

DEAL



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DOUBLING DISCOVERY

A simple 9-question system for
Account Executives to easily
boost their average deal size by
finding bigger deals, faster.

BY KRYSTEN CONNER

Hi friend :)

It's Krysten Here.

Thanks so much for grabbing this resource!

After 3 tech unicorns, 11 years in sales, and 6 years as an enterprise AE, I have 9 go-to Discovery questions. They help uncover which deals are Executive priorities vs. something a manager sees as a nice-to-have.

For each question, you'll get a "How" this sounds in real life so you can ask the questions like a seasoned veteran in your next call...
...and a "Why" it's important for you to ask.

I've listed them in order of how they usually come up in a 1st discovery call:

- 1) In this role, I talk to {{your industry}} leaders all day long. They tell me about their heartburn around problems A, B and C. How much of that sounds like your world & what did I miss?
- 2) So you're looking to change or improve {{XYZ metric}}...by how much?
- 3) For executive discovery meetings: What kinds of things did you get hired to change or start?
- 4) Happy to answer {{question on a feature}}... sounds like you have a specific reason for asking?
- 5) You just mentioned {{XYZ pain}}.... what's causing that to be prioritized?
- 6) How widely felt is this pain across your whole organization? A few teams or a top 3 strategic priority?
- 7) How will others in your org feel about using something like {{my product}}?
- 8) Who will feel left out if we don't include them next time we meet?
- 9) How can I best match your urgency?

Let's dive in!

1) In this role, I talk to {{your industry}} leaders all day long. They tell me about their heartburn around problems A, B and C. How much of that sounds like your world & what did I miss?

HOW (IRL this sounds like):

"Usually, when Sales leaders join these calls they usually want to either Capitalize or Catch up.

- They have hiring freezes, but quotas are not going down.
- They're facing double-digit growth metrics. And not sure how they're going to hit them.
- They are seeing Pipeline dry up in these market conditions. And so they're looking for a new channel.
- . . . OR - they're facing none of these challenges, are hitting record high revenue, and want to capitalize to grab market share.

Curious how much of that sounds like your world? And what did I miss?"

WHY:

This question does 3 things:

1. Immediately establishes credibility - you already know the common problems they're facing, so they see you as an industry insider. And are relieved they don't have to educate you.
2. Lowers friction (they don't have to think up an answer from scratch - they can pick from multiple choice) and;
3. gets you detailed answers (it leaves room for them to correct you. People love to correct others... they especially love to correct sales people. They want to go into detail.)

2) So you're looking to change or improve {{XYZ metric}}...by how much?

HOW:

"Sounds like increasing pipeline is the #1 priority. By millions or tens of millions? 9% or 49%?"

WHY:

Getting a specific metric vs. just "improve this metric" will help you keep urgency throughout the deal. You will reference this when asking for follow-up meetings or if momentum starts to slow down.

"You mentioned your team needs to increase pipeline by 39% by Q2. If it needs to be implemented by Q2, should we meet with your Ops team next week to do the set up overview?", etc.

3) For executive discovery meetings: What kinds of things did you get hired to change or start?

HOW:

1) Start the call with a recently hired exec by saying you "have a hunch they probably didn't get hired to keep things the same"

2) "I'm curious...what are the 2 biggest things your leadership wants you to change?"

3) "Those are big changes. What risks do you foresee in the next 3-6 months?"

*Even better if you've done your homework and throw out 2-3 things you think they may have been hired to do (build an outbound motion, take the product upmarket, modernize process)

**Doubly better if you also come with a point-of-view on the risks they might be facing: economic conditions, competitive landscape, culture/politics of the org

WHY:

These 3 insights I learned from a VP of Sales at Salesforce:

- 1) No leader gets hired to keep things the same
- 2) Leaders get hired to duplicate their past success
- 3) What keeps leaders up at night is Risk

4) Happy to answer {{question on a feature}}... sounds like you have a specific reason for asking?

HOW:

"Smart question. Sounds like {{feature}} may be important for your team. You probably have a specific reason for asking?"

WHY:

Sometimes people ask about a product feature because they hope we DO have it.

Sometimes people ask about a product feature because they hope we DON'T.

When I sold data analytics, our team viewed 'democratizing' a company's data as a benefit. What I learned the hard way was many IT departments saw this as a threat.

We always want to figure out why they're asking before we answer.

5) You just mentioned {{XYZ pain}}.... what's causing that to be prioritized?

HOW:

"It sounds like reducing churn is top of mind for you. There's usually a story there. Curious what's driving that for you?"

WHY:

Executives are always putting out multiple fires. What's causing this fire to take priority? (It's likely been an issue for awhile.)

What you're looking to uncover here is

- A specific initiative related to a problem you solve
- A target metric (26% improvement, etc.)
- A time-bound event (by Q3)

6) How widely felt is this pain across your whole organization? A few teams or a top 3 strategic priority?

HOW:

"These days it's harder than ever to bring on new tech. I'm seeing across all my clients that to bring on something new, we have to align with a specific departmental or company OKR. Otherwise, it goes nowhere."

"In your opinion, which priority do we best align with?"

"Who's responsible for the success of that priority?"

"What's the best way to get them involved?"

WHY:

Problems can be urgent to 1 manager and non-existent for another. Problems for executives that have ripple effects across departments... those are the ones that get prioritized and solved.

7) How will others in your org feel about using something like {{my product}}?

HOW:

"Typically something like this creates either excitement or concern, or both. Curious to hear your prediction on how this might go down for your team?"

WHY:

Every initiative will have allies. And adversaries. Asking about this (early & often) will help uncover 2 things:

- Who will transparently give you inside intel
- Who to engage & who to watch out for

8) Who will feel left out if we don't include them next time we meet?

HOW:

"How folks typically evaluate [my product] is by involving Personas X, Y, and Z.

Persona X is involved because they are usually feeling [pain 1,2,3].

Persona Y is impacted by [pain 4,5,6]

--> To what extent are Personas X & Y being affected in your org?

--> Who else's team is also being affected?

--> Would involving Persona X in our next meeting make the most sense or would another next step be better? Who else might feel left out if they're not included?"

WHY:

Teaching them how to buy (personas, problems, process) adds value. It also gives them something to react to. If they clam up & won't introduce you, red flag. If they don't know how to engage, yellow flag. If they immediately start naming names and offering intros - green flag!

9) How can I best match your urgency?

HOW:

"Sometimes people join these calls because they are in education mode and just want to understand new tools.

- Sometimes people join these calls because they have a [big churn, pipeline or revenue] problem they needed to solve 6 months ago.
- Sometimes people join these calls because they need to do something about churn, pipeline or revenue in the next 12 months, but it's not urgent.
- Curious where would you put yourself on that scale?
- Asking because I never want to chase anyone.
- If today was purely education, that's ok."

I ask this at the end of the call. After they've gotten the product overview. And BEFORE we talk next steps.

WHY:

Their answer here determines what next steps make sense.

If they are purely in education mode, the next step may be to send them a follow-up email, put them in a nurture sequence, and take what we've learned from them to get higher up in the organization.

To find someone who does have urgency. OR maybe we just leave them in a nurture sequence to stay top of mind for when they do have a compelling event.

Knowing which prospects are purely in education mode vs. problem-solving mode will save immense amounts of time. Time that can be spent working on deals that will actually close.

FINAL THOUGHTS:

Thanks for taking the time to go through this!

I hope it helps you on your next disco call.

It takes the same effort to close a 10k deal as it does 100k in most cases...so we need to spot the big fish early.

These questions give us concrete ways to diagnose, quantify & qualify.

If you are looking for more actional tips, be sure to follow me on LinkedIn and keep an eye out for my newsletter coming to your inbox soon!

-krysten