Discovery Questions

Discovery is about understanding before recommending.

Before discussing solutions, it is important to understand the business, the goals, and the challenges that influence decision-making.

The strongest recommendations are often built on the strongest discovery conversations.

1. The Difference Between Information and Insight

Many salespeople gather information.

Fewer salespeople uncover insight.

Information may include:

- How long the business has been operating
- How many employees they have
- What products or services they offer

This information can be useful.

However, it does not always reveal what matters most to the business owner.

Insight often reveals:

- Priorities
- Frustrations
- Goals

• Obstacles

• Opportunities

Why This Matters

Information tells you what is happening.

Discovery helps reveal why it is happening.

> **TIP**
>
> **Interesting answers are often more valuable than prepared questions.**
>
> When a business owner reveals something important, resist the urge to move to the next question.
>
> Some of the most valuable discovery happens when you explore an unexpected answer.

2. Understanding Current Results

Before discussing solutions, understand what is happening today.

Examples:

• How do you currently get customers to come again?

• What marketing efforts have worked best for you?

• How do customers typically hear about your business?

• What does a successful month look like for you?

These types of questions help establish a baseline and provide context for the rest of the conversation.

3. Exploring Challenges

Business owners often reveal opportunities when discussing challenges.

Examples:

• What marketing challenges are you currently facing?

• Are there certain times of the week that tend to be slower than others?

• What would you like to improve over the next six months?

• What has been the most frustrating part of promoting your business?

A Different Perspective

Challenges often create opportunities.

Effective discovery helps reveal what the business owner would like to improve.

4. Understanding Priorities

Business owners often have multiple goals, frustrations, and challenges.

However, not every challenge carries the same level of importance.

Some concerns may be minor inconveniences.

Others may have a significant impact on revenue, customer retention, growth, or daily operations.

One of the most valuable parts of discovery is identifying which challenges matter most.

Examples:

• Which of these challenges has the greatest impact on your business?

• If you could improve one thing this year, what would it be?

• What would make the biggest difference for you right now?

Why This Matters

Not every challenge creates urgency.

Not every frustration motivates action.

A business owner may mention several concerns during a conversation, but one concern is often more important than the others.

The strongest opportunities are often connected to the challenges a business owner is most motivated to solve.

Understanding priorities helps you focus on what matters most rather than trying to address everything at once.

Example:

A restaurant owner might say:

- Staffing is difficult.
- Food costs are increasing.
- Tuesdays are slow.

Which is the biggest business problem?

Maybe staffing.

Which one are they willing to spend money to fix right now?

Maybe slow Tuesdays.

Those are two different answers.

5. Curiosity Creates Discovery

Business owners rarely present a complete picture immediately.

They often begin by describing a symptom, observation, or frustration.

Discovery becomes more valuable when curiosity replaces assumption.

Instead of immediately looking for a solution, explore the answer further.

The first answer often introduces the topic.

The follow-up questions reveal what matters.

Examples

Business Owner:

"We need more customers."

A curious salesperson might ask:

• What makes you say that?

• Are you looking for more new customers, or more repeat customers?

• Has this always been a challenge?

The real issue may not be attracting new customers.

The real issue may be customer retention.

Business Owner:

"Our promotions don't seem to work."

A curious salesperson might ask:

• How are customers currently learning about your promotions?

• Have some promotions performed better than others?

• What results were you hoping to see?

The real issue may not be the promotion itself.

The real issue may be visibility and communication.

Business Owner:

"We've tried marketing before."

A curious salesperson might ask:

• What types of marketing have you tried?

• What were you hoping would happen?

- What was disappointing about the results?

The real issue may not be marketing.

The real issue may be unmet expectations, inconsistent execution, or previous negative experiences.

Why This Matters

Business owners often describe what they see.

Discovery helps uncover what is causing it.

Curiosity often leads to better understanding.

Better understanding often leads to more relevant recommendations.

6. Listening for Opportunities

Discovery is not simply about asking questions.

It is also about recognizing opportunities within the answers.

Business owners often reveal:

- Goals
- Frustrations
- Priorities
- Obstacles
- Desired outcomes

The better you understand these areas, the easier it becomes to determine whether your solution can help.

COMMON MISTAKE

Treating discovery like an interview checklist.

The most valuable conversations are rarely linear.

Listen carefully, stay curious, and explore important topics when they arise.

KEY TAKEAWAY

Effective discovery uncovers opportunity.

By asking thoughtful questions and listening with intention, you gain the insight needed to understand your prospect's real challenges and recommend the right solution.