

Bitesize Business Breakthrough



...in the time it takes to drink a cup of tea

Build Value Sell More

Support tools and resources

Build Value, sell more, struggle less – ask the right questions like an 8-year-old...

Ask the right questions in the right way and your customers will tell you how valuable your product or service is, you won't have to tell them, you won't feel as though you're selling either.

When customers persuade themselves to buy rather than you having to persuade them, you'll convert more prospects into paying customers. This requires skills at asking great (but simple) questions.

Arguably more important, you'll be selling ethically because you'll be helping your customers overcome the challenges they are experiencing.

What questions do you prepare before you meet a prospect or a customer?

Check out these tools and resources to help you make more of every conversation you have with every prospect and every customer:

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1. The one 'BREAKTHROUGH QUESTION' you must ask to help yourself...
2. 2-step process to prepare and plan valuable questions
3. Don't leave your customers depressed!
4. Review your SPIN experiences
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STOP asking so many situation questions

START asking sad and happy questions that build value

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1. The one 'BREAKTHROUGH QUESTION' you must ask to help yourself...

Hold a prospect or customer conversation on the telephone, on Zoom, or physically face-to-face and **the conversation you create determines the value** your customer experiences. The value they experience determines whether they buy from you or not.

You can obsess about talking features and benefits in your selling endeavours and come across as very 'salesy'.

Or...

You can ask great questions (simple questions) that stimulate a valuable discussion and come across as genuinely interested and caring.

What questions do you prepare before you meet a prospect or a customer?

Your answer to this question tells you whether you prepare questions at all!

And if you do prepare questions (well done) then the question makes you wonder if you are preparing the right questions that deliver value in every customer conversation.

There's an old saying that goes something like:

"Preparation and planning prevents particularly poor performance"

And if there's one thing that helps prevent poor performance more than anything else, it's preparing the questions you want to use to create a valuable conversation.

Below, and in the accompanying Bitesize Business Breakthrough report, you'll find the insights that show you how to create questions that mean you will build value, sell more, struggle less in every prospect and customer conversation you hold.

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2. 2-step process to prepare and plan valuable questions...

The SPIN framework of questions is easy to understand. It's easy to implement too, but only if you do a little preparation and planning. If you try and create great questions 'on the hoof' whilst in the middle of a customer conversation, then it's most likely you'll fail to get the best out of the SPIN framework.

This 2-step process gets you on the road to using the SPIN framework for your questions and your conversations:

- a. What problems are your customers experiencing?
- b. What questions are you going to ask to uncover and discuss these problems?

Neil Rackham points to the need to unlock the financial and emotional impact of the problems your customer is experiencing – but make sure these problems are relevant to your product or service.

*"...without dissatisfaction, there's no basis for a sale. You must **begin by deciding what problems your products can solve for customers.**"*



This simple 2-step preparation exercise will have a big impact on your customer conversations. Stop looking at your products and services in terms of features and benefits. Instead think of your products/services in terms of problem-solving capability.

Analyse your product or service in problem-solving terms:

1. What problems will your product or service solve for your customer?
 - a. .
 - b. .
 - c. .
 - d. .
 - e. .

Now prepare some sensitive questions that help your customer talk about their problems/challenges/issues:

2. Using your list of problems above what questions can you ask about those issues? For each problem work out 4 or 5 possible questions:
 - a. .
 - b. .
 - c. .
 - d. .
 - e. .
 - f. .
 - g. .
 - h. .
 - i. .
 - j. .

Some of your questions will be simple 'Problem' questions, others will be 'Implications' questions, why not have a go at deciding which is which?

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3. Don't leave your customers depressed!

Problem and implication questions help your customer see the true impact of not taking some kind of remedial or preventative action (by buying your product or service).

But these two types of questions are the **sad** questions the 8-year-old daughter of a colleague pointed out when unavoidably involved in a SPIN discussion!!!

Yes, your customers need to see the full impact of not taking action – problem and implication questions creates the full recognition of the pain and painful future of not doing something about it.

Needs-payoff questions are the **happy** questions that must follow-on from your problem/implication questions. It is the needs-payoff questions that prompt your customer to describe how much better-off they will be with their problems resolved (by your product or service).

This creates a contrast between the pain and the solution that prompts your customer to make a decision to buy.

Example needs-payoff questions:

- How would that help you?
- What do you see as the upside of resolving this issue?
- If our product can prevent that problem re-occurring how will your team and your customers respond?
- When this problem ceases what will be the impact on your role?
- In what other ways will this approach help you and your team?
- What will the speed/quality/price/stress improvements mean to the profit per job?

Work out your favourite needs-payoff questions by building a list of 20 possible needs-payoff questions and then filtering and distilling the best 3 or 4 you think will work best.

This exercise is more fruitful the more people you involve in the exercise.

To put the SPIN framework into context, watch this video by a website entrepreneur to see how the SPIN framework all fits together.

In just 25 minutes this business owner shows how he has been able to both increase prices and increase sales volumes (and so increase profits substantially) by using the SPIN question framework.

Watch it here

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vpxa814rWRA>



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4. Review your SPIN experiences

Planning and preparation always pays dividends.

So does reviewing your performance and your results.

Neil Rackham's research (the creator of the SPIN framework) points to the importance of reviewing and revising your approach. Rackham suggests the following review questions – something you can do by yourself or use to prompt valuable conversations with everyone involved in customer calls or meetings:

1. **Did I achieve my meeting goals?**
2. **If I were making that call again, what would I do differently?**
3. **What have I learned that will influence future calls with this customer?**
4. **What have I learned that I can use on other customer calls?**

Very few of us take enough time to systematically review what we do and how we do it. Such 'after action' reviews can help you fine tune your use of the SPIN framework and make more and more customer calls/meetings successful.

Rackham's research shows that the top people his sales training teams have worked with put great emphasis on reviewing the details of each call/meeting. The right questions, at the right time with the right tone can make all the difference to a successful or unsuccessful call.

As mentioned in the Bitesize Business Breakthrough report, if the Japanese can work out how to ask problem questions sensitively (in a culture that reveres saving 'face' and doesn't want to talk about problems) then we can all fine-tune our questions to work too.

5. The books and other resources

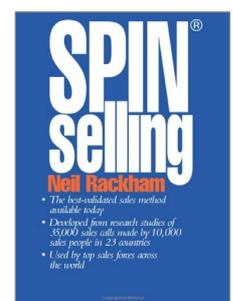
Neil Rackham, a Brit, sold selling skills to many USA global companies (before bringing it back to the UK).

He was successful because he took a serious research approach to what works and what does not work when selling complex, high ticket products and services.

Rackham, and his company Huthwaite, examined more than 35,000 sales calls made by thousands of salespeople in 23 countries relating to larger high-value sales situations. Valuable research worth taking seriously.

In his book Neil Rackham brings the SPIN framework to life with role plays and stories that prove the SPIN framework really works.

Here is a link to buy the book 'SPIN selling' <https://bit.ly/spinsellingNR>



Is the SPIN framework relevant to the online world we now live in?

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Neil Rackham from Huthwaite (only 5 minutes) talking about how relevant SPIN selling is to 21st Century sales skills.



Watch it here - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1UIDa-OJYxE>