- Maybe they have been unhappy for years, but something finally made the issue urgent.
- A competitor just launched a better website.
- Their sales manager complained about lead quality.
- A customer told them their site looked outdated.
- Their current provider stopped responding.
- They are spending money on ads, but nobody can tell what is working.

That is the real conversation.

Ask Questions That Make the Problem Clear

Once you know there is a problem, do not rush to explain your solution.

Ask questions.

Not fake questions designed to corner someone into buying. Real questions that help them understand the cost of staying where they are.

Some Examples:

- How long has this been going on?
- What have you already tried?
- What has that cost you so far?
- How much time does your team spend dealing with this each week?
- What happens if nothing changes in the next six months?
- Is this affecting sales, customer trust, operations, or all three?
- Who else inside the company is feeling this problem?
- What is the frustrating part that people do not see from the outside?

These questions do two things.

First, they help you understand whether you are actually a good fit. Not every problem is yours to solve, and not every prospect is ready to solve it.

Second, they help the buyer put words to something they may have only felt vaguely before.

A business owner may say, “We need more leads.”

But after a few questions, the real issue may be that they get leads, but most are unqualified. Or they get good leads but follow up too slowly. Or their website is not clear enough, so people do not understand what they actually offer.

Those are very different problems. They require different solutions.

The better you understand the problem, the easier it is to recommend the right next step.

Quick Example

I do this with teaching skiing. Someone comes for a lesson, I ask what they would like to do, but then I keep asking why. Eventually, like after 2-3 times asking, I get the real reason. They say something like, “I get too tired” or “I can’t keep up with my friends” or even “I just want to feel more confident.” Once I know that, I better know how to teach them.

Help Them Picture the Desired State

Once the pain is clear, you can talk about what better looks like.

This is where many people make another mistake. They go right back to features.

They say things like:

- “We will redesign the homepage.”
- “We will install lead tracking.”
- “We will create monthly content.”
- “We will build a dashboard.”
- “We will add automation.”

Those things may be true. But they are not what the buyer really wants.

The buyer wants the result.

They want to feel confident sending people to their website. They want fewer bad-fit leads. They want to stop wondering whether their marketing budget is being wasted. They want their team to follow up consistently. They want to look like the kind of company customers trust with bigger decisions.

So instead of only describing the work, describe the outcome.

Some Examples:

“The goal is not just to give you a better-looking site. The goal is to make it much easier for the right people to understand what you do, trust you, and take the next step.”

Or:

“You should not have to wonder whether leads are being followed up with. By the end of this, you will be able to see where each lead came from, who owns it, and what happened next.”

Or:

“Instead of explaining your company from scratch on every sales call, your website should do enough of that work before the conversation begins.”

That is what people are buying.

They are buying a clearer, calmer, more profitable version of their current situation.

Tell Them the Price, Then Stop Selling

Once the problem is clear and the desired outcome makes sense, tell them what it costs.

Then stop talking.

This part makes people nervous because silence feels uncomfortable. So they keep explaining. They start discounting before the buyer even asks. They pile on extra deliverables. They keep trying to justify the price.

That usually makes the offer feel less certain, not more.

A better approach is simple:

“Based on what we talked about, this would be \$X.”

Then pause.

Give the other person room to think.

They may ask a question. They may need to talk it over with someone else. They may say the price is higher than expected. They may hesitate.

That does not mean the sale is dead.

It means you are finally at the part of the conversation where the real decision is happening.

When They Hesitate, Go Back to the Questions

When someone has doubt, most sellers push harder.

They repeat the features. They offer a discount. They start defending the price. They add more stuff to the package.

But hesitation is often a sign that you need to understand something better.

Go back to the questions.

You might ask:

- What feels unclear to you?
- What would you need to feel comfortable moving forward?
- Is the concern the investment, the timing, the scope, or something else?
- Compared with what you are dealing with now, what would a good outcome be worth to the business?
- What happens if you wait another six months?

This is not about pressuring someone.

It is about helping them make a clear decision.

Sometimes the answer will be that they are not ready. That is okay. A good sales conversation should help someone decide whether moving forward makes sense, not force them into something that does not.

But sometimes the hesitation is just uncertainty. They know the problem is painful. They know they want the result. They just need to think through the decision out loud.

Good questions help them do that.

Be the Painkiller, Not the Vitamin

A vitamin may be useful. It may even be good for you.

But it is easy to put off buying.

A painkiller solves something that hurts now.

That does not mean you need to manufacture urgency or make every offer sound dramatic. It means you need to understand the real consequences of the problem you solve.

People move when the cost of staying the same becomes more obvious than the cost of changing.

Your job is not to make the problem bigger than it is.

Your job is to understand it clearly, explain the path forward honestly, and show what becomes possible when it is fixed.

That is the difference between a pitch and a useful sales conversation.

A Simple Sales Conversation Framework

The next time you are talking with a prospect, do not start by explaining everything you do.

Try this instead:

1. Ask why they are looking for help now.
2. Find out what is frustrating, expensive, slow, risky, or unclear.
3. Ask what they have tried and why it has not worked.
4. Help them describe what a better situation would look like.

5. Explain how your offer helps move them from the current problem to that desired result.
6. State the investment clearly.
7. Pause.
8. When they have questions or doubts, get curious instead of defensive.

That is it.

You do not need a complicated script.

You need to listen well enough to understand what hurts, and explain the value of getting to the other side of it.

Key Takeaways:

- Customers do not primarily buy products or services. They buy relief from a problem, frustration, risk, or missed opportunity.
- Start sales conversations by finding out why the issue matters now.
- Ask questions that help the buyer understand the real cost of doing nothing.
- Sell the desired outcome, not just the list of tasks or features.
- State the price clearly, then give the buyer space to respond.
- When someone hesitates, ask better questions instead of pushing harder.
- The strongest offers solve an urgent, meaningful problem. They act like painkillers, not optional vitamins.

Frequently Asked Questions

Is it manipulative to ask questions about a prospect's pain?

No, not when the questions are honest and useful. The goal is not to make someone feel worse. The goal is to understand whether there is a real problem, how serious it is, and whether your offer can genuinely help.

What if the customer does not seem to have a strong pain point?

They may not be ready to buy, or the problem may not be urgent enough yet. You can still be helpful, but you should not force a sale. Sometimes the right outcome is a smaller next step, a future follow-up, or a clear explanation of what to watch for.

How do I talk about the desired state without overpromising?

Describe realistic outcomes based on the work you can actually do. Focus on what your service makes more likely or easier, rather than guaranteeing results you cannot control. For example, you can say a website can make the right next step clearer, but you should

not promise a specific number of leads unless you have a strong basis for it.

Should I always stay silent after telling someone the price?

You do not need to be awkward about it. The point is to avoid immediately talking yourself out of the price by overexplaining, discounting, or adding unnecessary extras. Give the prospect a moment to process it and respond.

What should I do if someone says the price is too high?

Ask what they are comparing it to and what specifically feels out of reach. The issue may be budget, timing, scope, uncertainty, or a mismatch between the problem and the proposed solution. Understanding that gives you a better chance of finding an honest next step.

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