



Client Qualification

Selling with Confidence

Hire ❖ Develop ❖ Retain

Overview

What is qualification?
 Benefits of qualification
 Risks of not qualifying
 When it should occur
 What to look for
 How to gain that knowledge
 Ensuring qualification
 Key Takeaways

What is Qualification

According to Insightly, qualification is the process a company or salesperson goes through to determine the likelihood of a prospect becoming a paying customer. Ultimately, client qualification is ensuring that the buyer is “the right fit” for the product/service/offering. Clients need to not only have the ability but the desire to do business. Qualification addresses both of those items.

Benefits of Qualification

There are many benefits of qualifying prospects and clients, for the company, the sales person, and the client. Here are a few:

- Save time
 - By only sit with invested prospects, you’ll avoid the common “tire kicking” syndrome
- Decrease time to close
 - Much of qualification is fact finding up front
 - By completing this and knowing what the decision-making process will be, you will be able to customize your approach for a faster close
- Create space in meeting to move into high impact vs fact finding
 - Upfront fact finding and qualification will allow you to dive deeper into high impact discovery questions, recommendations and a natural closing during your scheduled appointment time
- Increase hold rates
 - Having meetings hold to their scheduled time is critical for a busy sales rep
 - Qualification can increase the hold rate of scheduled appointments, virtually or in-person
- More defined meeting prep
 - When you know the stakeholders, the process and the challenges up front, preparing for a meeting is streamlined

Risks of Not Qualifying

While tempting, not qualifying your clients or prospects can often lead you to what we like to call Coffee Dates. These are meetings where you propose a relaxed, non-businesslike meetup in order to secure the meeting, all the while your intent is to pitch. While this may be an easy way in, it is often not resulting in a productive appointment.

If you’re tempted to not qualify your prospect consider the following:

- How many serious buyers have you had a coffee date with?
- What objections have you been met with from non-qualified appointments?
 - I didn’t know this was about buying something
 - I thought this was free information
 - This sounds great but I don’t have any money
 - I’d have to run this by XYZ people
 - I’m nowhere close to starting something like this
 - I don’t really think my business needs this...



When to Qualify

Qualification can be broken down into two types: Pre-Contact Qualification and Live Qualification.

Pre-Contact Qualification

Pre-Contact Qualification occurs before your first email, call, DM or interaction. This is your opportunity to hone in on a more appropriate group of clients or prospects for your products/services. During pre-qualification, you'll want to consider the following:

- Company size
- Territory / Location
- Industry / Vertical
- Partnerships / Technologies / Vendors

If a prospect doesn't fit every box perfectly, that is ok and it doesn't mean you should exclude them. Simply understand where a potential risk lies.

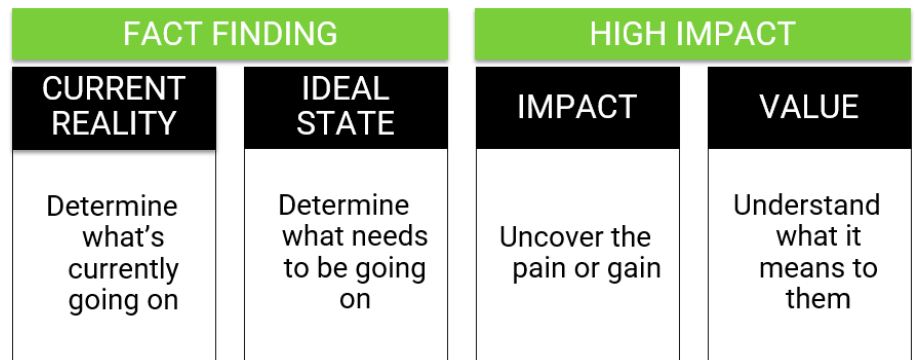
Live Qualification

Live qualification is often completed while setting the appointment. This allows for more fact-finding conversation specific to the individual or business and helps you determine their ability and desire to do business with you. Unlike pre-contact qualification, the information you discover here will help you determine if you should or shouldn't hold a meeting. If a prospect does not have both the ability and desire to do business with you, it may not serve you to continue with the meeting.

Determining Qualification

The discovery process must be just that – a systemized, easily repeated process that moves a client from simply identifying needs to creating urgency to solve problems or reach goals. And it will be critical to understanding the ability and desire of your prospect to do business with you. By systematically combing fact finding and high impact questions, the roadmap for the salesperson and the client becomes clear.

The process can be complex or simple, short or long, and can be done once or multiple times to uncover multiple needs. But the four pillars of discovery are the following:



The LAD Method

Using the discovery cadence outlined above, you'll need to learn the following "Big Ticket" Qualification items before concluding your conversation:

- Logistics
 - Necessary Facts to Build the Recommendation
- Ability
 - Ability to Implement the Recommendation
- Desire
 - Reason for and Value of Recommendation



The LAD method helps you to check the top qualification boxes in each category.

Logistics

- Business Basics
 - Products and services
 - Territory, location, service area
 - Industry information
 - Company size
 - Recent changes to business
- Solutions
 - Previous efforts
 - Current efforts
 - Success of those efforts
- Other Players
 - Products/systems/technologies in place
 - Partners/vendors in place
 - Pitch competition

Ability

- Ability to Invest
 - Current investments
 - Budgeted investments
 - Expense approval limits
 - Amount they are willing to invest to reach goals or solve problems
- Ability to Sign Off
 - Who needs to be in the meeting
 - What the decision-making process looks like
 - Who makes the final decision
- Ability to Move Forward
 - How quickly they need to reach the goal
 - Any contracts/deadlines in place

Desire

- Gap to Close
 - Top challenges that must be resolved
 - Goals or initiatives that require support
- Value (or Cost) to Client
 - Pain or Gain
 - Cost of taking no action

Thoughts on Budget

Asking for a budget or considered investment can be uncomfortable at times, but that doesn't mean that we can shy away from that question. Be confident, calm and honest when setting expectations regarding potentials costs and investments.

You may run into scenarios where your prospects truly are not "in the know" when it comes to the required investment to solve all their issues and make their dreams come true. In these scenarios, keeping the conversation open is the best approach. Try something like this: *"I'm going to show you EXACTLY what it takes to solve X problem/reach Y goal. Now that may or may not be in your budget. While I'm putting a solution together, what is a comfortable investment you'd like me to keep in mind? Could this budget be stretched in order to accomplish everything on your wish list?"* With phrasing like that, you'll keep the door open but have an understanding of where their mind is at and what you'll need to consider in your meeting preparation.



Confirming Qualification

If you're feeling like you've qualified the client or prospect, ask yourself these questions to confirm:

- What expectations have I set for the meeting?
 - Does my prospect understand that we are meeting to discuss a solution that is intended to be sold/implemented?
 - Did I position this as a “helpful hints” or educational meeting?
- Do I have enough information to create a recommendations?
 - If you cannot prepare a pitch, it's not qualified.
 - Do you fully understand their need/strengths/focuses/opportunities?
 - Do we have a solution for their concerns?
- Are all necessary DMs going to be present?
 - Do you know all parties involved?
 - What does their decision-making process look like?
 - Do all DMs have the same expectation of the meeting?
 - How much info is going to have to be passed to others?
- Do they have the means to move forward with a solution?
 - Is money an issue?
 - Do they need approvals?
 - Are they under any contracts?
 - Are they trying to accomplish a different goal before putting a solution in place?

When Qualification is Incomplete

There may be times when you realize your prospect is not quite as qualified as you once thought. Before blazing forward with appointment prep, you may consider confirming the appointment with a call and asking final qualifying questions. If enough information is not obtained, you may need to reschedule or restructure the appointment. If enough information is obtained to move forward, determine what you know, what you don't and what you'll still have to find out, and add the qualification questions into your discovery.

Key Takeaways

More than skill, qualification takes discipline. Create healthy sales habits and qualify each prospect/client and you'll find yourself reaping the benefits.

Practice Makes Permanent

- Making complete qualification a habit will improve your hold rate, shorten the sales process and increase sales
- Practice your process and complete each time

Ask The Hard Questions

- While it may feel more comfortable in the moment to avoid the tough topics, getting things like budget in the open up front will allow for a streamlined process

Review And Revisit

- While it may feel more comfortable in the moment to avoid the tough topics, getting things like budget in the open up front will allow for a streamlined process

Don't Forget About Desire

- If the buying ability is there, but the desire to solve/improve is not, you'll fight an uphill battle
- Ensure they're just as invested as you are



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