

# 9 Questions to Disrupt Buyer Thinking

Use these nine questions to disrupt thinking and generate insights in your buyer conversations.

## 1. WHY?

- Why is that your strategy?
- Why do you say that?
- Why do you think that?
- Why do you believe that's the case?
- Why do A versus B?

By asking why—while keeping the tone collaborative—you're asking buyers to justify something. If they can do so convincingly, great! But often they either can't, or they give reasoning you believe is flawed.

## 2. WHY HAVEN'T YOU ACHIEVED THIS YET?

This is a "why" question worth looking at on its own.

This question is challenging, but not argumentative. A cheaper, too-basic, ill-conceived, poorly-executed, or even too-complex solution or approach may have failed in the past for the buyer. Their response opens the door for you to help them see why past failures happened and that better solutions are available.

## 3. WHAT WILL THE IMPACT BE?

Responses to "impact" questions can reveal:

- The buyer sees the impact and why it's important. This is good.
- The buyer's perception of the impact has increased by thinking it through with your help. This is great.
- The buyer believes the impact is too small for action. You can show them it's bigger. Or perhaps they'll show you why it's not worth bothering to tackle this area and you can move on to more fruitful topics.
- The buyer doesn't know the impact, but you know it's very strong. You can help them figure out the impact.

## 4. HOW?

How do you see this all panning out?  
How do you think you need to proceed so this becomes a part of the culture?  
How might you avoid the common challenges like X, or Y, or Z that often crop up?

"How" questions can highlight potential problems and challenges, and help you see which approach may be good to introduce. Buyers—or you—might come up with a change that alleviates problems and improves the solution.

## 5. WHAT?

What do you think could be possible?  
What is your impression of what will work or what won't?

"What" questions help you see the gap between what buyers believe to be true and what's really true or possible, which you, in turn, can guide the buyer to see.

## 6. HAVE YOU CONSIDERED...?

Ask this question and you may discover the buyer did consider other options, but didn't approach them the right way. Or wasn't aware of the option itself. In any case, you can shed light.

## 7. WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF YOU DON'T ACT? OR IF IT TAKES TOO LONG TO SOLVE A PROBLEM?

Asking this question gets buyers thinking about the negative consequences of inaction and can greatly increase urgency. For example: their competition will get ahead, they'll bleed cash, turnover will be unsustainably high, and so on. Or, perhaps they need your guidance to see the negative consequences of inaction or moving too slowly. Either way leads to insight and increases urgency.

## 8. HOW DO YOU KNOW THAT? OR WHY DO YOU BELIEVE THAT?

Buyers may share "facts" without foundation. Or they may share facts with a foundation that were once true but are no longer so. By asking for the reasoning behind a statement, you can help the buyer question the fundamental basis for their assumptions.

## 9. WHAT'S MISSING?

This is the question that often gets a response of, "Good question!" Or prompts people to share what should be, but isn't. They think out loud, which gives them insight and gives you openings to add your own. And, as with the other questions, there can be an element of uncertainty in the response. When there is, this opens the door to learning and insight.

### And here's a bonus: follow-up questions.

Ask a question, and you may get a somewhat solid, somewhat thorough, and somewhat convincing answer. Keep pressing, though, and these answers and arguments can break down. "Somewhat thorough" turns into the tip of the iceberg. "Somewhat convincing" becomes not so convincing at all.

Even simply asking "why" a few more times can open the door to new paths of insight for the buyer.

Use variations of these nine questions to disrupt your buyers' thinking with insightful inquiry so you can then influence their agenda for action.