

# These 3 Words Can Sharpen Your Questioning Skills and Lead to Better.

## SMART STRATEGIES IN REMODELING & RENOVATION SALES

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To successfully sell a homeowner on a home improvement project requires many skills. Near the top of the list is your ability to ask well thought out questions. In my experience, many salespeople have an inflated perception of their level of questioning skills and this leads to a lack of desire to work at increasing this skill. It requires practice in order to get better and we could all use a little help in this area. That's why, when talking to prospects and customers, I keep the acronym CIA (consequences, impact, or affect) in mind. This keeps me focused on the consequences of their problems and helps them understand the issues on a deeper level, which could make it more likely for them to be in a positive mental state to solve that issue.

All too often, when salespeople hear about an issue, or problem from a homeowner they immediately start "selling" their solution, even though the prospective customer may not have a full appreciation of the problem. Here's what I mean: A salesperson or contractor is in the home of a prospective customer, hoping to persuade them to buy replacement windows from their company. During the walk through, they enter the infant child's bedroom and the salesperson can immediately feel this room is warmer than the others, and says "Ma'am, it feels awful warm in this room". She replies, "Yep, it gets that way often, especially this time of year." Then the salesperson starts talking about all the ways their products and services will keep that from happening. Fight the urge to sell too soon – anytime a prospective customer shares a problem or issue with you, immediately think to yourself "I wonder what the consequences, impacts or affects are of this situation?" - and then ask the question.

So, same scenario, salesperson walks into the child's bedroom, feels the warmth, makes the statement that the rooms feels warm and hears the customer's response that it often gets that way, especially this time of year.

Thinking CIA, the salesperson asks, "How does this affect your use of the space?" The homeowner replies "Well now that you mention it, I can't put my daughter down for her naps during the day in this room. She naps in the living room which makes it difficult for me to get anything done during that time." Now when it comes time to sell my window, the problem is not just a warm room, but an inability to have a good space for the child to nap, which is causing a host of other issues. I used replacement windows in this example, but it does not matter what type of product or service you're discussing - identify an issue, and drill down using CIA questions.

These questions dig a lot deeper into the situation than simply "selling" when the first hint of a problem is exposed. Asking about consequences, impacts or affects of a problem presents two helpful things to me as a salesperson: It underscores the magnitude of the problem to prospects, thereby creating a sense of urgency, and it brings emotion into their buying decision. These are two powerful things for a contractor or in-home salesperson to get on the table and out in the open.

Humans have a natural desire to be understood, and when we, as salespeople, let people know beyond a shadow of a doubt that we seek to understand them, it draws people nearer to you. It builds trust and deepens connections that make the rest of the selling process easier. Being inquisitive, listening more than talking, and focusing on CIA questions will help you immensely. You'll not only be able to demonstrate how your product or service helps the buyer relieve a pain point, or make life easier, you'll become a better salesperson.



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