Sales Methodology Question Bank

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Command of the Message (CoM)

Sales Question Bank

The Command of the Message (CoM) methodology is a sales framework focused on structured discovery, qualification, and alignment, ensuring that value and differentiation are communicated consistently across the organization. Elite sellers using CoM spend the majority of the discovery call uncovering the buyer's current state, negative consequences, and desired outcomes before positioning the solution.

Here is a comprehensive question bank and dialogue guide based on the Command of the Message methodology, ready for download.

I. Opening & Current State (Before Scenarios)

The goal of this initial phase (Part 1: Current State) is to develop a holistic, objective overview of the customer's problem, process, and organizational impact without pitching.

Purpose Category	Specific Question/Focus	Variations /Rephrasing	Example Q&A/ Dialogue Scenario
Guiding Principle (Discovery)	"How would the customer express the current situation?"	(Implied guiding question for content creation)	(Ensures the resulting solution conversation uses customer language
Contextual Discovery	What does the prospect do today?	Walk me through your current process for X.	**Seller:** "Walk me through how you currently qualify deals/forecast."
Contextual Discovery	Why do they do it that way	What is the historical rationale for this process? (Implied)	(Used to uncover underlying systems or political inertia)
Scope Definition	How many teams use this?	Which departments rely on this tool/process?	(Helps gauge organizational scope and potential scale)
Scope Definition	What does this tool/ process/feature/etc... support in the organization?	What larger business initiatives are supported by this specific function? (Implied)	(Connects the tactical challenge to strategic objectives)
Initial Pain/ Problem	How big of a problem is it?	On a scale of 1 to 10, how critical is this issue right now? (Implied)	(Gauges initial severity, though quantification comes later)
Specific Pain (Example)	Why is it crashing?	What are the immediate technical causes of the failure?	**Scenario:** CTO mentions database crashes.

Purpose Category	Specific Question/Focus	Variations /Rephrasing	Example Q&A/ Dialogue Scenario
Specific Pain (Example)	Has it ever crashed in the past before the most recent crashes you mentioned?	Is this a new problem, or an escalating historical issue?	(Establishes a baseline and urgency)
Specific Pain (Example)	Are there any patterns you've noticed that cause it to crash?	Are there specific triggers or times when the issue is most prevalent?	(Helps identify constraints and root causes)
Sales Process Discovery	How much time do your managers spend closing deals? How much time do they spend on coaching?	What is the current split between deal closure activity and sales team development? (Implied)	(Used when selling sales enablement/ management solutions)

II. Negative Consequences

After establishing the current state, the seller digs into the Negative Consequences (Part 2), which are the tangible, unfavorable operational or financial outcomes resulting from the pain.

Purpose Category	Specific Question/Focus	Variations /Rephrasing	Example Q&A/ Dialogue Scenario
Guiding Principle (Quantification)	"How would the customer express the tangible business implications of the current situation?"	(Implied guiding question for content creation)	(Focuses on measurable outcomes like high OpEx or CapEx)
Urgency Creation	If this doesn't get fixed in time, what happens?	What is the worst-case scenario if we don't resolve this issue by [Date]?	**Customer:** "If we don't fix this database crash before Black Friday, we lose 80% of our annual revenue."
Quantification (Financial)	Have you quantified that in terms of dollars?	What is the monetary impact of [specific consequence]?	**Seller:** "What does [15 minutes of downtime] mean for your business, specifically quantified in dollars?"

Purpose Category	Specific Question/Focus	Variations /Rephrasing	Example Q&A/ Dialogue Scenario
Quantification (Operational)	You mentioned when the database crashes for 15 minutes, everyone has to stop what they're doing in your warehouse. What does that mean in a real sense for your business?	How does that downtime translate into specific lost productivity or resource drain?	**Customer:** "We lose $X in sales every minute, and 10 engineers are pulled off critical product work."
Resource Drain	How many engineering resources are required to fix it?	How often are staff being pulled away from their other work to resolve database issues?	(Used to quantify the soft cost of distraction/ reallocation)

III. Future State & Positive Business Outcomes (PBOs)

This phase (Parts 3 & 4) pivots to the outcomes, clarifying the ideal future state and ensuring that the potential benefits are compelling enough to secure discretionary funding from the Economic Buyer.

Purpose Category	Specific Question/Focus	Variations /Rephrasing	Example Q&A/ Dialogue Scenario
Guiding Principle (Vision Setting)	"How would the customer describe the ideal state?"	(Implied question used to create the After Scenarios)	(Creates a stand-in-the-future vision of life after resolution
Vision Setting	What would a successful outcome actually look like?	Describe the target state or destination for this project.	**Seller:** "If this problem is solved, what changes for you and your team?" **Customer:** "We could finally focus on shipping new features instead of fixing infrastructure."
Vision Setting	If this problem is solved, what changes for you and your team?	How would resolving this pain enable new strategic focus?	(Reveals the "real win," which often transcends the technical fix)

Purpose Category	Specific Question/Focus	Variations /Rephrasing	Example Q&A/ Dialogue Scenario
PBO Validation	If the database is on 24/7, how impactful is that to the business?	Can you articulate the specific value of achieving this uptime goal to the organization?	(Ensures the engineer's goal translates to executive value)
PBO Validation/ Enablement	If you didn't have to worry about the database crashing, what would it enable your team to focus their time and energy towards?	What strategic projects would become unblocked by this resolution?	(Links the solution to innovation and growth)
Executive Alignment (Quali...	How do you think leadership would prioritize us if they heard our database never crashed?	Is this PBO compelling enough that the Economic Buyer would reallocate discretionary funding? (Guiding Question)	(Tests whether the pain is significant enough to warrant executive attention and budget)

IV. Required Capabilities (RCs) & Metrics

This stage (Parts 5 & 6) shifts to defining the necessary solution components and the measurable Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) that the technical buyer will use to judge success.

Purpose Category	Specific Question/Focus	Variations /Rephrasing	Example Q&A/ Dialogue Scenario
RC Prioritization (Qualification)	"Are these the highest priority solution requirements that will most impact the buying decision?"	(Implied guiding question for content creation)	(Ensures focus on the capabilities tied most closely to PBOs)
RC Definition	If we could only test two or three things to validate that we resolve the issue, what would you need to see to feel confident?	What are the absolute minimum technical requirements necessary to prove ROI?	**Customer:** "We need fast migration, scalable infrastructure that works under pressure, and support."

Purpose Category	Specific Question/Focus	Variations /Rephrasing	Example Q&A/ Dialogue Scenario
Metric Definition (Technical Succe...	"How will the technical buyer measure the success of our solution?"	What KPIs will you use to judge success in a Proof of Concept (PoC) or trial?	(The answer provides the scorecard for the trial phase)
Trial Scope (Metrics)	How much traffic would we need to scale to support and demonstrate that we can handle in a trial?	What are the peak load requirements we must hit during the trial period?	(Defines the what and how of the success definition)
Trial Scope (Metrics)	We're not going to be able to migrate an entire database, have you thought how much data we could migrate to prove it's successful?	What is the minimum viable data set needed to validate performance metrics?	(Sets realistic expectations for the trial)
Current Metrics Validation	What other metrics are you using today to define success/failure of your current database? Any that we should use in the trial?	How do you currently measure uptime, throughput, and severity of issues?	(Leverages existing internal scorecards for validation)

V. Trap-Setting Questions (Differentiation & Qualification)

Trap-setting questions (analogous to Discovery Questions) are open-ended, two-sided questions that proactively introduce your Defensible Differentiators into the customer's Required Capabilities list, often setting a trap for competitors who lack that specific capability.

Purpose Category	Specific Question/Focus	Variations /Rephrasing	Example Q&A/ Dialogue Scenario
Trap Setting (Messaging)	How "audible-ready" are your reps in morphing the sales conversation across buying audiences?	How do you ensure your sales team tailor value to both the CEO and the technical user? (Implied)	(Persona-specific messaging, locks out competitors who rely on generic messaging.)

Purpose Category	Specific Question/Focus	Variations /Rephrasing	Example Q&A/ Dialogue Scenario
Trap Setting (Process)	How do you ensure consistent qualification across the org?	What formal process ensures all reps are qualifying opportunities uniformly?	(If your solution standardizes qualification, this makes the competitor's inconsistency a weakness)
Trap Setting (Negotiation)	Where do reps go for guidance in managing negotiations? How do you ensure consistency across teams/geos?	Do you have a standardized, value-based negotiation approach, or is it ad-hoc? (Implied)	(If your solution includes a defined negotiation process like Value Negotiation®, this sets a trap for generalist competitors
Trial Scope (Metrics)	How much traffic would we need to scale to support and demonstrate that we can handle in a trial?	What are the peak load requirements we must hit during the trial period?	(Defines the what and how of the success definition)
Trap Setting (Talent/Scaling)	How do you ensure you have the right people in the right roles? How do you plan to scale this process as you grow?	Do you have a consistent, scalable talent selection process correlated to revenue growth? (Implied)	(If your solution focuses on sales talent alignment, this highlights competitors' lack of talent focus)
Competitive Discovery	Is it fair to ask if they are considering other competitive products?	Who else are you evaluating to solve this problem?	**Seller:** "If they get offended you ask, you can simply tell them you are asking so you can best show some of the differences, though you encourage them to evaluate other solutions."
Trap Setting (Implementation & Adoption)	How do you ensure high adoption after rollout? What mechanisms guarantee teams actually use the new system or process?	Do you have a structured, repeatable adoption framework, or does each team handle rollout differently? (Implied)	(If your solution includes a proven implementation methodology, it exposes competitors who rely on "deploy and hope.")

VI. Objection Handling & Competitive Response

CoM provides frameworks for responding to common objections, often redirecting the conversation back to the Positive Business Outcomes (PBOs) and Required Capabilities (RCs) that have been agreed upon.

Purpose Category	Specific Question/Focus	Variations /Rephrasing	Example Q&A/ Dialogue Scenario
Objection: Price / Value	How does price compare to the Positive Business Outcomes you identified and the Required Capabilities we agreed upon?	Given the quantified value (PBOs) we established, is the price a true barrier, or is the perceived ROI unclear? (Implied)	**Customer:** "You are too expensive." Seller: (Response focuses on transformational outcomes and ROI)
Objection: Tech Stack / Adoption	How are your managers currently driving desired behaviors on their teams? How do you ensure consistency across teams?	If we successfully implement this solution, how do you ensure it is actually adopted and utilized by the field? (Implied)	**Customer:** "I don't want to add more to my tech stack." Seller: (Response focuses on adoption mechanisms like the Command Center™)
Objection: Do It Internally (Resources)	Walk me through the other responsibilities you have (in addition to this initiative). How will you provide continued support to drive adoption post-training?	Do you have dedicated internal capacity to manage and sustain this large-scale change initiative? (Implied)	(Highlights the challenge of internal teams lacking bandwidth for continuous support)
Objection: Do It Internally (Change Management)	Walk me through your last major change initiative. What worked well? What didn't? How did the org align on cross-functional priorities?	What is your internal track record for driving lasting, large-scale organizational change? (Implied)	(Forces the customer to acknowledge the difficulty of internal alignment and lasting change)
Competitive Strategy (Sandler Example)	Describe the importance of having field-ready content that supports any sales methodology you implement.	How crucial is it that the training content is customized and immediately deployable by your sales team? (Implied)	**Challenger:** "Sandler is the largest sales training org." Seller: (Uses this question to highlight the weakness of generic vs. customized CoM content)

VII. Next Steps (Closing)

While CoM is primarily a discovery framework, the conclusion of the call leads directly to defined next steps (Part 7, 8, 9).

Purpose Category	Specific Question/Focus	Variations /Rephrasing	Example Q&A/ Dialogue Scenario
Post-Discovery Transition	If we could only test two or three things to validate that we resolve the issue, what would you need to see to feel confident?	(Repeated from RC phase, but also serves as a closing question to define the focus of the next meeting or demo)	**Seller:** "Based on those required capabilities, can we schedule a 30-minute session to show you exactly how our solution addresses those things?"
Solution Positioning	(No explicit question—this is where the seller connects the dots by tying features to specific pains/ outcomes)	N/A	**Seller:** "You told me 4x scalability is the biggest risk. Let me show you how we handle that automatically without manual tuning."
Final Confirmation (Proof Points)	(No explicit question—this is where the seller reinforces the story with social proof and data)	N/A	**Seller:** "A client with the same migration challenge cut downtime by 90% and hit record revenue that quarter—proof you're on the right track."

The Command of the Message framework depends on strong discovery (Parts 1—4) and linking Required Capabilities and Metrics (Parts 5—6) to the value uncovered.

Since its efficacy relies on the quality and structure of the underlying Value Cards that these questions are designed to uncover and validate, would you like to focus next on creating a compelling Value Card structure for your specific offerings?

SPICED

Sales Question Bank & Dialogue Scenarios

The SPICED methodology is designed to systematically diagnose a prospect's situation, focusing on uncovering the true business Impact necessary to solve their Pain. It serves as a comprehensive framework for discovery, qualification, and internal forecasting.

Here is an exhaustive list of sales questions used in the SPICED methodology, categorized by purpose and component.

S - Situation (Discovery, Contextualization)

Purpose: To gather objective facts, circumstances, background details, and functional specifics about the prospect's organization, tools, and roles. This helps determine if the prospect is a good fit.

Purpose Category	Specific Question/Focus	Variations /Rephrasing	Example Q&A/ Dialogue Scenario
Guiding Principle (Discovery)	"How many salespeople work in your San Francisco office?"	Can you confirm the team size for that specific regional function? (Implied)	**Seller:** "How many salespeople work in your San Francisco office?" **Customer:** "We have about 45 reps covering the Western region."
Discovery (Technology)	"What CRM are you using today?"	Could you describe the core technological tools supporting this workflow? (Implied)	**Seller:** "What CRM are you using today?" **Customer:** "We're currently running on an instance of Salesforce that we customized extensively about five years ago."
Discovery (Facts/Fit)	"I noticed on LinkedIn you're currently hiring for 30 SDRs. Did I get that right?"	Can you confirm this recent hiring trend or organizational shift? (Implied)	**Seller:** "I noticed on LinkedIn you're currently hiring for 30 SDRs. Did I get that right?" **Customer:** "Yes, we are investing heavily in pipeline generation this quarter."
Discovery (Process)	"How do you currently onboard and train your sales team?"	Walk me through the established procedures for that specific organizational function.	**Seller:** "How do you currently onboard and train your sales team?" **Customer:** "It's mostly self-service documentation followed by shadowing a senior rep for two weeks."

Purpose Category	Specific Question/Focus	Variations /Rephrasing	Example Q&A/ Dialogue Scenario
Discovery (Workflow)	"What is your process for building customized proposals for your customers through your CRM?"	Detail the steps involved in that complex manual or automated workflow.	**Seller:** "How do you build customized proposals through your CRM?" **Customer:** "Finance has to pull and reformat the data manually, then Legal reviews."
Discovery (Information Access)	"How do prospective employees find relevant information about their positions?"	Where is critical knowledge currently housed and disseminated within the organization? (Implied)	**Seller:** "How do prospective employees find information about their positions?" **Customer:** "We rely on a SharePoint site, but it's often outdated."

P - Pain (Discovery, Diagnosis)

Purpose: To address acute challenges and frustrations (emotional or rational) that brought the prospect to seek a solution.

Purpose Category	Specific Question/Focus	Variations /Rephrasing	Example Q&A/ Dialogue Scenario
Diagnosis (Elicitation)	(Implied question structure following Situation: What challenges arise from this status quo?)	What are the acute challenges associated with doing things that way? (Implied)	**Seller:** "You mentioned the proposals process requires manual reformatting. What challenges or frustrations does that cause?"
Objection Handling/ Prioritization	Ask to prioritize the issues.	If the client starts venting about multiple issues, which challenge is the most pressing right now?	**Customer:** "We have unreliable data, slow proposals, and high turnover." **Seller:** "If you could fix one this quarter, which should we prioritize?"
Diagnosis (Emotional/ Rational)	(Focus on the acute emotional or rational consequences of the current state)	What are the costly mistakes or cash flow issues resulting from this pain? (Implied)	(Used to move from the process [S] to the cost/consequence [P/I])

I - Impact (Discovery, Quantification, Value Setting)

Purpose: To reveal the core business objectives (Rational: increasing revenue, decreasing cost, improving customer experience; Emotional: individual-level benefits) that the solution must solve.

Purpose Category	Specific Question/Focus	Variations /Rephrasing	Example Q&A/ Dialogue Scenario
Quantification (Rational Impact)	"How do slow-ramping salespeople affect your ability to hit revenue targets?"	Quantify the financial or performance consequence of that specific problem.	**Seller:** "How do slow-ramping salespeople affect your ability to hit revenue targets?" **Customer:** "It means we miss our Q3 pipeline goal by 15%."
Implication (Rational Impact)	"What happened the last time an inconsistent custom proposal caused your Finance team to work overtime to fix errors?"	Describe the negative outcome that resulted when this specific risk materialized previously.	**Seller:** "What happened the last time an inconsistent custom proposal caused your Finance team to work overtime to fix errors?" **Customer:** "We delayed the annual audit because the revenue reconciliation was flawed."
Scope/Priority (Rational Impact)	"What impact does a lack of visibility have on recruiting?"	How does this technical gap hinder a crucial strategic function?	**Seller:** "What impact does a lack of visibility have on recruiting?" **Customer:** "Our recruiters wasted 20% of their time chasing outdated leads."
Individual/ Emotional Impact	"To what extent is remote team collaboration important to you?"	How does resolving this issue benefit your team or you personally (emotional impact)?	**Seller:** "How important is remote team collaboration?" **Customer:** "If we fix it, morale improves—they won't be waiting until midnight for approvals.

CE - Critical Event (Qualification, Urgency Creation)

Purpose: To identify the deadline or time-sensitive milestone by which the prospect must achieve the desired impact, creating a sense of urgency.

Purpose Category	Specific Question/Focus	Variations /Rephrasing	Example Q&A/ Dialogue Scenario
Timeline (Direct Ask)	"When do you need this by?"	What is your intended deadline for implementation or resolution?	**Seller:** "When do you need this by?" **Customer:** "We need it fully functional by October 1st."
Validation (Importance)	"Why is that date important to you?"	What specific external or internal event ties directly to that deadline?	**Seller:** "You mentioned October 1st. Why is that date important to you?" **Customer:** "That's the start of Q4, and we need the new reps fully ramped to capture holiday sales."
Testing Urgency (Consequence)	"What happens if you miss that date?"	If that deadline is not met, what are the negative consequences?	**Seller:** "What happens if you miss that date?" **Customer:** "If we miss Q4 targets, the VP of Sales likely loses their job."
Testing Urgency (Consequence)	"What happens if you do not have a solution by that date?"	(Slight variation, focusing on the absence of the solution by the date)	**Seller:** "What happens if you do not have a solution by that date?"

D – Decision (Qualification, Process Mapping)

Purpose: To understand the process, committee, and criteria involved in purchasing (or renewing/expanding) a solution, including stakeholders and approvals.

Purpose Category	Specific Question/Focus	Variations /Rephrasing	Example Q&A/ Dialogue Scenario
Process Mapping (Past Experience)	"Have you brought in a platform like this in the past?"	Can you share your previous experience initiating a purchase of similar complexity?	**Seller:** "Have you brought in a platform like this in the past?" **Customer:** "Yes, last year we implemented our new ERP, which involved six months of security review."
Process Mapping (Steps)	"How does your buying process work?"	Can you walk me through the mandated stages of review and approval?	**Seller:** "How does your buying process work?" **Customer:** "First, we submit findings to the steering committee, then Procurement reviews, then Legal."
Process Mapping (Parallel Tracks)	"Are there any conversations we should start in parallel, like with Legal and Procurement?"	Which non-functional departments need to be engaged simultaneously to avoid delays?	Seller: "Are there any conversations we should start in parallel, like with Legal and Procurement?"
Process Mapping (Technical Gates)	"What about Security and IT reviews?"	What mandatory technical or compliance gatekeepers must sign off on the solution?	**Seller:** "What about Security and IT reviews?" **Customer:** "Security is mandatory; they require SOC 2 Type 2 certification."
Process Mapping (Stakeholders)	(Implied focus on identifying committee members)	Who needs to be involved in the final decision committee? Who will sign off?	(Used to map out the decision committee and decision criteria).

General Conversational Techniques (Diagnosis, Alignment)

Purpose: Structuring the conversation flow (Discovery Call), ensuring clarity, trust, and alignment before advancing the deal.

Purpose Category	Specific Question/Focus	Variations /Rephrasing	Example Q&A/ Dialogue Scenario
Diagnosis/ Alignment (Summarize)	"Ask if you got it right"	Based on everything we've discussed, let me quickly summarize to ensure I captured this accurately. Did I get that right?	**Seller (after summarizing S, P, I):** "So, to confirm, the inconsistency in proposals [P] delayed your audit [I]. Ask if you got it right." Customer: "Yes, that's exactly right."
Diagnosis (Context/ Preparation)	Perform research and talk in context	(Implied question: What research can I share to show I understand the customer's context?)	**Seller:** "I read in your annual report that you are prioritizing faster time-to-market. Is that correct?"
Empathy/Trust Building	EMPATHIZE	I frequently run into similar challenges with other leaders in the [Industry] vertical. (Implied action)	(Used to build rapport before exploring sensitive topics like Impact or Pain.)
Trust Building/ Social Proof	Share a client story	(Implied action to relate the prospect's situation/ pain to a relevant, positive outcome achieved by a comparable client.)	(Used before moving from Pain to Impact)

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SPIN

Selling Methodology Question Bank

The SPIN Selling Methodology, developed by Neil Rackham based on extensive research into major sales transactions, defines four powerful types of questions (S-P-I-N) used primarily during the Investigating Stage to uncover and develop customer needs. The goal is to move the buyer from stating Implied Needs (problems) to expressing clear, strong Explicit Needs (wants or desires for a solution) before presenting capability.

Here is the super detailed and exhaustive question bank organized by the four stages of a sales call, ready for download.

I. Preliminaries (Opening Stage)

Purpose: To gain the buyer's consent to move quickly and effectively to the **Investigating Stage** (asking questions). Traditional techniques like relationship building around personal interests or using an Opening Benefit Statement are often risky or ineffective in major sales.

Purpose Category	Specific Question/Focus	Variations /Rephrasing	Example Q&A/ Dialogue Scenario
Opening / Consent	(Implied question structure: Establish role as questioner)	Would you be receptive to answering a few questions about your current operations before I describe our solution? (Implied)	**Seller:** "I'll be brief". **Seller:** "The purpose of Opening is to gain the buyer's agreement for you to ask questions".
Opening / Clarity Check	"Are you sure I've answered all your questions?"	Is there anything else I can tell you about this product?	(Used by inexperienced seller failing to conclude the call)

II. Investigating Stage: SPIN Questions (Discovery, Qualification, Value Building)

The Investigating Stage is the most important for success in larger sales. The goal is to develop needs using the four types of questions in sequence.

A. Situation Questions (S)

Purpose: To gather facts, background, and data about the customer's current situation. Used sparingly, as excessive use can bore or irritate the buyer.

Purpose Category	Specific Question/Focus	Variations /Rephrasing	Example Q&A/ Dialogue Scenario
Contextual Discovery	"How long have you had your present equipment?"	What equipment are you using at present? How long have you had it? Is it purchased or leased?	**Seller:** "What sort of business do you run? Is it growing or shrinking?"
Contextual Discovery	"Could you tell me about your company's growth plans?"	What do you see as your objectives in this area?	**Seller:** "How many people use it [the equipment]?"
Organizational Facts	"Do you make the purchasing decisions?"	What's your position? How long have you been here?	**Seller (linking questions):** "During the plant tour, I noticed that there was a large locked 'clean room' behind the assembly area. Is that where you store your wheezos?

B. Problem Questions (P)

Purpose: To explore problems, difficulties, and dissatisfactions, uncovering **Implied Needs.**

Purpose Category	Specific Question/Focus	Variations /Rephrasing	Example Q&A/ Dialogue Scenario
Discovery (Implied Needs)	"Is this operation difficult to perform?"	Are you worried about the quality you get from your old machine?	**Seller:** "What are the disadvantages of the way you're handling this now?"
Discovery (Dissatisfaction)	"Are you satisfied with your present equipment?"	What problems are you experiencing in this area? / How satisfied are you with your present system?	**Seller:** Seller: "(Problem Question) Does this old machine give you reliability problems?"
Diagnosis	"What prevents you from achieving that objective?"	Are you worried about competitive responses?	**Seller:** "(Problem Question) You're getting too many mistakes?" **Buyer:** "(Implied Need) Some. Well, no more than most offices, but more than I like."

Purpose Category	Specific Question/Focus	Variations /Rephrasing	Example Q&A/ Dialogue Scenario
Clarification/ Follow-up	"Why is that a problem?"	How long does it take for your current service provider to respond when you have a breakdown? / How often does your machine break down? / Who usually has to deal with the problem?	**Seller:** "I'm not satisfied with our current whatsit... Why not?"

C. Implication Questions (I)

Purpose: To take an Implied Need (problem) and explore its consequences or effects, building the seriousness and urgency of the problem so it justifies the cost of a solution.

Purpose Category	Specific Question/Focus	Variations /Rephrasing	Example Q&A/ Dialogue Scenario
Value Building / Seriousness	"How will this problem affect your future profitability?"	What effect does this reject rate have on customer satisfaction?	**Seller:** "Could that lead to an increase in your costs?"
Value Building / Urgency	"How much production loss has this led to?"	Doesn't the overtime add even more to your costs?	**Seller (developing seriousness):** "So the time you spend proofing makes you a bottleneck for others' work?"
Linking Consequences	"What effect do these problems have on your competitive position?"	If competitors have a faster revision process, what impact will that have?	**Seller:** "If you've trained five people in 6 months... how much production loss has this led to?"
Quantification	"Doesn't the overtime add even more to your costs?"	How much scrap rate has this been squeezing your margins? (Implied)	**Scenario:** Buyer mentions high error rate. **Seller:** "Are those errors causing issues in documents you send to clients?"

D. Need-Payoff Questions (N)

Purpose: To ask about the value or usefulness of a solution. They focus the buyer on solutions, obtain **Explicit Needs,** get the buyer to state benefits, and reduce objections.

Purpose Category	Specific Question/Focus	Variations /Rephrasing	Example Q&A/ Dialogue Scenario
Explicit Needs / Value	"Would it be useful to speed this operation by 10 percent?"	If we could improve the quality of this operation, how would that help you?	**Seller:** "Is it important to you to solve this problem?"
Benefit Elicitation (Clarify)	"Why would you find this solution so useful?"	Why is that important to you? / Do you want faster turnaround to save costs or to better utilize your other equipment?	**Seller:** "Would it help if you could restrict long-distance calling to authorized persons?"
Benefit Elicitation (Extend)	"Is there any other way this could help you?"	What other tasks would the streamlined process enable you to complete that you can't do now?	**Seller:** "If you didn't have to spend that time proofreading. What could you do with the time you saved?"
Internal Selling Rehearsal	"What benefits would you get from lower inventory levels?"	Would cost be the most important benefit for your Finance V.P.?	**Seller:** "And that would be worth doing?" **Buyer:** "Probably. I don't know precisely how much is lost there. It might be enough to make some difference."
Transition/ Closing Focus	"What do you see as the pluses of this approach?"	How would that help?	**Seller:** "If we could give you the kind of system that would cut mistakes and reduce proofing… how would that help you?"

III. Demonstrating Capability & Objection Prevention

Purpose: Once Explicit Needs are developed, the seller demonstrates capability using Benefits (statements showing how the solution meets the Explicit Need). Objections are prevented by building value using Implication and Need-Payoff Questions first.

Purpose Category	Specific Question/Focus	Variations /Rephrasing	Example Q&A/ Dialogue Scenario
Objection Prevention	(Requires successful use of I and N Questions beforehand)	N/A	**Seller:** (After developing Implied Needs into Explicit Needs for a word processor) "Then let me show you how our word processor would help you cut mistakes and reduce proofing..." (Objection avoided).
Handling Capability/Can't Objections	"But could your need for personalized service prove to be important next year?"	Isn't that a case where our help would be extremely important?	**Customer:** "I need to move faster than your timetable." **Seller:** (Acknowledges limitation, then asks Need-Payoff Question to increase value of capability they do have): "So, the personalized service we've talked about might be important in a number of areas?"
Handling Capability/Can Objections	(Used after acknowledging concern and demonstrating capability)	N/A	**Seller (showing proof):** "Well, what I think we should do is have you talk with Bob Townsend at Borax. He just addressed this same issue. I'll also send you a publication just put out by The Wall Street Journal, which I think will be of some help."

IV. Obtaining Commitment (Closing)

Purpose: To obtain an Advance (an action that moves the sale forward). Traditional closing techniques (Assumptive, Alternative, etc.) are ineffective or detrimental in major sales.

Purpose Category	Specific Question/Focus	Variations /Rephrasing	Example Q&A/ Dialogue Scenario
Key Concern Check	"But before we go further, could I check whether there are any areas that you feel I should tell you more about?"	Could I check whether there are any further points or concerns that needed to be addressed?	**Seller:** "Is there anything else that we need to cover?". Buyer: "Yes, you haven't mentioned the terms of the leasing arrangement."
Proposing Commitment (Advance)	(Implied statement/ question proposing the next action)	What action do you propose we take now to move this forward? (Implied)	**Seller (Proposing Advance):** "Then I might suggest that the most logical next step would be for you and your accountant to come and see one of these systems in operation."
Alternative Commitment (Advance)	(Implied question seeking a less ambitious action if the primary Advance is rejected)	What realistic commitment can we obtain that will move the sale forward? (Implied Self-Question)	**Seller:** (Primary objective was Advance 1, but buyer rejects it). "In that case, would you be willing to introduce me to your Chief Engineer for a 15-minute briefing?" (Proposing a fallback Advance).

MEDDICC

Sales Question Bank & Dialogue Scenarios

MEDDIC is a **qualification methodology,** not a sales methodology, designed to help B2B sales organizations systematically qualify complex enterprise deals and achieve predictable revenue growth. Developed by Dick Dunkel at Parametric Technology Corporation (PTC) in the 1990s, with contributions from sales leaders like John McMahon and Jack Napoli, MEDDIC emerged from analyzing hundreds of sales opportunities to identify recurring patterns that determined why deals were won, lost, or slipped quarters.

The acronym stands for six core qualification elements: **M**etrics, **E**conomic Buyer, **D**ecision Criteria, **D**ecision Process, **I**dentify Pain, and **C**hampion. Unlike basic frameworks like BANT (Budget, Authority, Need, Timeline), which treat qualification as a one-time checkbox exercise, MEDDIC is applied continuously throughout the entire sales cycle from initial discovery through contract signature.

I - Implicate the Pain (Discovery, Urgency Creation, Quantification)

The goal of these questions is to move the customer past merely Identifying the pain to Implicating the pain, making them feel the negative impact and subsequent urgency to solve it.

Purpose Category	Specific Question/Focus	Variations /Rephrasing	Example Q&A/ Dialogue Scenario
Discovery (The Big 7 Intentions)	What is working?	"I read in your annual report that digital sales have grown 40% this year, what do you attribute your success to?"	**Seller:** "What's not working in your automation stack?" **Customer:** "Manual segmentation updates take too much time." (i1)
Discovery (The Big 7 Intentions)	What is not working?	"Even though 40% is impressive, is there anything that you think held you back from growing even more?"	(See above)
Discovery (The Big 7 Intentions)	When it works, what good things happen?	Tell me about the positive outcomes of this process running smoothly. (Implied)	(Used to establish a baseline for the "After State")
Discovery (The Big 7 Intentions)	When it does not work, what bad things happen?	Describe the negative consequences when this problem occurs. (Implied)	(Used to build the emotional connection to the problem)
Discovery (The Big 7 Intentions)	Whom does that affect?	Which departments or individuals feel the biggest impact of this issue? (Implied)	(Used to map pain ownership across stakeholders)
Discovery (The Big 7 Intentions)	How much does that cost?	Quantify the financial implication of this problem (How much revenue is missed? How high are the costs?)	(Used to quantify Financial Pain)

Purpose Category	Specific Question/Focus	Variations /Rephrasing	Example Q&A/ Dialogue Scenario
Discovery (The Big 7 Intentions)	Why haven't you tried to solve it yet?	What barriers prevented you from addressing this issue sooner? (Implied)	(Used to uncover underlying risks or politics)
Deep Discovery / Two-Sided	Ask open-ended questions using the TED acronym.	Could you please Tell me about it... / Can you please Explain to me... / Would you please Describe how...	**Seller:** "Can you tell me how GDPR impacts your ability to communicate with your customers?"
Quantification & Implication	"Are you able to tell me how much less productive you think this issue is making your team?"	"What percentage of time is wasted due to this workflow inefficiency?" (Implied)	**Seller:** "20–30%? That's high–why is that?" **Customer:** "It runs slowly and requires monitoring, which stops my team from doing other work."
Quantification & Value	"If you were able to free up 30% of your team's time, what else would they be able to get done?"	How would resolving this pain enable new strategic initiatives? (Implied)	**Seller:** "And what would that mean in extra revenue per month?" (Shifts efficiency pain to financial value)"
Implication (Hypothetical)	"What if Justin Bieber Tweets at you, and you miss it?"	What is the perceived cost or lost opportunity of missing a high-value interaction?	**Purpose:** Causing the customer to consider a negative scenario to feel Implicated by the pain (i3).

M - Metrics (Quantification, Value Validation)

Metrics quantify the value your solution provides and must be easily understandable to all stakeholders, especially the Economic Buyer.

Purpose Category	Specific Question/Focus	Variations /Rephrasing	Example Q&A/ Dialogue Scenario
Discovery (M1 - Proof Points)	What positive outcomes would you expect to report in a QBR six months from now?	If we were to measure the success of this project, what KPIs would you focus on? (Implied)	**M1 Example:** "For Sales Analytics software, leaders will likely focus on a metric like forecast accuracy in a QBR."

Purpose Category	Specific Question/Focus	Variations /Rephrasing	Example Q&A/ Dialogue Scenario
Discovery (M2 - ROI)	How much additional growth do you think you would have got if you had [solution feature]?	What is the potential incremental revenue from solving this problem?	**Seller:** "How much incremental revenue do you think that X% [growth] would have given you?"
Price Conditioning/ Value Setting	"[Referencing a successful client's ROI] The size of their deployment of our solution is similar to yours, and I am sure you wouldn't mind paying us $500,000 a year if it meant you, too, could get an additional $20m of revenue, right?"	How does this potential ROI compare to other initiatives competing for budget? (Implied)	(The question sets a high anchor price expectation based on high value)
Closing/Urgency (Objection Handling)	"Our Metrics predict that for each week you don't implement our solution, you are losing $100,000 revenue which exceeds the amount you are trying to negotiate!"	How much value are you losing daily/weekly by delaying implementation? (Implied)	**Seller:** "If I skip running a thorough Procurement process... we'd get ourselves into a real mess." (Shows the importance of leading with Metrics to defend value.)

E - Economic Buyer (Access, Alignment, Commitment)

These questions focus on identifying the Economic Buyer and confirming their motivations and sponsorship.

Purpose Category	Specific Question/Focus	Variations /Rephrasing	Example Q&A/ Dialogue Scenario
Discovery (Champion Coaching)	How do they [Economic Buyer] like to be engaged? E.g. Phone? Email? Letter?	What is the Economic Buyer's preferred communication style? (Implied)	(Used by the Champion to coach the Seller on interacting with the EB)

Purpose Category	Specific Question/Focus	Variations /Rephrasing	Example Q&A/ Dialogue Scenario
Discovery (Champion Coaching)	What do they care about? E.g. Making Money? Saving Money? Reducing Risk?	What are the Economic Buyer's key strategic objectives? (Implied)	(Ensures the Seller speaks the EB's language—focusing on business outcomes, not features)
Access/Price Conditioning	"Do authorization levels change by cost? For example, if it's over $500K, do additional decision-makers need to approve it?"	What monetary thresholds trigger additional executive approvals?	(Used to proactively condition the price and discover engagement rules)
Alignment/ Validation (Killer Question)	"We've built some success metrics, but before sharing them, what do you think would best indicate this solution is working for you?"	What definition of success is most important to you, the executive sponsor?	(Used to gauge the EB's goal and align the solution proposition)
Closing/ Commitment (Killer Question)	"It sounds like we can help you hit your objectives, and with your sponsorship, expand the value further. Would you sponsor the project?"	Will you lend your influence to ensure the success of this project internally?	(A bold closing ask to secure executive backing)

D - Decision Criteria (Discovery, Influence, Qualification)

The Decision Criteria (DC) represents the requirements used to judge the solution. The goal is to influence this criteria towards your unique strengths.

Purpose Category	Specific Question/Focus	Variations /Rephrasing	Example Q&A/ Dialogue Scenario
Discovery/ Validation	"You said EU servers matter in your criteria; what makes that important?"	What were the sources or influences that led you to define this requirement?	Customer: "ABC's analyst told us EU hosting is required for GDPR."

Purpose Category	Specific Question/Focus	Variations /Rephrasing	Example Q&A/ Dialogue Scenario
Influence/Closing	"Do you think this is an essential enough requirement that the solution you select will need to have it?"	Is this unique capability a "must-have" requirement for success?	**Seller:** "Will, the discovery of solutions that have automation that could save thousands of Euros in salaries mean you can obtain a higher budget to pay for it?" (Used to encourage the Champion to elevate the priority of a unique differentiator)
Qualification/ Consensus	"Do the Metrics within the business case resonate with all stakeholders?"	Is there universal agreement on the ROI calculation and business outcomes presented? (Implied)	(Used to confirm alignment on Economic Decision Criteria in late stages)
Qualification (Relationship Criteria)	"Do you or your colleagues have any reservations with our team and working with us?"	How do we score against the Relationship Decision Criteria? (Implied)	(Used in late stages to uncover final reservations or political barriers)

D - Decision Process (Discovery, Timeline Management)

The Decision Process (DP) defines how the decision will be made.

Purpose Category	Specific Question/Focus	Variations /Rephrasing	Example Q&A/ Dialogue Scenario
Discovery/ Mapping	Who needs to approve this deal?	What are the necessary signatures required?	(Part of the core list of questions needed to uncover the DP)
Discovery/ Mapping	Are there any committees or formal boards?	Are there any steering committees or internal reviews required?	(Part of the core list of questions needed to uncover the DP)

Purpose Category	Specific Question/Focus	Variations /Rephrasing	Example Q&A/ Dialogue Scenario
Discovery/Timing	How long does each person take?	What are the typical timeframes for approval at each stage?	(Part of the core list of questions needed to uncover the DP)
Discovery/ Acceleration	Who or what can slow this down? / Who can help me speed it up?	What are the dependencies we need to manage to maintain momentum? (Implied)	(Crucial for risk mitigation and accurate forecasting)
Validation/Go-Live Plan	"I have the introduction to Procurement down as stage 7, is that correct? Are there any other stages that have to come before it? And are the stages afterwards correct?"	Does this timeline accurately reflect the steps required by your organization?	(Used to validate the Decision Process steps documented in the Go-Live Plan)

P - Paper Process (Discovery, Risk, Closing)

The Paper Process (PP) defines the steps after vendor selection leading to a signed contract. These questions often overlap with DP Risk mitigation.

Purpose Category	Specific Question/Focus	Variations /Rephrasing	Example Q&A/ Dialogue Scenario
Discovery/ Validation	"Have you worked through these stages with a solution of similar complexity/cost to mine before?"	Can you share past experiences with contracts of this size?	(Used to gauge Champion's experience and validate the mapped process)
Risk Mitigation (Proactive)	"What things should we look out for?"	What are the common legal or procurement sticking points we should prepare for?	**Seller:** "What things should we be doing to be on the front foot?" (A professional approach to anticipate issues)
Risk Mitigation (Scenario Planning)	What if the signer is unavailable—does someone else have authority to sign? (Implied by required planning)	Who are the contingency signers if the primary signatory is unavailable?	(Crucial late-stage question to avoid last-minute slips)

C - Champion (Qualification, Testing, Coaching)

The Champion is someone who has power, influence, and a vested interest in your success, and acts as an internal seller.

Purpose Category	Specific Question/Focus	Variations /Rephrasing	Example Q&A/ Dialogue Scenario
Role Definition (Upfront Ask)	"Champion, normally when I am working on a project like this, I need someone to act as a Champion for me; what they do is help me understand the criteria and process in which you will go through to make a decision… I think you could be that person for me. What do you think?"	Would you be willing to partner with me to ensure we focus on the right things and make the buying process efficient?	(Elite sellers are explicit about the Champion's role)
Testing Power/ Influence (Killer)	Ask your Champion about the last time they worked on a deal like yours. Ask them about the steps they took to get the deal done and what obstacles they had to overcome.	Describe your experience navigating internal deals of similar complexity and size.	(Their answer reveals their experience, access to resources, and power level)
Testing Internal Selling	"In the conversations you've been having about my solution internally, has anyone raised any concerns or negative opinions?"	What FUD (Fear, Uncertainty, Doubt) is the competition spreading about us, and how did you counter it? (Implied)	(Tests if the Champion is actively selling internally and surfaces objections for the seller)
Testing Vested Interest	"What happens if we don't win?"	What is your personal incentive for this project to succeed?	**Seller:** "Will that impact your bonus?" **Champion:** "Yes." (Reveals the specific alignment of the Champion's personal win/loss)

C - Competition (Discovery, Trap Setting, Objection Handling)

Competition includes rivals, internal build initiatives, other projects, and inertia (doing nothing).

Purpose Category	Specific Question/Focus	Variations /Rephrasing	Example Q&A/ Dialogue Scenario
Discovery	What is your competition? Are they known to you? How were they engaged?	Who else is currently being evaluated, and what is your sentiment toward them? (Implied)	(Used to build the Competitive Strategy Plan)
Trap Setting (Discovery)	"What are you doing to ensure you are qualifying your deals throughout their lifecycle?"	How do you ensure continuous qualification beyond the initial stages?	(Aimed at highlighting a shortcoming of BANT and positioning MEDDICC's advantage)
Trap Setting (Commitment)	"Ok, but if you do invest in implementing a qualification framework, will you want it to help you qualify throughout the entirety of your deal lifecycle?"	Do you require a solution that manages qualification from start to finish?	(Gets explicit agreement that this differentiating feature must be part of the DC)
Objection Handling (High Road)	"The issue you have just raised is something we regularly hear our competition saying about us... We are not going to get into a tit for tat debate with our competition. We would rather focus on our suitability for your needs."	(This is a structured statement used to elevate standing and pivot back to value)	**Partner:** "...perhaps you would like to tell us some things about them?" **Seller:** "Thank you, but I'll politely decline the opportunity. Competitor Name has a good solution..."

R - Risks (Discovery, Monitoring, Mitigation)

Risks are specific threats identified in the deal that must be monitored or overcome.

Purpose Category	Specific Question/Focus	Variations /Rephrasing	Example Q&A/ Dialogue Scenario
Risk Discovery (General)	"What things should we look out for?"	Where are the potential sticking points or landmines in this process?	(General question used to elicit historical issues)
Risk Discovery (Technical/Legal)	Have we confirmed our privacy policy meets the levels of privacy illustrated in their Decision Criteria?	Are there any technical compliance requirements (like stringent GDPR or security standards) we must meet? (Implied)	(Example of a check to be added to an industry-specific checklist)
Risk Mitigation (Go-Live Plan)	[Statement of Risk in Go-Live Plan]: Risk around missing a deadline meaning they will miss the targeted Go-Live date or if they don't sign the contract by a specific time, a discount may be lifted.	(The Go-Live Plan surfaces risks to the customer to share accountability and drive urgency)	.

General Questions (Qualification & Closing)

These essential questions help manage the overall process and gain commitment.

Purpose Category	Specific Question/Focus	Variations /Rephrasing	Example Q&A/ Dialogue Scenario
Next Steps (Jedi Mind Trick)	"It seems like you might have some next steps in mind?"	What is your internal thinking on how we proceed from here? (Implied)	(Used to bypass the typical customer response of needing to "debrief internally")

Purpose Category	Specific Question/Focus	Variations /Rephrasing	Example Q&A/ Dialogue Scenario
Next Steps (Traditional)	"Thank you for the super insight you have given me today. If it is OK with you, then I think a good next step would be to show you how we can connect our solution to solving some of the goals and challenges you have raised today."	Can we agree that the appropriate next step is a demonstration of how we solve the quantified pain?	(A robust closing statement/question setting clear expectations for the next meeting)
Final Qualification (Doubt)	"Are there any concerns you have seen from our conversation or the sessions today that make you feel like I wouldn't be able to fulfill the role here...?"	Do you have any outstanding reservations about moving forward with us? (Implied)	(A high-stakes closing question to uncover final objections/doubts)
Qualification (Access)	In this scenario, be sure to request an introduction by stating that you have heard that other people sound like they may be stakeholders and that you think it is crucial you are introduced to them.	Based on what we've discussed, who else internally needs to be involved, and can you facilitate an introduction?	(Used to expand stakeholder mapping and gain access to influential players)

MEDDICC is fundamentally a **Qualification Methodology**, designed to ensure efficient resource allocation and forecast accuracy. While the questions listed serve multiple purposes—from deep discovery to closing commitments—their overarching function is **Qualification.**

Would you like to explore how to integrate these questions into a specific sales methodology, such as SPIN Selling or Command of the Message, which MEDDICC is designed to complement?

BANT

Sales Qualification Framework: Comprehensive Question Bank

BANT is a fundamental qualification methodology developed by IBM. It is widely used to obtain an early steer on an opportunity. However, modern sales environments—especially complex, enterprise sales where Oliv AI operates—require depth and consistency that manual BANT checklists often miss.

Oliv AI's Value Proposition for BANT Users:

- **Deal Intelligence:** BANT only addresses early qualification, but continuous qualification is necessary throughout the deal lifecycle. Oliv AI ensures accurate deal data collection and visibility (Deal Intelligence).

- **Coaching:** Sales reps often forget methodologies. Oliv AI monitors calls to ensure reps adhere to the BANT format and scorecards (Coaching), identifying hesitation or non-adherence.

- **CRM Automation:** Reps face pressure to update CRM fields. Oliv automatically updates CRM fields related to qualification, ensuring consistent and proper data capture across the organization.

The questionnaire below integrates advanced discovery techniques (drawing from methodologies like SPIN and SPICED, which Oliv is trained on) into the foundational BANT structure.

1. B - Budget: Establishing Financial Commitment

The Budget step confirms whether the customer has the financial capacity available for the solution. Discussions around cost should be framed by the expected Return on Investment (ROI) and the quantifiable cost of the unresolved problem.

Key Question Threads	Examples of Discovery Questions	Oliv AI Navigation & Guidance (How to Handle Scenarios)
Quantifying Pain/ ROI	How much is this current problem costing your organization annually? If we achieve the desired outcomes, what is the anticipated monetary value that would deliver? When ACME INC implemented our solution, they saw ROI increase by [X%]. If you saw similar results, what would that mean for your budget alignment?	**Guidance:** The key is moving the focus from price to value. Use Metrics (M1's) and Proof Points from similar customers to anchor the value proposition early.
Budget Availability	Do you have a budget set aside for this project? If so, would you mind sharing that with me in round numbers?	**Guidance:** If the prospect is uncomfortable, use a softening statement to nurture them: "That's not unusual. How do you plan to make this investment?". If they provide a range, respond by proposing the opposite end of the range to test commitment.
Testing Commitment	What happens if the investment required is higher than you planned for? How will this project be funded? Is this coming from CapEx or OpEx? If we can't go first class, are there some problems we can trim? Which ones?	**Scenario:** The prospect says the budget is too low. Navigation: Use the "That could be a problem" Reverse. Immediately ask what they plan to do if the investment needs to be higher, or ask if they are truly committed to solving the problems. Focus on selling a smaller piece of the action (e.g., a study or pilot project—a Monkey's Paw) to gain initial commitment.
Oliv AI Insight	Oliv AI automatically captures and analyzes commitment questions and links quantified value to CRM fields so reps qualify ROI consistently.	

2. A - Authority: Mapping the Decision Process

The Authority step determines who has the power to buy and ensures you engage all necessary stakeholders. BANT is often insufficient here for enterprise deals, which require mapping the full Decision Process.

Key Question Threads	Examples of Discovery Questions	Oliv AI Navigation & Guidance (How to Handle Scenarios)
Decision Process	Walk me through the decision-making process for a purchase like this one. What specific steps does the process involve? Are there any committees, formal boards, or third parties that need to approve this solution?	**Guidance:** Obtain answers for the "What, When, How, and Who" qualifiers. If the customer is unable to offer useful information about the Decision Process, this should be a major red flag.
Identifying Stakeholders	Who is involved in the decision-making process, and what role does each person play (e.g., Decider, Influencer, Gatekeeper)? Who has the final buying authority or veto power? Whom else do I need to speak to regarding this opportunity?	**Scenario:** The prospect claims sole authority ("I can make decisions myself"). Navigation: Gently reverse this assumption: "You mean you don't get help from a president, a committee, or a spouse?". This encourages the prospect to reveal other stakeholders involved in the process.
Gaining Access/ Commitment	If the decision were up to you alone, based on what you've seen, would you buy the solution? If you were willing to sponsor this project, I think we could find more areas of value. Would you be willing to sponsor the project?	**Guidance:** Elite sellers use the concept of a Champion (internal advocate with power/influence). Ensure you arm your Champion with the necessary information (Metrics and Implicated Pain) to sell internally for you.
Oliv AI Insight	Oliv AI's Deal Driver leverages intelligence to track engagement across multiple stakeholders identified in the CRM, helping managers coach reps on accessing and aligning value with the Economic Buyer.	

3. N - Need: Developing Urgency Through Pain and Impact

The Need step identifies if the customer has sufficient Pain to buy. This is the core of sophisticated qualification frameworks, which seek to develop Implied Needs (problems) into Explicit Needs (a clear, strong desire for a solution) by focusing on Impact.

Key Question Threads	Examples of Discovery Questions	Oliv AI Navigation & Guidance (How to Handle Scenarios)
Uncovering Pain (Implied Needs)	What challenges brought you our way today? What is the biggest difficulty or dissatisfaction you are experiencing with your current process? How long has this been a problem, and what have you tried to do about it?	**Guidance:** Approach this consultatively, like a doctor diagnosing a patient. Use Problem Questions to uncover Implied Needs. Remember: The problem the prospect brings you is often only the symptom, not the real underlying issue.
Developing Impact (Explicit Needs	**Implication Questions:** What effect does this reject rate have on customer satisfaction or future profitability? What related difficulties might this problem lead to? How much extra revenue a month would freeing up your team's time deliver?	**Guidance:** Use Implication Questions to increase the seriousness or urgency of the problem in the customer's mind. Focus on consequences, effects, and linkages to other business areas. This builds the seriousness until the cost of the problem outweighs the cost of your solution.
Confirming Value (Need-Payoff)	**Need-payoff Questions:** If we could improve the quality of this operation, how would that help you? How would that help you save time or reduce costs? What do you see as the value or usefulness of this solution?	**Scenario:** The prospect agrees they have a problem. Navigation: Do NOT jump straight to pitching or demoing the solution. First, use Implication Questions to build pain, then use Need-payoff Questions to get the customer to tell you the benefits they see in your solution.
Oliv AI Insight	Oliv AI analyzes call transcripts, identifying if reps are effectively pivoting from Situation to Problem to Implication to Need-Payoff questions (SPIN Model) and coaches them on maximizing the development of Explicit Needs.	

4. T - Timing: Ascertaining Urgency and Critical Events

The Timing step qualifies when the customer plans to purchase. This must be tied to urgency, often rooted in a Critical Event (CE).

Key Question Threads	Examples of Discovery Questions	Oliv AI Navigation & Guidance (How to Handle Scenarios)
Timeline Definition	When do you see yourself moving forward with this project? When do you need this solution implemented and fully operational? What are the intermediate deadlines we need to meet?	**Guidance:** Timing should align with the customer's buying process. Ensure the deadlines are set and acknowledged by the relevant stakeholders.
Testing Urgency (Critical Event)	Why is that date important to you? What happens if you miss that date/deadline? How long can you afford to let this problem continue before it significantly impacts operations?	**Scenario:** The prospect gives a soft, undefined timeline. Navigation: Challenge the timing by linking delay to value loss. Use questions that probe for a Critical Event. If your solution can help mitigate a risk or meet a mandate, this increases urgency.
Implementation Process	Have you worked through implementation stages with a solution of similar complexity or cost before? What things should we look out for that could slow down the timeline?	**Guidance:** Discussing the Paper Process (the steps from decision to signed contract) and implementation timing early builds trust and sets expectations.
Oliv AI Insight	Oliv AI can leverage deal data to predict forecast accuracy based on qualification adherence and timeline definition, flagging deals where timing is vague or risk is high (e.g., if a rep fails to uncover a Critical Event).	

Conclusion: Ensuring Scalable Success with Oliv AI

BANT is effective for identifying qualified opportunities early in the sales cycle. However, to scale successful qualification, you need technology that ensures adherence, captures vital data, and provides timely coaching.

Oliv AI helps sales organizations master the BANT methodology (or any chosen methodology) by turning it from a static checklist into a dynamic, supported process:

- **Continuous Adherence:** Oliv uses AI to monitor sales conversations and scorecards (like a BANT scorecard), guaranteeing reps consistently follow the framework.

- **Actionable Coaching:** Managers receive data on which BANT elements reps are missing or mishandling, enabling targeted coaching.

- **Eliminating Admin:** Oliv automates the tedious work of updating BANT fields in the CRM, freeing up reps to focus on valuable selling conversations.

If you are serious about moving beyond basic qualification and ensuring your methodology sticks, Oliv AI makes your investment in training—whether BANT, SPICED, or MEDDIC—profitable and scalable.

This downloadable content is presented from the perspective of Oliv AI, synthesizing sales intelligence and methodology best practices to enhance the execution of the BANT qualification framework.

Sandler

Sales Methodology Comprehensive Question Bank

The Sandler Selling System is built upon a methodical, control-oriented, and psychological approach to qualification, rooted in Transactional Analysis (T-A). Questions are the core tool for successful execution, moving the focus from the seller's product to the prospect's emotional pain and subsequent commitment.

Here is a super detailed and exhaustive question bank organized by the components of the Sandler Submarine and associated techniques, categorized by purpose, and ready for download.

I. Rapport Building & Dummy-Up (Bonding, Trust, Discovery)

The goal is to make the prospect feel comfortable and more "OK" than the salesperson, allowing the prospect to talk 70% of the time.

Purpose Category	Specific Question/Focus	Variations /Rephrasing	Example Q&A/ Dialogue Scenario
Relationship Building	(Implied question structure based on the Three-Foot Rule)	"What do you do for a living?"	(Used when approaching a stranger/ suspect to open a conversation)
Trust/Bonding	(Mirroring the prospect's pace/style)	(Implied: "How can I speak the prospect's language to establish rapport?")	(Rapport is almost instantaneous when you speak the prospect's language and enter the prospect's world)
Dummy-Up Technique	"I don't understand …"	"Can you help me with that?"	**Seller:** "Sharon, I don't understand what you mean when you say you need to know more about the clauses in the agreement. Can you help me with that?" (Guards against mind reading)
Dummy-Up Technique	"Let me see if I have this straight …"	"Did you mean …?"	**Seller:** "Let me see if I have this straight: you were hoping for a shorter delivery time?" (Used to clarify vague language)
Dummy-Up Technique (Reinforcement)	"I forgot …"	"We talked about whether or not you had a budget set aside for this—didn't we?"	**Seller:** "I've forgotten, Ron, did you say delivery was important to you?" (Reinforces a key point in the prospect's favor)

II. Up-Front Contract (UFC) (Qualification, Process Control)

The UFC establishes clear ground rules for the meeting, setting mutual expectations regarding objective, time, roles, and conclusion.

Purpose Category	Specific Question/Focus	Variations /Rephrasing	Example Q&A/ Dialogue Scenario
Setting the Agenda/Objective	"Bill, what are some of the things you'd like to accomplish today?"	"What motivated you to invite me in?"	**Seller:** "Linda, when we were on the telephone, I asked you to write down five of the major problems you're having with [blank]. Can you share some of them with me?"
Consent and Time	"How much time have you set aside for this meeting?"	"Is that satisfactory?" (Regarding setting the ground rules)	**Seller:** "Bill, how much time have you set aside for this meeting? Your time is valuable, and so is mine, and I want to make sure not a minute gets wasted."
Managing Rejection (Closing)	"Are you OK telling me no?"	"If you feel like you have to think it over, I'd rather you say 'No.' Are you OK telling me that, Liz?"	**Seller:** "So that we don't waste each other's time, are you OK telling me no?"
Managing Acceptance (Closing)	"What happens then?"	"If my answers fit what you're looking for, what happens then?"	**Seller:** "Let's suppose my answers fit what you're looking for. What happens then?" **Prospect:** "Then we can decide to move forward."
Internal Fear/ Defusing	"I'm worried you'll like the presentation, but I'll struggle to ask about budget. To avoid that, are you OK discussing money up front?"	(Used to proactively introduce and neutralize the salesperson's perceived weakness)	**Prospect:** (Accepts upfront discussion of money)

Purpose Category	Specific Question/Focus	Variations /Rephrasing	Example Q&A/ Dialogue Scenario
Confirming Appointment	"Before we hang up, is there any chance you might have to change this appointment?"	"Could we do that now? I run a rather tight schedule, and I'm sure you do too." (Used to fight for a firm appointment)	-
Clarifying and Validating	"Would you mind telling me what happened between us today so I can make sure we're in sync?"	"Liz, are you sure you're OK telling me no? Or if I can fill your needs, are you OK with telling me yes?"	(Ensures "No mutual mystification")

III. Pain Step (Discovery, Urgency, Qualification)

The Pain step moves the prospect from "Well" to "Critical". The goal is to obtain emotional responses, not just intellectual ones.

Purpose Category	Specific Question/Focus	Variations /Rephrasing	Example Q&A/ Dialogue Scenario
Initial Diagnosis (Implied Needs)	"Is there anything about your present situation you don't like?"	"How do you feel about that?"	
Context/Status Check	"How long has this been a problem?"	"When did you first decide you should look into [blank]?"	
Quantification/ Impact	"How much do you think that has cost you?"	"How serious would you say the problem is today?"	
Drilling Down (ISS)	"Tell me more about that." (ISS = Intellectual Smoke Screen)	"Can you be a bit more specific? Give me an example."	(Used when prospect gives a non-emotional/ intellectual answer to probe deeper)
Previous Attempts	"What have you tried to do about that?"	"And did that work?"	(Uncovers past decisions and reveals potential embarrassment/pain)

Purpose Category	Specific Question/Focus	Variations /Rephrasing	Example Q&A/ Dialogue Scenario
Vision Casting (Magic Wand)	"Sarah, if you had a magic wand that could produce the ideal solution to your problem, what would it be?"	"If you had your druthers, Sarah ..."	(Used to help prospects paint pictures of their wants and needs)
Testing Urgency/ Commitment	"Good. So, what I hear you saying is that finding a better way of helping the [blank] isn't that critical. Am I right or wrong about that?"	"If you were to pick one thing that you didn't like about that, what would it be?"	

IV. Budget Step (Qualification, Financial Alignment)

This step must be thorough because when the prospect is in real pain, they will pay whatever it takes to get rid of it.

Purpose Category	Specific Question/Focus	Variations /Rephrasing	Example Q&A/ Dialogue Scenario
Initial Budget Elicitation	"Do you have a budget set aside for this project?"	"Would you mind sharing it with me in round numbers?"	
Handling "No Budget"	"That's not unusual. How do you plan to make this investment?"	"Interesting. Tell me more about that."	
Bracketing Technique	"Should we address the 3-to-9 range, or should we go for the 9-to-20 range?"	"Would you say you're in the 3-to-6 range or the 6-to-9 range?"	(Used when the prospect won't share their number, to steer them toward a cost range)
Testing Low Budget/ Commitment	"What will you do if the investment is higher than you planned for?"	"Are you really committed to solving these problems?"	

Purpose Category	Specific Question/Focus	Variations /Rephrasing	Example Q&A/ Dialogue Scenario
Monkey's Paw Technique	(Implied question structure: What is the smaller commitment we can sell now?)	Could you sell a research project, or a study? Is there a one-day consulting project you could do?	(Used for big-ticket items to get a small piece of business first)
That Could Be a Problem Reverse	"Hmm. That could be a problem…. What are you planning to do if the investment needs to be higher?"	(Used even if the budget seems sufficient, to anchor the price high and test the value perceived)	

V. Decision Step (Qualification, Process Mapping)

This step nails down the decision process, stakeholders, and commitment to a "Yes" or "No" outcome, avoiding "Think It Over".

Purpose Category	Specific Question/Focus	Variations /Rephrasing	Example Q&A/ Dialogue Scenario
Process Mapping (What, When, How, Who, Why)	"Jim, what decision-making process do you go through when deciding on a purchase like this one?"	(What are the specific steps?)	
Timeline/Urgency (When)	"When do you see yourself moving forward with this project, Jim?"	(By when must the decision be made?)	
Mechanism (How)	"Assuming that you want to move forward, how is it going to happen? Do I get a purchase order? A check? Or how exactly does that happen?"	(Where geographically are decisions made?)	
Stakeholder Identification (Who)	"Jim, who besides you will be involved in the decision-making process?"	"Who has final buying authority?"	

Purpose Category	Specific Question/Focus	Variations /Rephrasing	Example Q&A/ Dialogue Scenario
Testing Solo Authority	"Fine, but you mean you don't get help from a president, a committee, or a spouse?"	(Used when prospect claims to be the sole decision maker)	
Intermediate Decision Testing	"After I give you my presentation, would you be nice enough to tell me if you would buy my product [or service] if the decision were up to you?"	"Mr. Smith, based on what you've seen, would you buy my product [or service] if it were up to you?"	(Used when selling to non-final decision makers/committees)
Rehearsal Technique	"What questions do you think the committee will ask?"	(Helps prospect prepare their internal selling presentation)	

VI. Fulfillment Step (Closing/Commitment)

This is the presentation stage, where the solution is presented only against the validated pain points.

Purpose Category	Specific Question/Focus	Variations /Rephrasing	Example Q&A/ Dialogue Scenario
Thermometer Technique	"John, on a 0-to-10 scale, 0 meaning you have no interest in my service and 10 meaning you have already decided to buy my service, where are you?"	(Measures prospect's emotional readiness to buy)	
Addressing Low Score	"John, based on what you've said, I'm not sure why you rated it a 4. Can you clarify?"	(Used if the score is unexpectedly low, seeking deeper pain/objections)	
Raising the Score	"John, what do you need to see to get to 10?"	(Guides the presentation to only what's needed for commitment)	

Purpose Category	Specific Question/Focus	Variations /Rephrasing	Example Q&A/ Dialogue Scenario
Final Closing Question	"What would you like me to do now?"	(Used when the prospect hits 10, putting the pressure on them to close)	

VII. Post-Sell Step (Objection Handling, Commitment Cementing)

This step secures the deal against Buyer's Remorse by proactively raising compromises or potential roadblocks after the verbal commitment is secured.

Purpose Category	Specific Question/Focus	Variations /Rephrasing	Example Q&A/ Dialogue Scenario
Defusing Buyer's Remorse	"What could come up that would cause you to call me and tell me to put the contract on hold?"	"And you're absolutely sure a six-week implementation schedule rather than a four-week schedule, as you had hoped, isn't going to be a problem?"	(Forces the prospect to confront potential doubts while the seller is present)
Final Commitment Check	"If there are any doubts about moving forward, Steve, let's discuss them now. [Pause] If not, you're telling me you're moving forward, and I won't receive a message from you tomorrow telling me you've changed my mind. Is that fair?"	(Locks up the sale, preventing deal derailment)	
Key Concern Check (Rule 33)	"Is there another decision maker, or perhaps a committee, who could veto the decision?"	"Could the intended purchase be put on hold for any reason – including, say, an obligation to "run the decision past" a higher-up you have not met?"	(Prevents internal roadblocks from derailing a closed deal)

VIII. Advanced Conversational Techniques (Used across all Stages)

These techniques, especially Reversing and Negative Reverse Selling (NRS), are integral to the Sandler methodology for controlling the conversation and uncovering truth.

Purpose Category	Specific Question/Focus	Variations /Rephrasing	Example Q&A/ Dialogue Scenario
General Reversing	"Why do you ask?"	"Can I ask why that's important to you?"	**Prospect:** "Will this software package work with Windows?" **Seller:** "That's an interesting question. Why do you ask?"
Reversing Statements	"Which means ... ?"	"And ...?"	**Prospect:** "The price is too high." **Seller:** "Which means ... ?" (Converts a stall into a discoverable question)
Stroke-Repeat-Reverse	"Thanks, Fred. I appreciate (stroke) the fact that you're telling me I'm close (repeat), but let me ask you a question (the reverse)."	"Could the intended purchase be put on hold for any reason – including, say, an obligation to "run the decision past" a higher-up you have not met?"	(Used when prospects use "play-it-safe" words like "close" or "top consideration")
Objection Preemption (Defusing)	"Which of these, if any, Art, is a concern to you?"	(A multiple-choice question designed to smoke out hidden objections early)	
NRS - Handling Hostility	"Ms. Brown, why are you putting all this pressure on me?"	"I feel pressure right now, but I'm not sure why."	(Shifts pressure back to the prospect or invites them to share their agenda)
Last Resort / Consultant Mode	"Can I stop being a salesperson for a minute and be a consultant?"	"Can I take off my technical hat for a moment and be a consultant?"	(Used when stuck at the end of the line to give hard-hitting, objective advice)

Purpose Category	Specific Question/Focus	Variations /Rephrasing	Example Q&A/ Dialogue Scenario
Challenging Negative Prospects (NRS)	"Mr. Jones, based on what you have told me so far, my feeling is that you have absolutely no interest in what I am selling. So, before I leave, can I ask you one last question: Is it over?"	(The ultimate reverse to initiate motion in a negative prospect)	
Let's Pretend (Qualification/ Commitment)	"Let's pretend for a moment that when I come back with our preliminary plan, you are completely comfortable with my approach, the estimated costs are within your budget, and the completion dates meet your deadlines ... what would happen at that point?"	(Avoids doing unpaid consulting by clarifying future commitments in the present)	