Elevate
CORPORATE TRAINING

The Sales Conversation Playbook

QUESTION BETTER.
SELL SMARTER.
WIN TOGETHER.



PRACTICAL TOOLS FOR
HIGH-PERFORMING SALES TEAMS

Elevate
CORPORATE TRAINING

The Sales Conversation Playbook

Practical tools for better sales conversations, stronger pipelines and more confident teams

Great sales results rarely come from one perfect script.

They come from better conversations, better preparation and better decisions throughout the sales process.

That means knowing how to:

- Ask stronger discovery questions
- Understand what really matters to the buyer
- Communicate value clearly
- Handle objections without becoming defensive
- Create urgency without pressure
- Negotiate with confidence
- Close next steps properly
- Coach sales conversations more effectively

This playbook gives you a practical set of frameworks, questions and tools you can use with your own sales team.

You do not need to use everything at once.

Start with the area where your team is losing the most momentum.

01 Start With the Sales Conversation, Not the Pitch

A common mistake in sales is trying to explain your solution too early.

The buyer mentions a problem.

The salesperson immediately starts presenting.

But the strongest sales conversations usually begin with understanding.

Before talking about your solution, make sure you understand:

- What is happening now
- What is not working
- Why it matters
- What the impact is
- What the buyer wants to improve
- What happens if nothing changes

The goal is not to interrogate the buyer.

The goal is to understand enough to have a useful conversation.

THE SIMPLE DISCOVERY FLOW

Current situation

What is happening right now?

Challenge

What is getting in the way?

Impact

What is the cost or consequence?

Desired outcome

What would better look like?

Priority

Why does this matter now?

Decision

What needs to happen next?

02 Better Discovery Questions

Weak discovery questions often produce weak answers.

Instead of asking:

> *"What are your challenges?"*

Try being more specific.

Current situation

- How are you currently handling this?
- What does the process look like today?
- What is working well?
- Where are you seeing the most friction?
- How long has this been an issue?

Understanding the problem

- What tends to go wrong?
- Where do you lose the most time?
- What part of this frustrates the team most?
- How does this affect customers or clients?
- What happens when this does not go well?

Understanding impact

- What is the impact on revenue?
- What does this cost you in time?
- How does this affect the team's performance?
- Does it create any risk elsewhere?
- What happens if nothing changes?

Understanding priorities

- How important is fixing this compared with other priorities?
- Why is this being looked at now?
- Is there a deadline driving this?
- What would make this worth solving?

Understanding outcomes

- What would a good outcome look like?
- What would success look like six months from now?
- What would you want your team to be doing differently?
- How would you know this had worked?

SALES HABIT

Try to avoid asking five questions in a row.

Ask one.

Listen.

Explore the answer.

Then ask the next question.

03 The Power of the Follow-Up Question

Often, the first answer a buyer gives is not the real answer.

They might say:

> *"We need more sales."*

That is broad.

A better salesperson explores further.

Try:

- What do you think is causing that?
- Where are you losing the most opportunities?
- Has that changed recently?
- What impact is that having?
- Can you give me an example?
- Why does that matter?

The first answer gives you information.

The second and third answers often give you insight.

04 Turning Features Into Value

Buyers rarely care about features in isolation.

They care about what those features mean for them.

A simple way to communicate value is:

Feature	Benefit	Business impact
What is it?	What does it help the buyer do?	Why does that matter?

EXAMPLE

Instead of:

> *"Our program includes role-play exercises."*

Try:

> *"We use realistic role-play so your team can practise difficult sales conversations before they face them with a live customer, helping them build confidence and improve consistency."*

The second version connects the feature to an outcome.

VALUE TRANSLATION EXERCISE

Feature:

What does it help the buyer do?

Why does that matter commercially?

05 The Buyer Value Formula

A useful way to think about value is:

Value = Outcome + Relevance + Confidence

Outcome

Does the buyer believe this will improve something important?

Relevance

Does it feel tailored to their situation?

Confidence

Do they believe you can actually deliver?

You can strengthen value by connecting your recommendation directly to what the buyer has told you.

Try language like:

> *"Based on what you've said about the team struggling with objection handling, I think the most useful focus would be..."*

That is more powerful than giving the same pitch to everyone.

06 Handling Objections Without Becoming Defensive

An objection is not always a rejection.

Sometimes it means:

- The buyer needs more information
- They do not yet see enough value
- They are worried about risk
- They are comparing options
- They are not ready
- Something else is happening internally

A simple structure is:

Listen	Let them finish.
Clarify	Make sure you understand the objection.
Explore	Understand what sits behind it.
Respond	Address the real concern.
Check	Confirm whether you resolved it.

Example: "It's too expensive."

Instead of immediately discounting, try:

> *"I understand. When you say expensive, is that compared with another option, your current budget, or the value you were expecting?"*

That creates a better conversation.

OBJECTION QUESTIONS

- What is the main concern?
- What is making you hesitate?
- Is price the only thing holding this back?
- What would you need to feel comfortable moving forward?
- What are you comparing us against?
- What feels most risky about this decision?

07 Common Sales Objections

“We need to think about it.”

Try:

> *“Of course. What are the main things you need to think through?”*

“We need to speak to the team.”

Try:

> *“Who else needs to be involved, and what will they be looking for?”*

“It's too expensive.”

Try:

> *“Understood. Is the concern the total investment, the timing, or whether the value justifies it?”*

“We're happy with our current provider.”

Try:

> *“That makes sense. What do they do particularly well?”*

“Now isn't the right time.”

Try:

> *“What would need to change for the timing to become right?”*

The goal is not to argue.

The goal is to understand.

08 Creating Urgency Without Pressure

Good urgency comes from the buyer's situation.

Bad urgency comes from the salesperson trying to manufacture pressure.

Instead of:

> *"This offer expires Friday."*

Focus on:

Deadlines	**Missed opportunities**
Cost of delay	**Business priorities**
Upcoming events	**Commercial impact**

Ask:

- What happens if this is delayed by six months?
- Is there a date you need this solved by?
- What is the cost of keeping things the same?
- What else depends on this decision?

If there is no genuine urgency, do not invent it.

09 Closing the Next Step

A sales conversation does not always need to end with a sale.

But it should usually end with clarity.

Avoid:

> *"I'll send something through and we can go from there."*

Instead, agree on:

- What happens next
- Who is responsible
- When it will happen
- Who else needs to be involved
- What decision is being made

BETTER NEXT-STEP LANGUAGE

> *"I'll send the proposal this afternoon. How about we lock in 20 minutes on Thursday to go through any questions?"*

Or:

> *"You mentioned the CFO will need to review this. Would it help if I included a short commercial summary they can review as well?"*

A good sales process reduces ambiguity.

10 The Proposal Conversation

A proposal should not introduce a completely new solution.

It should reflect the conversation you have already had.

A strong proposal should clearly show:

The problem	What is the buyer trying to improve?
The objective	What does success look like?
The recommendation	What are you proposing?
The rationale	Why is this the right approach?
The commercial value	What difference could this make?
The investment	What does it cost?
The next step	What happens now?

PROPOSAL CHECK

Before sending a proposal, ask yourself:

- Does this sound specific to the buyer?
- Does it reflect what they told me?
- Is the value clear?
- Is the next step obvious?
- Is there anything unnecessary?

11 Negotiating With Confidence

Negotiation should not automatically mean discounting.

Before changing price, understand what the buyer actually needs.

They may want:

- Lower cost
- Different scope
- Different timing
- Payment flexibility
- More certainty
- Additional value

Before discounting, ask

- What specifically needs to change?
- Is budget the only issue?
- What would make this workable?
- If we adjusted the scope, would that help?
- Is there something else that matters more than price?

If you do make a concession, try to trade rather than simply give.

For example:

> *"If we reduce the scope to two workshops instead of three, we can bring the investment down."*

This protects value.

12 Sales Conversation Scorecard

Use this after a sales call or during coaching.

Score each area from 1 to 5.

Preparation

Did I understand the buyer before the meeting? Score: / 5

Discovery

Did I uncover the real challenge? Score: / 5

Listening

Did I spend enough time understanding? Score: / 5

Impact

Did I explore why the issue matters? Score: / 5

Value

Did I connect our solution to their priorities? Score: / 5

Objections

Did I explore objections properly? Score: / 5

Next step

Did we finish with a clear next action? Score: / 5

My biggest improvement area:

13 Coaching Salespeople More Effectively

Sales managers often coach by giving advice.

But the best coaching helps the salesperson think.

Instead of:

> *"You should have handled it this way."*

Try:

- What do you think went well?
- Where did the conversation lose momentum?
- What did the buyer care about most?
- What question could you have asked?
- What would you do differently next time?
- What is one thing you want to practise?

COACHING FRAMEWORK

Review

What happened?

Reflect

Why did it happen?

Improve

What could be done differently?

Practise

How would you handle it next time?

Commit

What will you do on the next call?

14 Pipeline Health Check

A full pipeline does not always mean a healthy pipeline.

Review opportunities based on evidence rather than optimism.

Ask:

- Is there a genuine business problem?
- Do we know the impact?
- Is there urgency?
- Do we understand the decision process?
- Are we speaking to the right people?
- Has the buyer committed to a next step?
- Is there a clear reason this will move forward?

If the answer to most of these is no, the opportunity may not be as strong as it appears.

15 Warning Signs in a Sales Opportunity

Watch for these signals:

- No clear problem
- No urgency
- No access to decision-makers
- Repeated delays
- No defined next step
- Vague interest
- Requests for proposals without proper discovery
- No commercial discussion
- The buyer stops investing time

These do not always mean the opportunity is dead.

But they usually mean more discovery is needed.

16 The Five Questions Every Salesperson Should Ask Themselves

Before finishing a sales conversation, ask:

1. **Do I understand the real problem?**
2. **Do I understand why it matters?**
3. **Does the buyer understand our value?**
4. **Do I know how the decision will be made?**
5. **Do we have a clear next step?**

If not, the opportunity probably needs more work.

Sales Call Preparation Sheet

WHO AM I MEETING?

WHAT DO I ALREADY KNOW?

WHAT DO I WANT TO LEARN?

WHAT BUSINESS CHALLENGES MIGHT MATTER?

WHAT QUESTIONS DO I WANT TO ASK?

WHAT OUTCOME DO I WANT FROM THE MEETING?

Post-Call Reflection

WHAT DID I LEARN?

WHAT MATTERS MOST TO THE BUYER?

WHAT IS THE COMMERCIAL IMPACT?

WHAT OBJECTIONS OR RISKS EXIST?

WHO ELSE IS INVOLVED?

WHAT IS THE AGREED NEXT STEP?

WHEN WILL THAT HAPPEN?

Your 30-Day Sales Improvement Plan

Choose three areas to improve.

Focus 1

WHAT I WILL IMPROVE

HOW I WILL PRACTISE IT

Focus 2

WHAT I WILL IMPROVE

HOW I WILL PRACTISE IT

Focus 3

WHAT I WILL IMPROVE

HOW I WILL PRACTISE IT

One sales habit I will build:

One sales habit I will stop:

One conversation I want to handle better:

Better Sales Conversations Create Better Results

Strong sales performance is not about having the perfect script.

It is about understanding buyers, asking better questions, communicating value clearly and creating confidence throughout the decision process.

The best salespeople are not simply persuasive.

They are curious.

They listen.

They understand.

They help buyers make better decisions.

And they improve their conversations continuously.

Want to Strengthen Your Sales Team?

Elevate Corporate Training delivers practical, interactive sales training designed around real sales conversations.

Our programs can support teams across areas such as:

- Consultative selling
- Discovery
- Value conversations
- Objection handling
- Negotiation
- Closing
- Sales confidence
- Coaching
- Sales leadership

Every program can be tailored around your team's sales process, customers and commercial goals.

Get a tailored training proposal

Tell us a little about your team, your current challenges and what you want to improve, and we'll recommend an approach tailored to your organisation.

Elevate
CORPORATE TRAINING

Practical training. Better conversations. Stronger performance.