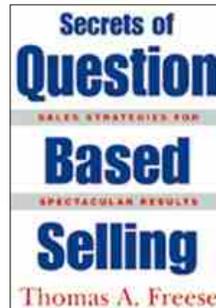


Secrets of Question Based Selling

Sales Strategies for Spectacular Results



Author: Thomas A. Freese
Publisher: Sourcebooks Inc.
Date of Publication: 2000
ISBN: 1570715882
Number of Pages: 270 pages

■ About the Author



Thomas Freese

The first time **Thomas Freese** oversold his sales quota by 200 percent, everyone thought it was a fluke. When he did it again, they assumed it was just some sort of freak accident. Then, over and over for seven consecutive years, Tom not only exceeded his sales quota, he doubled it. Suddenly, his success in selling was more than a trend. It was a business phenomenon!

With more than seventeen years experience in the trenches of corporate sales and management, Tom packaged his unique approach into a proven sales methodology called Question Based Selling. Now, he works with companies all over the world showing salespeople how a question-based approach can exponentially increase their bottom-line results.

As founder and president of QBS Research, Inc., Tom has published three books on selling: **It Only Takes 1% To Have a Competitive Edge in Sales**, **Secrets of Question Based Selling**, and **The New Era of Salesmanship (Formerly QBS II: Getting Deeper, Wider, & More Strategic)**. Today, Tom is considered to be one of the foremost authorities on sales effectiveness, buyer motivation, and business strategy.

For more information, visit <http://www.qbsresearch.com>.

■ The Big Idea

In sales, asking the right question is just as important as knowing what to say. This is the principle behind **Question Based Selling (QBS)**. Salespeople must know how to ask the proper questions to clients and customers in order to identify new opportunities, qualify accounts and uncover needs. In addition, asking questions also smokes out any objections that may hinder the sale which is crucial in closing a transaction.

Question Based Selling offers a unique approach by providing you a step-by-step, easy-to-follow program that will enable you to ask the right questions at the right time. Author Tom Freese takes you through the QBS methodology, showing how you can penetrate more accounts, establish greater credibility, generate more return calls, and close sales faster.

▪ PART ONE: A Short Course on QBS Strategy

Chapter 1 - Increasing Your Probability of Success

In sales, the average success rate for engaging new prospects is between two to five percent. This means that for every one hundred sales calls, the average salesperson will uncover only a handful of qualified opportunities. This low success rate translates to a difficulty in filling the pipeline with revenue opportunities.

The challenge is for salespeople to keep themselves motivated, even if the vast majority of sales calls end in rejection. QBS teaches you how to be different in order to achieve above-average sales results.

Selling Isn't about "Right" and "Wrong"

Every salesperson knows that each sales transaction is unique because clients will have different needs, biases, and experiences. The concepts behind "right" and "wrong" are much too absolute to have any constructive value in sales. The author does not suggest that QBS is the right way to close a sales transaction. Nor does he imply that your current approach to selling is wrong. Instead, he expects you to make changes in your sales strategy. After reading this book, you will discover new and more productive ways to approach the sales process by using techniques that will increase your probability of success and decrease your risk of failure.

A Methodology Based on Cause and Effect

One of the goals of QBS is to simplify the sale. This is accomplished by identifying the events, activities, and strategies that will increase your probability of closing a sales transaction. It makes sense to incorporate those techniques and strategies that will move you closer to the desired goal, while disregarding other actions that produce undesirable results.

The single most effective way to increase your probability of success in a sale is to decrease your risk of failure. Probability and risk share an inverse relationship in sales: when one goes up, the other goes down. You need to minimize the risks involved in a sales transaction in order to increase your probability of success.

Five Closing Attempts

Statistics show that the average sale requires five closing attempts before a prospect is ready to make an emotional commitment. Customers first need to get comfortable with the idea of owning the product or service before they are ready to make a purchase decision. Other salespersons, being averse to risk, fail to make it to the fifth attempt. This results in many qualified sales opportunities being left on the table.

Opening the Floodgates of Opportunity

In the QBS Methodology there are numerous ways to use questions to reduce or eliminate your risk. Open the conversation by asking, "*Did I catch you at a bad time?*" If the prospect says, "*No, this is not a bad time,*" then you have their permission to proceed.

If they reply, "*Yes, this is a bad time,*" then you know that plowing forward and interrupting them wouldn't have succeeded anyway. Instead of hanging up, ask

another positioning question, “*When should I call back?*” Very few civilized people will say, “*Don’t ever call me back.*” More likely than not, prospects will give you a time to call back. Now, you have an appointment.

Chapter 2 - Mismatching: The Avoidable Risk

Mismatching is a form of disagreement. It’s an instinctive and emotional behavior that causes people to respond or push back in a contrarian manner; usually by taking the opposite viewpoint on what’s being said. Mismatching is a behavioral tendency and it often occurs in sales. It communicates disagreement, which increases your risk and lowers your probability of success.

What Mismatching Means for Salespeople

Prospects and customers do not want to be mismatched. Salespeople must be wary about contradicting, correcting, or one-upping them. Remember that if you are mismatching your prospects or customers, you are literally undermining your own success. If you are fond of mismatching, work with your manager, mentor, coach or sales trainer in order to correct this behavior. When you’ve made the necessary adjustments, you will significantly improve the quality and depth of your sales conversations.

However, when potential buyers mismatch you, it becomes an entirely different thing. You can’t just tell them to stop. In fact, you will find that prospects and customers tend to mismatch salespeople automatically. Do not be offended when this happens.

Telling is Not Selling

Buyers today don’t want to be pushed, persuaded, or otherwise convinced. Nobody wants to be manipulated into buying something they don’t need. You can’t just tell the customer to buy from you because he or she would benefit the most from it. To succeed in sales, you must uncover needs and then educate prospects and customers on the value of your product or service. Help them recognize an opportunity to improve their existing condition.

Five QBS Strategies That Reduce Your Risk

Below are five key strategies you will learn that will minimize your risk of mismatching:

1. **Ask More Questions and Make Fewer Statements** - Minimizing the mismatching behavior starts with prevention. If you can identify and prevent those things that cause people to mismatch the things you say or do, then you can avoid a negative reaction.

Statements are easily mismatched in conversations because most statements take a definitive position that can easily be disagreed with. While statements can be easily mismatched, questions are not. Questions help diffuse the emotional triggers that fuel the need to mismatch. After all, it’s impossible to disagree with a question.

2. **Credibility Reduces the Prospect’s Need to Resist** - Establishing

credibility should be one of your primary objectives in the sales process. If a salesperson appears credible to the prospective customer, then the prospect's need to mismatch is reduced because they start feeling comfortable with you, rather than cautious of you. An air of credibility also opens the door to a more productive conversation.

- 3. Curiosity Neutralizes the Mismatching Reflex** - Making prospects and customers curious is the most effective way to engage them in a productive sales conversation. People who are curious will want to hear more about your product or service. When customers ask you a question to satisfy their curiosity, they are actually requesting your help and it's impossible to ask for your help and push you away at the same time.
- 4. Reversing the Positive** - The following questions have a negative tone, so when someone answers and takes the opposite position they actually mismatch in your favor. This technique is called reversing the positive.

"Did I catch you at a bad time?"

"Am I interrupting?"

"Is next week too soon for a presentation?"

"Will the pricing in this proposal make your boss nervous?"

- 5. Momentum Helps Reduce the Mismatching Instinct** - Most prospective buyers won't make a buying decision just because the guy down the street decided to take the plunge. They will need more evidence to get convinced. Instead of trying to motivate potential customers with individual references, QBS shows salespeople how to leverage the Herd Theory which will be discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter 3 - The Hard Theory

The Herd Theory is a momentum play that also works as a mismatching reduction strategy. It works with a concept that if everyone else already seems to be moving in a certain direction, prospects will feel much less of a need to resist or push back.

Why the Herd Theory Works

The Herd Theory surrounds prospects with a sense of momentum to establish credibility and convey a greater sense of value. If you could demonstrate that everyone else was interested in, and excited about your product, wouldn't that communicate a greater sense of value and lower the prospect's risk? By showing prospects that "everyone else" is already moving in a certain direction, you can more easily motivate potential buyers to move in that same direction as well.

Standard Approach vs. QBS Strategy

The standard approach sounds like this:

Seller: *"Mr. Prospect, my name is Thomas Freese and I am with KnowledgeWare, Inc., the leading provider of development software, based in Atlanta. We develop and sell Computer Aided Software Engineering tools, and I wanted to get together with you to discuss how our products can address your programming needs."*

The author tried this approach and he didn't get many hits. Most of the prospects he called have already received a steady stream of sales calls that sounded the same as his.

The next time, he started calling prospects with a different purpose. He wanted to build a sense of anticipation and excitement around the event. He told the prospects that everyone would be at the event, and he is just making sure that no one is left out.

The new approach went something like this:

Seller: *"Hello, Mr. Prospect, my name is Tom Freese, and I'm the regional manager for KnowledgeWare in Kansas City. I wanted to contact you about the CASE application development seminar we are hosting at IBM's Regional Headquarters on August 26. Do you remember seeing the invitation we sent you?"*

Frankly, we are expecting a record turnout of over one hundred people, including development managers from US Sprint, Hallmark Cards, Pepsi Co., Yellow Freight, Kansas Power & Light, the Federal Reserve Bank...just to name a few.

I wanted to follow up because we haven't yet received an RSVP from your company and I wanted to make sure you didn't get left out."

The second approach is a highly positioned approach that is also 100 percent accurate. The seller wanted to know that IBM was endorsing this event. He was able to communicate that "everyone else" was attending the seminar by rattling off an impressive list of *marquis* company names that he was "expecting" to attend.

Herd Theory Application in the Sales Process

The Herd Theory is a powerful technique for establishing credibility and generating interest at the beginning of the sales process. Prospects are naturally curious when they find out that "everyone else" seems to be moving in a certain direction. And once they are curious, they will want more information. This theory is also useful in providing emotional reassurance that is needed to pull a trigger on a purchase.

Overcoming Objections

Herd references are valuable because it can be used to overcome objections and show customers why your product provides the best solution. Surrounding prospects with a credible herd reduces your risk because you become the messenger, not the message.

Prospect: *"I'm concerned that your price seems too high."*

Seller: *"I understand how you feel. Other customers have felt the same way. Take Nationsbank, for example, who had similar concerns about price until they found that the value of our product far outweighed its cost."*

Chapter 4 - Gold Medals & German Sheperds

It is important for every salesperson to know what motivates their customers. Some prospects will be driven by positive benefits (*gold medals*) while others will be motivated by their need to avoid potential problems and feelings of uncertainty (*German Shepherds*).

Double your Benefits to Double your Value

If you want to sell to people who are motivated by both *gold medals* and *German Shepherds*, then it is important to position product benefits in ways that both will understand.

Very few people are motivated only by gold medals or only by German Shepherds. In reality, the vast majority of prospects and customers are motivated by a combination of the two. Your ability to present twice as many benefits gives you an opportunity to present twice as much value; it also gives your prospects and customers twice as many reasons to move forward with a favorable purchase decision.

Comparative Chart

To give you a clearer picture, the chart below highlights a number of everyday products and how they are being positioned to appeal to both kinds of buyers:

Product	Gold Medals	German Shepherds
Volvo Automobiles	Efficient and stylish	Safe to protect family
Tandem Computers	Maximum performance	Eliminates downtime
Microsoft	Technology leadership	Fewer integration issues
Johnsons Baby Shampoo	Gentle on the hair	No more tears
Miller Lite Beer	Tastes great	Less filling
Fram Oil Filters	Smoother running engine	Prevents costly repairs
Life Insurance	Retirement savings	Financial protection
Diet Food Products	High in taste	Low in fat
Organic Detergents	Natural cleaning agents	Protects the environment
Weight Loss Programs	Look and feel better	Lose those ugly pounds

Focus on the Customer

QBS teaches salespeople to focus on the wants of the customer. Knowledge regarding the motivation of customers and prospects enables salespeople to approach the sales process differently which results in connecting with a larger audience. This approach will surely put the bounce back in your step and bolster your confidence.

Chapter 5 - Fueling the Sales Process

Identifying needs is fundamental to any successful formula in selling. It doesn't matter how exciting your solution is if your prospects don't recognize their own needs.

Active Needs vs. Latent Needs

Active needs occur when prospects recognize that they are no longer satisfied with the status quo; while latent needs happen when prospects fail to do the necessary recognition regarding their status quo.

People with active needs are easier to sell to. All you have to do is dangle a few benefits out in front of someone with an active need, and they get excited. Unfortunately, people with active needs represent only a small portion of your overall market opportunity.

The more significant portion of the market is comprised of prospects that have yet to recognize that they have needs for your product or service. These people have latent needs and the primary reason latent needs exist is ignorance. When prospects are not aware of a problem, they have no reason to change the status quo.

Increase Your Prospect's Sense of Urgency

High performing salespeople will attest that the overwhelming majority of their sales success comes from their ability to transform a prospect's latent needs into active needs. The need transformation creates a sense of urgency for your prospect. Remember that the greater the prospect's sense of urgency, the more likely they are to act on your solutions.

Changing the Prospect's Perspective

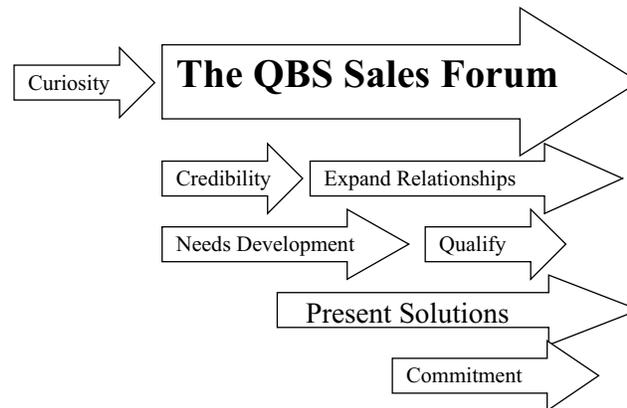
The easiest way to increase a prospect's sense of urgency is to change their perspective. You can accomplish this by offering new information or by asking questions that will help them discover opportunities of improvement.

■ PART TWO: Leveraging the Most Powerful Tool in Sales

Chapter 6 - Conversational Layering

If relationships are the key to selling effectively, what then is the key to building effective relationships? The answer is Conversational Layering. The author has created a layered model that defines each of the prerequisite steps that must occur

on the way to a successful sale.



In this model, relationships are a key component of the sales process, but as you can see from the diagram, relationships are not the catalyst of the sales process. A salesperson must first earn the right to engage the prospect in a business relationship by first arousing his curiosity and then engaging the prospect in the QBS Sales Forum.

The model contains a series of prerequisite steps that must be completed to move an opportunity forward in the sales process. As an example, presenting a solution is a pre-requisite for securing a commitment. Working backwards in the model, you will see that sellers can only present solutions if they have uncovered a need and qualified the opportunity.

The QBS Sales Forum

In order to have an opportunity to earn credibility, build relationships, uncover needs, present solutions, and ultimately secure a commitment to buy, a salesperson must foster an environment that's conducive to selling. This means that the salesperson must have two things: the prospect's time and their attention.

In QBS, this combination of time and attention is called a sales forum. This is where the sales process begins.

The Spark that Makes Prospects “Want to” Engage

Top performing salespeople are consistently penetrating new accounts, not because they are better conversationalists, but because they are better closers. They know how to secure a prospect's time and attention by piquing their curiosity. If you look at the conversational layering model, you will notice that curiosity is the key that unlocks the rest of the sales process. Curiosity creates the spark of interest that makes prospects want to know more.

Chapter 7 - What Makes People Curious?

Curiosity is the first step in the Conversational Layering Model. As a salesperson, you need to remember that the more curious your prospects become, the more opportunities you will have to add value and provide solutions.

In Question Based Selling, salespeople must engage prospective customers to become curious first, rather than launching right into a litany of features and benefits. In doing this you have two choices: be aggressive and force your way in or you can make prospects curious enough to want more information.

Five QBS Strategies That Make Prospects Curious

1. **Provocative Questions...and Statements** - Provocative questions and statements tend to make people curious. In the context of sales, you can use provocative questions to rouse the curiosity of your prospective customer. This will provide a window of opportunity for you to present your product or service.
2. **Partial Information** - If you want prospects and customers to want more information, then rather than telling them everything up front, you have to leave some meat on the bone. You should only share enough information to pique their curiosity.
3. **Glimpses of Value** - Using glimpses of value is a powerful strategy because dangling valuable benefits in front of potential buyers entices them to want more information. If they ask for more information, you have accomplished your primary objective. This technique actually combines provocative questions with partial information to give potential buyers a glimpse of the value that they too could receive.
4. **Newness and Exclusivity** - People don't want to be left out and they will always want to be "in the know." By engaging in a more in-depth discussion about their needs and your solutions, customers will know that your product is valuable to their business. You can then make an enticement even more exclusive by offering to share future plans if the prospect is willing to sign a non-disclosure agreement.
5. **Leveraging Momentum** - Momentum is another curiosity-inducer that sellers can use to capture their prospect's time and attention. To illustrate, when prospects cut you off in the first few seconds of a sales call to ask, "What's this about?", do not be caught off-guard. Instead, you can say:

Salesperson: *"Frankly, Mr. Prospect, we have figured out how to solve a series of very specific business problems that many customers in your industry currently face."*

Prospect: *"What problems?"*

Chapter 8 - Establishing Credibility in the Sale

QBS will show you that credibility can be established very early in the sale by narrowing down the scope of your questions. Then, as you gain the prospect's confidence, you should broaden the scope of your questions to engage them in a mutually beneficial sales conversation.

Narrowing Scope for Maximum Credibility

By narrowing the scope of your questions, you can convey higher levels of competence and credibility. Remember that when you demonstrate an ability to ask intelligent and relevant questions, prospects will automatically perceive a higher level of competence, credibility and value.

QBS suggests that you use a series of short-answer, diagnostic questions in initial sales conversation instead of "standard", open-ended, sales questions.

Seller: *"How many file servers do you currently have installed?"*
Prospect: *"We have 22 servers downtown and 7 in the annex."*
Seller: *"Is your network topology Ethernet or Token Ring?"*
Prospect: *"Ethernet."*
Seller: *"Are you using Microsoft NT or Novell?"*
Prospect: *"Microsoft."*
Seller: *"Version 3.X or 4.X?"*
Prospect: *"We just upgraded to release 4.0."*

The example above is a series of diagnostic questions. If you timed the exchange, you will notice that the exchange took less than 30 seconds. That's a lot of information in a very short time. In addition to gathering information, the conversation also allowed the salesperson to demonstrate his knowledge about file server hardware, network topology, operating system software, etc.

Narrowing the scope of your questions is an effective way to establish credibility early in your sales conversations. Once you are perceived as credible, you earn the right to broaden the scope of your questions to uncover the prospect's needs by probing their thoughts, feelings, and concerns.

Broaden the Scope to Expand Relationships

As prospective buyers become more willing to openly share, you must be ready to broaden the scope of your questions. Closed-ended questions are excellent tools for building credibility, but they aren't particularly effective for building relationships. When you ask open-ended questions keep in mind that what you really want is to uncover the prospect's needs needs that can be successfully addressed by your product or service offering.

Chapter 9 - Escalate the Value of Your Questions

Strategic Questioning is a Process

One of your goals in conversations with prospects should be to ask questions that earn you the right to probe further. Start out your sales conversations with questions that are easy to ask and easy to answer. Once you have earned the right to probe further, you should escalate the focus of your questions to increase the value of your sales conversations.

Ask Important Questions

Salespeople fail to recognize that important prospects appreciate being asked important questions. Prospects want to talk about their issues, problems, and concerns, because they do need valuable solutions. Once you understand this, you

can literally watch prospects perk-up as you escalate the focus of your questions, thereby raising the value of your sales conversations.

Status Questions vs. Issue Questions

A status question is a question that probes for specific pieces of information that will help reveal the current “status” of a prospect. Status questions are low in mutual value because prospects aren’t learning anything new as they are already aware of the status.

Issue questions facilitate the first stage of problem solving. They move beyond the status of an opportunity to uncover potential issues that are in need of viable solutions. Examples of Issue Questions include:

“What’s the most significant business issue you currently face?”

“What would you like to accomplish with this type of product?”

“To what extent is growth a factor in your business?”

“What other challenges do you foresee?”

To What Extent

Asking, “*To what extent is _____ important?*” is a technique that uncovers needs and encourages people to expand their responses. By filling in the blank with a relevant issue important to the prospect, you will have successfully escalated the focus of your questions. Asking “to what extent” seems to provide a seamless transition between Status Questions and Issue Questions.

Implication Questions

Implication Questions are designed to get prospects to think about the implications of an issue because it is the implication that will ultimately justify their purchase decision. Implication Questions probe further into the prospect’s thoughts, feelings, and opinions to find out what might happen if a pending issue isn’t properly addressed.

Here are some examples of Implication Questions.

“What would happen if your computer system went down and was unavailable for an entire day?”

“Have you ever calculated how much money every hour of unscheduled downtime is costing your company?”

“How does system downtime affect your customers?”

What would happen if your data was lost completely?”

Remember that, the more implications you uncover, the easier it is for prospects to justify a favorable purchase decision.

Solution Questions

Solution Questions are used to secure the next step in the sales process. Here, the discussion is focused on the benefits that will come from having the right solution. Solution Questions motivate the prospects to move forward by focusing their attention on solving the problem.

"Mr. Jenkins, if I could show you how to solve each of the issues we just discussed, would you be willing to take the next step?"

Whatever the next step in your sales process is, Solution Questions are excellent closing tools that use the potential value of your offering to secure the prospect's commitment to engage further.

Chapter 10 - How to Solicit More Accurate Feedback

Neutralize the Disposition of Your Questions

By neutralizing the disposition of your question, you offer the prospect a choice to respond either positively or constructively.

"Mr. Prospect, are we still in good shape to complete this deal by the end of the month, or do you think something might cause it to be delayed?"

Instead of:

"Mr. Prospect, are we still in good shape to complete this deal by the end of the month?"

The first question invites the prospect to share the whole story which includes good news as well as any potential problems or concerns. Neutral Questions are designed to solicit open, honest, and accurate feedback by making people comfortable enough to share their thoughts, feelings, and concerns.

By learning how to neutralize the disposition of your questions, you will solicit more accurate responses from prospects and customers. Knowing the real story will put you in a better vantage point.

■ PART THREE: Implementation: Putting Methods in Practice

Chapter 11 - Navigating the QBS Sales Process

Question Based Selling takes a more holistic view of the sales process and breaks the larger sale down into three distinct phases namely: *Interest Generation*, *Presentation*, and *Closing Steps*. The QBS gives salespeople a blueprint that's generic enough to implement across a wide range of industries and customer scenarios, and yet specific enough to implement with consistent and repeatable success.

Phase I: Interest Generation - In this phase, prospects enter the sales process as the result of interest generation activities like initial sales calls, trade shows, seminars, mass mailings, and special promotions. The objective in Phase I is to generate enough interest for potential buyers to move onto Phase II. In QBS, interest is generated by: making prospects curious, establishing credibility, and uncovering needs that will fuel the prospect's sense of urgency.

Phase II: The Presentation - The presentation is the pivot point of the sales process. The sales presentation is your opportunity to educate prospects on the value of your solutions so they will want to continue forward into closing the sale.

Phase III: Closing Steps - This is where buyers and sellers come together to agree on the terms and conditions of a sale, and wrap up the business transaction. The salesperson's objective here is to close the sale. This means securing the prospect's commitment to choose your product or service. Take note that your ability to close the sale often depends on how effective you were at generating interest in Phase I and presenting your solutions in Phase II.

Who Controls the Process?

Salespeople must take a proactive role in the sales process. As a salesperson, you are the expert. You have the skills and experience to help identify potential problems and you can give prospects a vision on how those problems can be addressed by the product or service that you offer.

Chapter 12 - Turn Your Cold Calls Into Lukewarm Calls

Nobody Likes Cold Calls

Most prospects view a cold call as an unwelcome interruption rather than a valuable use of their time. When calling new prospects, the rule of thumb is: the "warmer" the call, the greater its probability of success.

The Four Stages of a Lukewarm Sales Call

Stage I: Introduction - The introductory stage is divided into three sub-steps:

1. Identify yourself and your company. You may attach a tagline to your opening to give prospects more information about the nature of the call.

"Hello Mr. Prospect, my name is Jane Whitman and I'm with Pharmacom Products Corporation, the leading manufacturer of pharmaceutical supplies in North America."

2. Associate to create a sense of familiarity. After you identify yourself and the company, it's important to let the prospects know why you're calling. But refrain from jumping ahead into a litany of generic-sounding features and benefits. Instead use personal endorsements or associative references.
3. Glimpses of Value. Here, you can dangle a few enticing benefits out in front of your potential buyers to see if they would like to hear more.

"Would you like to know how to significantly reduce your cost of goods sold with one simple change in strategy?"

Stage II: Discovery - The objective here is information gathering. You will want to uncover enough needs to fuel the sales process. In QBS, you are encouraged to put yourself in a position that will earn you the right to engage further and uncover the

prospect's needs in Stage II. Ask the prospect if they are the right person to talk to. Whenever someone agrees that they are the right person, you automatically earn the right to probe further.

Stage III: Value Proposition - This stage marks the beginning of your opportunity to educate qualified prospects. This is also where you will start to build value in your product or service offering. Remember to put your best foot forward. Salespeople can rant and rave about their products without sounding arrogant.

Stage IV: Close on Next Steps - This stage is an opportunity to manage your prospect's expectations and expand the scope of engagement to include other people who will play a role in the financial decision. This is also a good time to develop potential champions people who will help ensure that subsequent sales events go well.

Chapter 13 - Getting to the “Right Person”

The job of a salesperson is to successfully identify those people who will affect the purchase decision so that the outcome of a sale can be effectively managed. Here are some tips to remember in getting to contact the “right person.”

Some of the most exciting sales opportunities begin with someone other than the very important top officer.

High-level contacts have the authority to make a decision, or the ability to bring together the people who can.

The greatest risk of calling low is being blocked by someone who doesn't have the authority to make a decision.

Not everyone can *pull the trigger* and make a decision, but lots of people can *pull the plug* on your opportunity to sell.

Chapter 14 - Building Value in the QBS Presentation

In the QBS sales presentation, the goal is building enough value to justify a favorable purchase decision. This requires a high level of presentation skills on the part of the salesperson. Through the presentation, the audience must recognize the existence of a need and listen attentively to the solutions.

How your sales presentation ends is important. Closing your sales presentation is an opportunity to summarize how your product or service matches up to the needs of your customer. It is also an opportunity to start positioning for closure.

Chapter 15 - Closing More Sales...Faster

Five Prerequisites to Closing Sales

1. **A recognized need.** Prospects will only buy your product if they recognize a need for it.
2. **A viable solution.** The discovery of a viable solution is what motivates

- them to move forward toward a decision.
3. **Value must justify the cost.** To purchase your product or service, the perceived value of your solution must exceed its cost.
 4. **A sense of urgency.** Until your prospect feels a sense of urgency, he or she is not likely to buy your product.
 5. **The authority to buy.** Your prospect must have the authority to make a buying decision.

If you want to close more sales, then you need to have more opportunities coming into the top of the sales funnel. This can be attained by using the **Question Based Selling** methodology to penetrate more new accounts, uncover more needs, present more value, and differentiate yourself from the competition. Keep in mind that there is no substitute for hard work.

If you are committed to excellence then you will undoubtedly accomplish the larger objective of doubling your sales results.