
SELLING AMONG WOLVES

GOD'S WORD: *“Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.” (Matthew 7:7)*



Premise: Questions are the key mechanism for developing rapport, building trust and understanding your prospect’s needs. According to one survey, sales reps asking five or more questions closed 72% more business than sales reps asking only two questions.

It behooves us therefore, to become skilled at the art of asking questions. We need questions to draw information out, questions to contain or redirect the prospect, questions that instruct or summarize in their asking.

Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things.

GOD'S ORDINANCES (teachings, practices, rules)

Discovery questions: *“Call to me, and I will answer you, and will show you great things, and difficult, which you don't know.”* (Jeremiah 33:3) God encourages us to ask of Him, to discover the great things about Him. To accomplish this, we're not going to say, “Good morning God, wasn't that a great football game?” George Washington Carver, the great 20th Century agrarian of black ancestry once asked God to show him the mysteries of the universe.

God apparently responded that He would show him the secrets of the peanut instead. What Carver learned from God revolutionized agriculture in the South and gave us many new materials including plastics. The main characteristic of discovery questions is that they can't be answered with a one-word answer. They require explanation. They get the prospect to open up and develop rapport with you. What are some good examples of discovery questions you can ask a prospect?

Focus questions: *“Then Paul said to him, ‘God will strike you, you whitewashed wall! Do you sit to judge me according to the law, and command me to be struck contrary to the law?’”* (Acts 23:3) The high priest Ananias had just commanded Paul to be struck on the mouth during an interrogation. Paul used this focus question to reveal a weakness in their approach. They were in violation of the law they were sworn to uphold and Paul revealed their folly with a simple focus question. Focus questions direct the conversation where the seller wants it to go requiring a simple answer to reveal weakness. Describe a situation where you could use a focus question to direct attention to a weakness your prospect is dealing with.

Instructive questions: *“When they had tied him up with thongs, Paul asked the centurion who stood by, ‘Is it lawful for you to scourge a man who is a Roman, and not found guilty?’”* (Acts 22:25) Paul is a prisoner being questioned under duress and is about to be scourged. He needs to sell someone on the idea of treating him properly. Paul uses a question worded in such a way as to be instructive. He is informing his captors that he is both a Roman citizen and uncondemned.

The question not only informs but it arouses concern regarding their current plan to scourge him. Instructive questions can be used to expose weaknesses in a competitive product, service or idea. (e.g. *“Have you seen the Buyers Lab report on the risks associated with overheating the bearings?”*) What question can you ask that is both instructive and provocative?

Containment questions: *“The commanding officer came and asked him, ‘Tell me, are you a Roman?’ He said, ‘Yes’”.* (Acts 22:27) Now the officer in charge of Paul is concerned and he asks Paul a direct question that

“And you shall instruct them in laws (GOD'S WORD) and ORDINANCES and show them THE WAY to live, and THE WORK they must do.”

contains Paul or limits him to a clear, unambiguous answer. The nature of containment questions is that they typically can only be answered with a “yes” or a “no” or a one-word answer. Their purpose is to gain control of the conversation by limiting the buyer's answers. Can anyone share an example?

Summary questions: A summary question summarizes your understanding of what has been said and asks for confirmation. The purpose is both to ensure your own understanding of the facts and to clarify that understanding with the buyer. It shows that you've been listening and the buyer has been heard. For example, *“So Bob, you're saying that corrosion has been a problem with your older equipment and that has caused breakdowns which have affected productivity. Am I correct?”* Someone share a relevant example.

(Exodus 18:20)

THE WAY (the path or course of action) & **THE WORK** (assignment, task, mission)

1. Write out examples of the various kinds of questions above and make them part of your approach.

Prayer: *“Lord, give me an inquiring mind and a caring heart for those I strive to serve. Open up your Word to me that I may find good examples by which to model my professional life. In Jesus name, Amen.”*