

3 Step Directional Selling

These three, simple steps can be applied to all styles of selling, no matter what sector you are in. Furthermore, as your career progresses and your sales training extends into more detailed skill sets, these same three steps will act as the bedrock of the 'consultative' selling process.

Let's look at the three steps in brief:

Step 1 : Qualify Questions, questions and more questions. What does your prospect do and what would make that process better? You are prospecting for 'needs' but remember to cover ground of where your solution (your product) lies (questions that will help match your service to the client's needs towards the end of the sale).

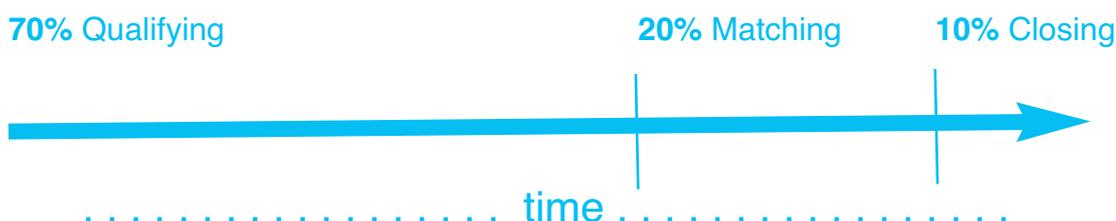
Step 2 : Matching Do any of these 'needs' match your product or service solution? Only now is the time to reveal and explain how they meet these 'need' requirements.

Step 3 : Closing With your 'matches' identified, the close should be auto-intuitive. Asking for the business should make sense to both parties.



During the career of a sales professional, we pick up little suitcases of information and experiential memories, such as closing techniques from a seminar, cold-calling skills from a book, or perhaps memories of winning a big order and what seemed to work with that particular close. And, of course, recalling that angry client who was simply having a bad day yet successfully planted the seed of doubt that occasionally awakes within you.

Whilst all this is perfectly natural, top performing sales executives never lose sight of the fundamentals – the bedrock three steps of the *Directional Selling* path. Note the importance that is placed in the time spent **Qualifying**. Do this right and **Matching** will be easy and **Closing** almost automatic.



Every meeting or call will differ. In some cases, it will be easy to stick to your *Directional Selling* path. On other occasions, the client will cause you to jump around a bit. When this happens, maintain a level head and keep track of where you are on the three-step path, irrespective of random questions that a buyer may chuck your way. See our *Direction Selling* course “*Always Face The Close*” for more details on this.



Now let's look at the three steps in greater detail.

Qualifying

Qualifying is by far the most important of the three steps, which is why we've weighted it with approximately 70% of the selling path.

Correct qualifying questions will:

- identify opportunities;
- document direct matches of 'needs' with your product or service;
- ensure that you do not mis-sell and
- take the pressure out of selling, making the whole process more natural.

Whilst asking qualifying questions, take notes. Show the prospect that you are writing their answers down and therefore taking them seriously. Furthermore, use these notes to sum up what the prospect has told you, making sure they concur and that nothing has been missed.

Key skills here are **Asking Probing Questions** and **Listening**.

Matching

Now you can talk about what you do and how your company can meet their requirements. Use your notes throughout this process and underline the most striking matches with the requirements as you go. Let the prospect understand the logic in what you are starting to propose. Involve them in the match-making process by using language such as “*you said that you were looking for something to solve this problem*” and “*do you agree that this product looks suitable for that?*”

This language will help you test-close, and using your notes to reinforce this (underlining items) will further move the two of you towards the close. With a more complex offering, it might be useful to number or prioritise matches.

Closing

With the first two steps completed correctly, this step should be the quickest and easiest part of the process. The conclusion should be intuitive, logical and pleasurable for both parties.

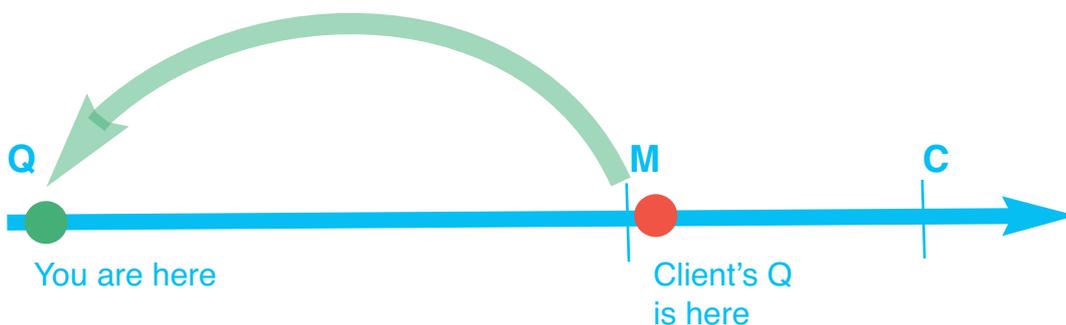
You should now know which product is right for the client and, hopefully, they will have already agreed during your test-close questions. This being the case, you can roll this summary into a simple *“So, based on what we’ve just discussed, do you agree that this is the right product for you?”*

Another great close is the ‘alternative close’ which can be deployed after successful matching: *“So, now that we know which machine will do the job, we just need to decide on which model you prefer. Do you want the single or twin port?”*

And, of course, we have the ‘assumptive close’: *“Great, I’ll raise an order and get you locked in.”*

All of these closing skills should flow naturally and without pain if you’ve followed the three steps of *Directional Selling*. And once the client has chosen, lock them in as agreed. Stop selling and raise the order. Don’t ‘over-sell.’

Remember, no matter how chaotic the sales environment is, stick to the path. Perhaps you’ve just cold-called in a busy shop and managed to grab the owner for a minute. The reply comes: *“Okay, 10 minutes, what you got?”* You must remember where you are and where you are heading on the *Directional Selling* path.



By understanding the three-step *Directional Selling* path, you will recognise where the client’s question is and the danger of simply doing as they request. Your job is to take them back to your point on the path. Perhaps a simple, *“Sure, but let me just ask a few questions first so that I show you the right ones”* will suffice. For more skills on controlling a difficult meeting, review *“Always Face The Close”* and *“Objection Handling”* in our *Directional Selling* suite of course notes.