Understanding Prospect Needs: How to Be Comprehensive and Find More Ways to Help

Description

In sales, itâ??s often easy to focus on just one need a prospect mentions and miss others that could make an even bigger impact. Maybe a prospect says theyâ??re struggling with their payroll system, so we jump straight into talking about just that one service we offer. Or they come to us for a specific training program, and we dive right in without pausing to ask what else might be going on internally.

When we narrow our focus too quickly and present solutions for just one aspect of their business, we risk missing opportunities to provide more value and deepen our relationships. Understanding prospect needs and being comprehensive means asking broader, more thoughtful questions that uncover every single way we might be able to help.

Why Understanding Prospect Needs Matters

Similar to creating a white space matrix to uncover opportunities within our existing client accounts, understanding a prospectâ??s needs goes beyond simply solving the problem they describe. Itâ??s about looking at the full picture â?? how different parts of their business connect, what their true goals are and where unseen challenges might exist for them.

At BDU, we see this happening often. A company might reach out to us asking for sales training. However, when we start asking questions, we discover their real issue lies in leadership â?? managers arenâ??t properly coaching their teams, providing support or helping them maximize their potential. By taking just a little time to dig a bit deeper, weâ??re able to then help not only with providing training options but also with performance management and leadership development.

When you understand your prospects fully, you open doors to make a broader impact. Itâ??s not about selling more â?? itâ??s about helping more.

The Comprehensive Approach: Going Beyond Surface-Level Questions

Think of a visit to the doctor. Youâ??ve taken a fall, and your knee is swollen. The doctor focuses just on your knee, prescribing ice, pain medicine and rest. But what if he never asks whether you hurt anything else? Your shoulder might ache from that same fall, or perhaps you wrenched your back, but those problems go unnoticed because the doctor zeroed in on just one issue.

The same thing can happen in sales conversations. We can become so focused on the â??kneeâ?• â?? the first problem the prospect mentioned â?? that we overlook the â??shoulderâ?• â?? other areas where they could use support.

A comprehensive approach means being curious about the whole situation, not just the presenting issue. Itâ??s about asking open-ended, big-picture questions that help you understand the prospectâ??s business from multiple angles.

The Power of Big-Picture Questions

Open-ended, big-picture questions move the conversation beyond features and functions. They invite prospects to share context, priorities and goals, providing insights that can lead to uncovering new ways to help.

Not sure what questions to ask? Here are some examples:

- What are the top three priorities for your organization right now?
- How does this initiative tie into your companyâ??s broader goals?
- If everything went perfectly, what would success look like a year from now?
- Who else in your organization is affected by this challenge?
- What would it mean for your team if this issue were completely resolved?

Once youâ??ve explored the big picture, you can then follow up with tactical questions that reveal even more detail:

- Walk me through how youâ??re currently handling this process.
- Which systems or tools are you using today?
- Whatâ??s worked well, and where have you hit roadblocks?
- Whoâ??s responsible for making sure this process succeeds long term?

These layered questions help you see not just one need but every way their challenges and opportunities are connected across the business.

Connecting the Dots: Turning Understanding into Opportunity

Being comprehensive doesnâ??t mean turning every conversation into a sales pitch. It means listening deeply and connecting the dots between what the prospect says, what they need and how you can help.

For example, when BDUâ??s CEO Lisa Peskin worked at ADP back in the 90â??s, they offered a variety of services. However, there were several salespeople who only felt comfortable talking about a few of the offerings, such as payroll and taxes, but not others like timeclock interfaces, human resource solutions or 401Ks. Instead of looking at the big picture, they would narrow their focus to what they were most comfortable with when, in fact, there were a variety of different ways ADP could help prospects integrate everything. By contrast, the salespeople who took a more comprehensive approach had a higher average revenue per sale and were the true sales superstars. Ultimately, all they really did differently was find more ways to impact their clients. By being comprehensive, they not only helped solve an initial problem presented but also addressed deeper issues that improved long-term success.

Checklist: Are You Being Comprehensive?

Before wrapping up a meeting with a prospect, ask yourself if you:

- Asked about both the strategic and tactical aspects of their goals
- Explored how other departments or stakeholders might be affected
- Uncovered any gaps between whatâ??s happening now and what they want to achieve
- Confirmed your understanding by summarizing what you heard

If you can check all these boxes, youâ??re likely getting a complete picture of your prospectâ??s situation and uncovering additional ways to make a bigger impact.

Bringing It All Together

Understanding prospect needs is more than just listening to whatâ??s said. Itâ??s exploring whatâ??s *unsaid.* When you take the time to be comprehensive, you show genuine curiosity, build trust and uncover new ways to help them succeed.

At BDU, we believe every conversation is an opportunity to unlock potential. The more comprehensive you are in understanding your prospects, the more meaningful your impact will be both for them and for you!

Ready to Strengthen Your Approach?

Are you ready to elevate your discovery skills and learn how to uncover additional ways to help your clients and prospects? Weâ??re here for you!

At BDU, our customized training and coaching solutions are built to help sales professionals ask smarter questions, deepen relationships and exceed expectations.

ð??? **Letâ??s chat!** Just enter your information below and weâ??ll set up a complimentary consultation so you can explore how BDU can help you or your team be more comprehensive throughout every interaction.

Your Name (required)

Company Name (required)

Your Email (required)

Additional Message

Send

Other Resources You Might Find Helpful:

- **How to Be Persistent in Sales Without Being Pushy: Mastering the Line in the Sand** â?? read Lisaâ??s LinkedIn article now
- **From Cold Calling to Warm Referrals: Referral Prospecting Strategies That Multiply Your Results** â?? read the BDU Blog post here
- **Target the Right Prospect: A Tuesday Tip for Smarter Sales** â?? watch the video on YouTube now

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