



Needs Analysis

It amazes me how many salespeople don't ask the right questions and even if they do, they rarely listen properly.

Let's have a look at a recent example that happened to me. I was looking to buy a laptop computer, and one of the key things I wanted was for it to be visible outside. Sometimes, I like to write outside to mix it up a bit. Upon telling this to the salesperson, he directed me to a computer which he believed would meet my needs. He built up the value of this solution quite well and I ended up taking the computer. When I went to use it outside, it was unusable in an outdoor environment as it was like a mirror (because of the gloss finish). Disappointed, I took the laptop back to which the sales person proceeded to inform me that I was NOT entitled to a refund, even though they had no other computers that would meet my needs. Let's just say that I am aware of my rights, and I did get a refund. This store lost a valuable customer that day.

So what went wrong? For a start, the salesperson either did not listen to what I wanted, lacked sufficient knowledge of the products and/or thought he could tell me what I wanted to hear to get the sale. For whatever reason, the store lost a sale, and a possible loyal customer. Considering that I usually update my computers every couple of years, my business to them might be worth a lot of money. Have others found out about the experience? Yes. Might they think about shopping elsewhere as well? Absolutely.

So how do we conduct our needs analysis?

1. The size and scale of the needs analysis will vary depending on the amount of money someone is looking to spend. Generally, the more money someone is spending, the more time will be spent identifying needs and then matching solutions to meet those needs.

2. Ask the right questions. The more questions you ask, the better prepared you will be in coming up with a solution. Too many average sales people fill in customer needs gaps by guessing, rather than by asking.
3. The questions to ask will depend on what you are selling. Here are some good sample questions you might ask depending on the product or service you are selling.

Professional Services (B2B) or (B2C)

- ➡ What's working?
- ➡ What's not working?
- ➡ What specific results do you want to see?
- ➡ Have you tried other solutions before? Did they work? If they didn't work, why do you believe they were unsuccessful?
- ➡ If I could achieve the specific results you want how much (money / time / energy) would that save you (or make you)?

Products (B2C) or (B2B)

- ➡ Do you already have one of these?
- ➡ If yes, what is the problem(s) with the one you have already?
- ➡ Is size important? What colour would you like? Which style?
- ➡ In this product what is the most important thing you want? (Eg. Low cost, product quality, warranty, after sales support etc.)
- ➡ What specific benefits would you like from this product? What do you intend using it for?

The questions above are intended to get you thinking about the types of questions you are asking your customers.

ACTIVITY

Think of your 5 top selling products or services. Now put on your customer's hat. To buy those products or services, what are the top questions you would need answered before **you** would make the decision to buy. These questions are the 'gold needs questions' that must be asked. A select number of salespeople within the organisation should complete this same activity, and then compare the responses. The combined answers will give you a great insight into the 'right' questions to ask future customers first.

In sales, if you find out what the customer really needs, then you can provide the right solutions. If you build enough value into your solution for the customer, they will not only buy from you, but they will tell others about it too!

“Never underestimate the power & value of a loyal customer.”

Blake Beattie

Happy sales!

Written by Blake Beattie

Blake is a director of Inspire Consulting and the Life Changing Experiences Foundation. Through coaching, speaking and training, Blake has provided long term, sustainable solutions to a number of different organisations throughout Australia, America, Canada and New Zealand. Myers, Telstra, the Australian Swimming Team and Community Aid Abroad are just some of the organisations that have benefited from Blake's work over the last few years.

Blake is a qualified teacher, actor, timeline therapist and NLP practitioner and is currently completing a Masters Degree in Business Administration. He has been a National Speakers Showcase finalist and was nominated for the Yale World Fellowship Program. Blake has managed highly successful teams, has spoken to audiences of up to 15,000 people in a day and has featured on Australian radio and television. Blake recently spoke aboard the Sapphire Princess, the largest passenger ship to ever come to Sydney and was also awarded the Summit Leadership Award presented at Parliament House.



Blake delivers results. He is a dynamic and passionate speaker who connects with any audience to increase productivity and improve performance. For your next conference or event make sure you choose a speaker that provides lasting sustainable change – look no further than Sydney born speaker Blake Beattie.