KLOZERS · SELLING SKILLS · VERSION 2.1

Objection handling playbook.

Most objections are predictable. Ask about them early, as discovery questions, and welcome a clear no from a buyer who will never buy. Answer the objections that remain with the CARES method.

1. How to use this playbook

The objections your team heard last quarter are the ones it will hear next quarter. This playbook helps you find them early, in discovery, instead of hearing them at the end of the sale.

1. Read sections 2 and 3 once. They explain how to find objections early and why a clear no is useful.
2. Use sections 4 and 5 when an objection still arrives. Use section 6 to prepare for a meeting on a live deal.
3. Complete the worksheet in section 7 for one open deal. Update it after each meeting.
4. Practise the questions aloud with a colleague before you use them with a buyer.

2. Turn past objections into discovery questions

Take each objection your team hears most often and write the question that would have found it early. Ask that question in the first or second meeting. The answer tells you whether the deal can close before you have written a proposal.

YOU HEAR LATE	ASK IN DISCOVERY	WHAT A NO TELLS YOU
"It is too expensive."	"Has a budget been set for solving this, and who set it?"	There is no money for this, so the deal is not ready.
"Now is not the right time."	"What happens if this problem is still here in twelve months?"	The problem does not cost them enough to act this year.
"We are happy with our current supplier."	"What would have to change for you to consider a new supplier?"	Nothing would change, so they are only checking prices.
"I need to check with my manager."	"Apart from you, who else needs to agree?"	You are not yet talking to the people who decide.
"This means more work for my team."	"Who will use this every day, and can we speak to them?"	The people who will use it are not part of the decision.
"It does not do what we need."	"Which requirements must it meet, and which are only preferred?"	A requirement you cannot meet ends the deal now, not later.

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YOU HEAR LATE	ASK IN DISCOVERY	WHAT A NO TELLS YOU
“We need to think it over.”	“What would make you say no to this?”	There is a concern nobody has stated yet.

NOTE

Ask these questions in discovery, not in the demonstration. A demonstration does not sell anything. It confirms a sale that was made in a good discovery call.

3. Aim for a no

Every clear no takes you one step closer to a yes. It removes a buyer who would never have bought, and it leaves your time for the buyers who will. Richard Fenton and Andrea Waltz call this going for no.

A no that arrives late costs far more than a no that arrives early. A deal that stays as a maybe for six months uses time, forecasts and management attention that a clear no would have saved.

Aiming for a no does not mean being rude or giving up early. It means asking a direct question and accepting either answer. These questions do this well:

1. “Is it fair to say this is not a priority for you this year?”
2. “If the price is the main concern, should we stop here rather than spend more of your time?”
3. “What would make you say no to this, so I can check now whether that applies?”
4. “If we cannot meet that requirement, should we agree now not to continue?”

A buyer who disagrees with the first question has told you the problem matters. A buyer who agrees has saved you a quarter of work.

4. The CARES method

When an objection still arrives, CARES gives you a fixed order to follow. Clarify comes first because most weak responses answer the wrong question.

STEP	WHAT TO DO	WHAT IT SOUNDS LIKE
Clarify	Ask what exactly concerns them. Confirm who raised it and what part of the deal it is about.	“When you say it is too expensive, is that against your budget or against another offer?”
Acknowledge	Show that you understand their position. Thank them for stating it plainly.	“Thank you for telling me directly. That is a reasonable thing to check.”
Respond	Answer the specific concern with evidence: data, an example or a result from a comparable customer.	“A customer with a similar team measured this result. I can show you how they measured it.”

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STEP	WHAT TO DO	WHAT IT SOUNDS LIKE
Educate	Give them information that helps them explain the value to the other people involved.	“This is the figure your finance team will ask for, and this is where it comes from.”
Suggest	Propose one specific next step that suits both sides, with a date.	“Can we review the cost of the problem with your operations director on Thursday?”

5. Common objections

Each card gives the words you are likely to hear, what they usually mean, the question to ask in discovery and the answer to build if the objection still arrives.

01 PRICE

Usually from procurement or finance

YOU HEAR “It is too expensive.” “Another supplier is cheaper.”

WHAT IT USUALLY MEANS Procurement’s job is to reduce price and risk. A price objection from procurement is that job being done.

ASK IN DISCOVERY “Has a budget been set for solving this, and who set it?”

IF IT STILL ARRIVES Answer with the value of solving the problem, in a figure stated by the manager whose problem it is. A discount answers procurement and nobody else, and it tells everyone your first price was not real.

02 NO BUDGET

Usually from the person who controls the money

YOU HEAR “There is no budget this year.” “This was not in the plan.”

WHAT IT USUALLY MEANS The person whose problem it is has not yet made the case for the money.

ASK IN DISCOVERY “How is spending that was not in the plan approved here?”

IF IT STILL ARRIVES Help the manager whose problem it is write a short business case: the problem and its cost, what success is worth, why now, and the request.

03 TIMING

Usually from the manager whose problem it is

YOU HEAR “Now is not the right time.” “We have other priorities this quarter.”

WHAT IT USUALLY MEANS The problem does not yet cost them enough to act now.

ASK IN DISCOVERY “What happens if this problem is still here in twelve months?”

IF IT STILL ARRIVES Ask them to state the cost of doing nothing, in their own figures. A figure they state is their conclusion. A figure you state is your claim to defend.

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04 APPROVAL

Usually from a contact who cannot decide

YOU HEAR "I need to check with my manager." "I cannot get this approved."

WHAT IT USUALLY MEANS You are speaking to someone who can give you information, or support you, but cannot decide.

ASK IN DISCOVERY "Apart from you, who else needs to agree, and how were decisions like this made before?"

IF IT STILL ARRIVES Ask your contact to arrange a meeting with the person whose problem it is. Give them a short business case they can present when you are not there.

05 THE PRODUCT

Usually from the technical team

YOU HEAR "It does not do what we need." "It will not work with our current systems."

WHAT IT USUALLY MEANS They are checking the product against the requirement. They can stop the deal, but they cannot approve it.

ASK IN DISCOVERY "Which requirements must it meet, and which are only preferred?"

IF IT STILL ARRIVES Answer feature by feature. Show the requirement met, or state plainly that it is not. If you cannot meet a requirement that must be met, agree to stop.

06 MORE WORK

Usually from the people who will use it

YOU HEAR "This means more work for my team." "Our current process works."

WHAT IT USUALLY MEANS A purchase the people who use it reject is abandoned, whatever the managers agreed.

ASK IN DISCOVERY "Who will use this every day, and can we speak to them before we propose anything?"

IF IT STILL ARRIVES Show a clear benefit they will see in the first few weeks. Involve them in the decision early, not after the contract is signed.

07 NO DECISION

The objection nobody states

YOU HEAR "We are happy with our current supplier." "We need to think it over." The close date moves to next quarter.

WHAT IT USUALLY MEANS Either the buyer thinks the problem is manageable, or the buyer wants to change but is afraid of choosing wrong.

ASK IN DISCOVERY "What would have to change for you to consider a new supplier?" and "What would make you say no to this?"

IF IT STILL ARRIVES If they are content as they are, show the cost of doing nothing in their own figures. If they are afraid of choosing wrong, recommend one option and reduce the risk of the decision.

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08 FIRST CONTACT

Before you know who you are talking to

YOU HEAR “I have never heard of your company.” “Send me some information.”

WHAT IT USUALLY MEANS There is no reason yet for them to give you time.

ASK IN DISCOVERY “What would make this worth twenty minutes of your time?”

IF IT STILL ARRIVES Give one specific reason that fits their situation. Then ask who in their organisation owns the problem you solve.

6. Before each meeting

Preparation starts with the people, not with a list of answers.

☐ Write down who will attend and what each person is responsible for.

☐ List the objections each person is most likely to raise, and one discovery question for each.

☐ Check whether the manager whose problem it is has stated what solving it is worth.

☐ Check whether anyone inside the buyer’s organisation has argued for the deal when you were not present.

☐ Check whether the next step after this meeting is already in the buyer’s diary.

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7. Worksheet for one live deal

Choose one open deal. Write every objection the buyer has raised so far, in their exact words. Complete one row for each objection.

OBJECTION	WHO	DISCOVERY QUESTION	RESPONSE	NEXT STEP

Before your next meeting on this deal, check:

- ☐ Every objection has a name next to it.
- ☐ Each objection has a discovery question you can ask on your next deal.
- ☐ You have asked at least one question that invites a no.
- ☐ The next step is in the buyer’s diary, with a date.

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8. Your own market

Objections in your market

Add the objections your buyers give that are not listed in section 5, with the question that finds each one early.

OBJECTION	DISCOVERY QUESTION	RESPONSE

What your customers gain

Three results your customers have confirmed, in their figures.

#	RESULT, AND WHO CONFIRMED IT
1	
2	
3	

Customer results you can cite

Results from comparable customers, and how each one was measured.

CUSTOMER	RESULT	HOW IT WAS MEASURED

NEXT STEP

To apply this to your team’s live deals, book a free consultation at klozers.com

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