



# Consultative Questions: Methods To Enlarge The Scope Of The Project

## OVERVIEW

Questions are a powerful tool that allows you to gain insight to the client's situation, problem and potential cures. In order to sell strategically and consultatively, you must become accustomed to asking well phrased, thought penetrating questions. More importantly, you must prepare questions in advance of the meeting.

Studies have shown that a well-phrased question will get the client to think about what you are saying and their situation better than your making a statement. The question forces the client to think and gains their attention. The well-phrased question cuts through all the clutter that is swirling around in their head. Questions also get the client to tell you their biases, preferences and even things they may not be consciously aware of. The question is part of an overall strategy that helps you change the game without the competition even being aware that the game changed. In addition, by asking great questions, the client cannot help but think of you differently, someone who is more consultative, and more experienced.

Every sales person, consultant, advisor, sales support person and executive should have a set of questions that are to be asked in various client situations. No one question or set of questions fits all situations. The questions that follow will stimulate your thinking and help you design your own questions for the client and specific the sales situation.

## QUESTION TYPE: INCREASING THE SCOPE OF THE PROJECT QUESTIONS

In selling consultative engagements you can increase the size and scope of the project through well-phrased questions. The benefit is obviously more revenue. But if your team is on-site performing work already, the ability to do additional work will be at a lower cost in almost all cases and will result in higher margins for your firm.



Also, because you provide the client options which he or she has not considered, you demonstrate your ability to add value and act more consultatively even before the project begins. Right away the client can see your value and how you act as a partner. Other benefits for you are; your chance to meet with additional people who later can turn into clients for other projects; finding additional opportunities for your firm; and skills expansion that make you and your team more valuable in the marketplace.

These questions can be used by external and internal account managers, consultants or other professionals on the organization as a whole or within subdivisions and business units.

1. Would you be open to a proposal that includes various options?
2. Are there other areas within your company that has the same or similar issue(s)?
3. Would you like for us to interview the people in this department to see or determine how this might impact them?
4. Would you like a proposal for the implementation of the findings?
5. One of the things we found useful is reviewing the marketplace (or something else) and looking at how other firms addressed this issue. Would you like for that to be included in the proposal?
6. Would you like for us to benchmark how you are doing this against other companies with similar sized organizations?
7. Would you like a support fee or retainer to address on-going questions that may arise?
8. Do you have other projects related to this?
9. How are you going to implement or use this information?

By asking questions about the scope of the current project, finding out how they are going to use the information and/or suggesting more things that may need to be reviewed or done allows you to enlarge the scope of the current project and in the end - deliver a better end product for the client. Do not be concerned with looking greedy. You are only asking the client if he or she has considered this or that and it helps clarify what is in and out of scope.

Last, I have seen where the client said "No" at first and the next day said, "You know I have been thinking about what you suggested yesterday, and we probably do need to add that other component." Your ability to suggest options will make you more consultative and win more business.

