



How do you turn the value dial up enough so that more clients say yes more often?

First you sense-check on where you stand now regarding your value communication.

As you know, your clients' perception of value determines whether clients buy from you or don't buy from you.

In addition, your clients' perception of value determines whether they buy more (or less) from you, buy more often (or less often) and also determines whether they recommend you to others.

And so, your ability to be clear on the value you deliver PLUS your ability to communicate that value is of paramount importance.

Here's a good sense-check question to ask yourself and your team:

How well do you and your colleagues communicate the true and clear value you provide your clients?

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STOP thinking that you're only competing with other businesses in your arena

START seeing your customers' attraction and commitment to their status quo as your main competition

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

Value is the personal perception of each-and-every client. It's something your client experiences, however, only you can take responsibility for communicating the value you and your firm provide.

You can use this important question as an open question to create a broad discussion about the value of what you do and the skill you all have of sharing and communicating your value.

If you prefer to capture your team's views as a number, ask your team to use a scale of 1-to-10 to answer the question where 1 is **we're totally unclear** and 10 is **every client is crystal clear about the value we provide**.

How well do you and your colleagues communicate the true and clear value you provide your clients?

Dig deeper...

- ask your team what matters most and what matters least to your clients.
- ask yourself and others what outcome your client seeks from using your product or service.
- ask yourself where your client could get to, what they could achieve, what stress they could resolve or improvement in results they could get.

Then it's a case of working out what difficulties, challenges and issues will prompt your clients to consider a change. Work out what questions you could ask your client that helps them find a new or more pressing problem.

See the 6 aspects of a valuable conversation coming next...

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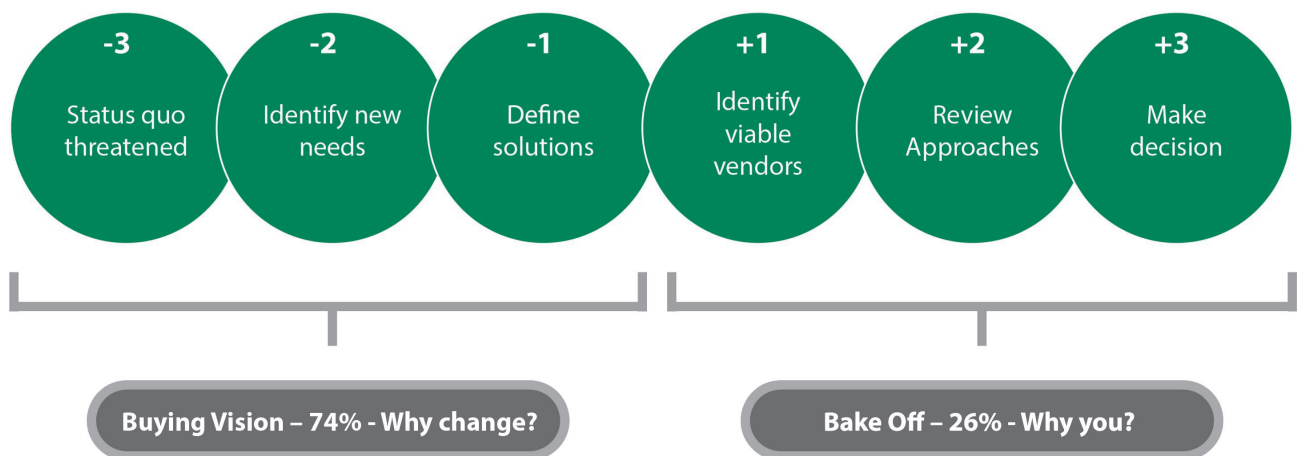
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2. Six aspects of a valuable conversation

World renowned research firm **Forrester Research** has ongoing studies into the buying habits of director level decision makers. Forrester results shows that 74% of business executives choose to work with the business that **helps them clearly see the need to change**. Forrester call this a '*Buying Vision*'.

Only 26% of director-level decision makers rely on a side-by-side competition comparison or '*Bake-Off*'!

Here are the 6 aspects of a valuable conversation from your clients' viewpoint according to Peterson et al in their powerful book '*The Three Value Conversations*':



Don't you want to be chosen 74% of the time rather than 26% of the time?

So, what do you do to tap into this windfall of almost 3 times as many buyers?

Work WITH your client...

Work WITH your client to discuss their current status quo, identify new needs and define new solutions.

Share new information from independent sources with a sense of possibility (not certainty – it pays to have a collaborative approach with your clients, otherwise they may feel they are being 'sold' to) and work through the implications of the new insights.

Yes, this requires research and preparation, but if it delivers you 3-times as many sales it's got to be worth it, hasn't it?

Here are a few questions that could stimulate a high-quality value conversation with clients – a conversation that is aimed at problem finding (see Daniel Pink quote below):

- Because technology is shifting the way we all work how are you responding to the global shift to using cloud technology?

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- USA and European countries are seeing a shift towards a shorter working week according to research studies. How are you seeing employees and new job candidates shift in attitudes impact productivity and motivation?
- If people's willingness to wholeheartedly commit to the work they do depends on their sense of fairness (according to the massive research project by Sirota Group), how do you rank your business according to the 4 elements of fairness suggested by Sirota (job security; treated as a human not an asset; fair pay; effective management)?
- If environmental concerns are profoundly shifting people's attitude to buying and to working, how are you changing your environmental credentials?

NB For more on asking questions that stimulate valuable conversations check out two other Business Breakthrough reports:

- "Build value, sell more, struggle less – ask the right questions like an 8-year-old..."
- "Want to grow your business? Don't hire a relationship builder..."

By discussing issues that challenge a client's sense of safety in their current status quo you then create an opportunity to identify WITH your client new needs they could and should be considering.

This then leads onto a conversation about possible solutions they could and should investigate, including how you can help them.

Without initially challenging their status quo and working WITH your client to find the real and pressing problems or difficulties, new needs and new solutions are not going to be discussed.

Like Daniel Pink says in his 'To Sell is Human' book:

"[Your products and services] are far more valuable [when your prospects are] mistaken, confused, or completely clueless about [their] true problem..."

...your ability to get prospects to do something different, choose you, and pay a premium, hinges less on your problem-SOLVING skills and more on your problem-FINDING skills."

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3. Challenge the status quo example – Making Tax Digital

Here's how new information is currently challenging the status quo and as a result changing the value conversation across the accounting profession at present...

If any business was to ask us about our accountancy firm's response to the HMRC's new rules for taxation – 'Making Tax Digital' – we might quietly roll our eyes, shudder at the thought of the changes coming and just continue to work as we've always worked.

The MTD corporation tax mandate is not until 2026! We don't need to do anything yet. Not until the deadline gets closer and more and more pressing! Or do we?!

When we're asked questions, we hadn't thought of to expose the REAL problems we start to see the need for change now and the need for new solutions now, not in 2025 or 2026.

Here's how our status quo bias has been recently challenged:

- How many limited companies do we do annual accounts for – let's say 300 companies
- How many limited companies do we do quarterly accounts for – let's say 10 companies
- So, there are 290 companies not currently having quarterly accounts reporting...
- How much time do we have until March 2026 – when Making Tax Digital and quarterly reporting becomes a legal requirement for all limited companies – 4 years from March 2022 or 16 quarters to shift 290 annual accounts clients to quarterly reporting
- How many clients per quarter need to move for us to be ready with all our current clients? 18 per quarter for 16 quarters!!! More than 1 per week!!!

Can you see how this new information from our own mouths challenges our status quo and makes us ready to take action now?

Another great question about the consequences of no action now might be...

- So, what happens to our client care if we don't make these changes?
- What happens to the stress on our team if leave any action for later?

Now we are open to help, guidance, decisions and actions!

It helps if you have external and credible sources of new information to help you challenge the status quo of your clients. But hopefully this example shows you that just asking questions to find problems not yet anticipated by your clients can do the job too.

Be a problem finder like Daniel Pink suggests.

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4. Value is relative – and value is separate from pricing...

Erik Peterson points to another part of Kahneman's research into human behaviour – the contrast principle.

"...the decision-making part of the brain sees value only through contrast"

"...the greater the contrast you can create between your client's perception of how unsafe the world is and what a new safe path looks like, the greater the perception of value you create."

In other words, as Kahneman points out, successfully show both the losses and the gains of changing and you show the most value.

- Show client losses by not changing and you'll show 2x the value
- Show client gains by changing and you'll show 1x the value
- Share both and you show 3x the value of changing compared with staying with the status quo

So how do you help them feel 'unsafe' with 'things-as-they-stand' whilst maintaining or building your client's trust in you and your ability to deliver for them?

As shared in part 2 of these tools it's about asking questions about new information or data not previously considered or ignored/avoided.

- a. Find new relevant information, statistics, reports and data from credible sources
- b. Collaborate with your client from a position of caring, curious, commitment and unpack the impact and consequences of your new information
- c. Ask questions about the POSSIBLE impact (**downside**) on your client's business and area of responsibility if they do not change and stay with the status quo
- d. Ask about what they now need, in light of the new insights you've reached together and the **upside** result that the changes could deliver
- e. Collaborate to work out the new solution (and how you might help them)

Based on the insights from Kahneman and the insightful suggestions from 'The Three Value Conversations' – please remember it's the relative difference between the **downside** and the **upside** that best persuades your client to move away from their status quo bias.

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5. Fire your big guns first

It's (possibly) worth considering evidence from Stanford University and the team that created the book – 'The Three Value Conversations' – see what you think.

An experiment with 400 people shows that opening your client and prospective client conversations around unconsidered needs is more impactful than saving them for later in your conversations or not using them at all.

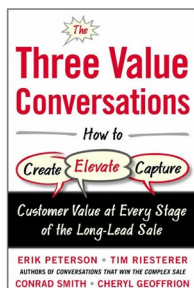
It seems that the big guns of value are conversations about unconsidered needs.

Don't play it safe talking about what clients are comfortable with, what they already know.

Instead go early on conversation about unknown, unconsidered or unexpected issues and challenges using the evidence you have pulled together.

And remember, share these new insights with some uncertainty rather than absolute confidence so that your clients stay engaged and open to the conversation. Collaborate rather than sell or dictate.

6. The books and other resources



'The Three Value Conversations' – Erik Peterson et al

This book looks at adding value and impact to client conversations throughout the buying cycle - all by just engaging your mind before you open your mouth.

The authors emphasise from the beginning that the successful businessperson is not just selling something, they are leading a conversation, telling a story and articulating value to the prospective client along their purchasing journey. For this happen you just need to have knowledgeable, enthusiastic, authoritative and leadership-led business conversations to take place.

This book offers a range of tools and methods to help the businessperson differentiate themselves from the competition, pushing value to the right decision maker and maximising all business opportunities across the entire buying cycle. It draws you in by delivering insight after insight – a must read!

[Here is the link to buy The Three Value Conversations by Erik Peterson](#)

And continue below for two excellent videos. The first video gives a detailed analysis of The Three Value Conversations directly from a business perspective. The second video will help you challenge the status quo with unconsidered needs.

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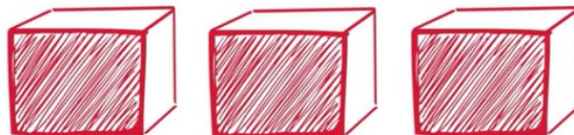
Support tools and resources

Corporate Visions' Erik Nitschke discusses strategies essential to helping your team defeat the status quo and elevate your value to your client. Erik is funny, engaging and makes the subject easy to understand and very relatable to all aspects of business.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sr508tGU4Q4>

The following video will help your client conversations and enable you to create the urgency to change and convince clients and prospects to choose you. Discover how to help the clients uncover needs they have not yet considered...



https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LXr_H7wTBR4