

5 Magic Questions to Ask at a First Consultation

Outstanding professionals don't sell, they coach buyers. By helping clients make the best decisions for themselves, we gain trust and add genuine value.

The professional asks them as soon as possible on the first consultation.

- 1. How can I help you? (or What shall we talk about?)**
Contrast this approach with self-centred laptop presentations, history of the company, case studies, CVs of all the key consultants, etc.
- 2. What works well already? (or What success have you had in dealing with this problem?)**
The rush to identify problems and solutions can show scant respect for the progress a client has already made. By taking our time with this step, we build real rapport and trust (as opposed to superficial body-language stuff) and therefore we are more likely to hear the real problems later. If writing a proposal, I suggest you add a section for this.
- 3. If there was one thing you could change, what would it be?**
Take your time and allow them to think before answering. If the client comes up with a list, coach them gently to get to the root problem. Too often, we get so excited by the potential extent of the work, we gloss over this. This is where we help them clarify where the real root of the pain lies. If they do the analysis, there is a much greater probability that they will accept the eventual solution which they have played a part in developing.
- 4. If we solved this, what difference would that make?**
This is where they come up with lots of benefits, and you write them all down - in their language. Feel free to repeat the question in several ways. Ask for the benefit of the benefit. Keep going until they cannot think of anything more. These are the reasons they will buy. You might also choose to ask them what would happen if the problem was not solved. This is useful if you suspect you might have to help them overcome later indecision - the greatest scourge of professional life!
- 5. If I could help you with that, would you be interested?**
Either they are or they aren't. There is little point in spending time on a solution where there is no genuine interest.

These questions are but a starting point. However, they have built literally thousands of Euros worth of business for my clients.

For more information about our services, visit our website www.davisbusinessconsultants.com or email us at: enquiries@davisbusinessconsultants.com or call: 086 - 810 8548.

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