



Introduction

- Based on 10 years of research by Huthwaite Corporation that analyzed over 35,000 sales transactions, presented in the book Spin Selling by Neil Rackham
- Largest-ever investigation of selling success – researched selling in 27 countries
- Concluded that traditional selling methods don't work for high-value sales
- Found that top salespeople were using a probing (investigating) strategy called SPIN

Four stages of a sales call

- Opening – warming up events, including introductions and how you begin the conversation
- Investigating – asking questions is the most important of all selling skills in larger sales
- Demonstrating Capability – demonstrate to customers that you have something worthwhile to offer
- Obtaining Commitment – larger sales involve a number of intermediate steps called Advances

Four types of questions

■ **Situation questions**

- At the beginning of the call, successful salespeople ask data-gathering questions, such as:
 - “How long have you had your present equipment?”
 - “Could you tell me more about your growth plans?”
 - Don't overuse these questions

■ **Problem questions**

- Once sufficient information has been gathered from Situation Questions, then you move to a second type of questions – Problem Questions
 - “Have you had any problems with your current bank?”
 - “Are you satisfied with the service you get from your other suppliers?”
 - Salespeople often don't ask enough Problem Questions

■ **Implication questions**

- Successful salespeople also need to ask more complex Implication Questions, such as:
 - “How will this problem affect your future profitability?”
 - “What effect does this problem have on your overall customer satisfaction?”
 - Even experienced salespeople rarely ask good Implication Questions

■ **Need-payoff questions**

- Successful salespeople ask Need-Payoff Questions that get the customer to tell you the benefits that your solution could provide
 - “Would it be useful to speed up this operation by 10 percent?”
 - “If we could improve the quality of this operation, how would that help you?”
 - Huthwaite's research shows that top performing salespeople ask 10 times as many Need-Payoff Questions per call compared to average performers

■ **Possible outcomes**

- Order – customer makes a commitment to buy
- Advance – An event that moves the customer forward towards a decision
- Continuation – Discussions may continue, but no action by customer to move forward
- No sales – Customer actively refuses to make a commitment

Source: SPIN Selling, by Neil Rackham, 1988