

How to Disqualify Sales Prospects: Step by Step

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Do you know how to disqualify sales prospects effectively?

Most sales reps are aware of the importance of the qualification stage in the sales process. Making sure the people you're connecting with are a good fit for your product or service is essential. Not only does it mean you can deliver genuine value to these leads, but it also [increases your win rate](#). It ensures you're not wasting your time and energy on people who will never convert.

However, while many experts know the basics of lead qualification, they stumble when it comes to actually 'disqualifying' leads from their pipeline. Here's what you need to know about lead disqualification, its value, and how you can do it effectively.

Identifying Criteria for Disqualifying Sales Prospects

Quality is just as important as quantity when it comes to adding leads to your pipeline. While it's easy to focus on collecting as many potential leads as possible, through your [cold calling, emailing](#), and social selling strategies, you need to ensure each lead is actually a good fit for your solution.

Failure to effectively qualify and disqualify leads causes sales reps to waste time and energy on opportunities that will never drive results. Fortunately, identifying disqualification criteria is just as simple as figuring out which criteria you'll use to qualify your leads.

All you need is:

An understanding of your ideal customer profile:

To recognize non-qualified leads, you first need to know what your ideal customer looks like. This is the decision maker or professional that has a problem your service or solution can solve. Your ICP should have the budget and authority to decide, and the willingness to buy from you.

To refine your Ideal Customer Profile, collect as much data as you can about your perfect customer's industry, business size, location, revenue, challenges, goals, and pain points.

Lead qualification skills

Lead qualification skills ensure you can distinguish potential buyers who are a 'good fit' for your company, from other, less appealing leads. There are various strategies you can use, from leveraging checklists to help with your [prospecting efforts](#), to asking open-ended questions.

Asking open-ended questions when you connect with a prospect will help you to uncover whether your lead has a problem you can solve, whether they have the authority to make a purchase, and if they have any

major objections against a purchase.

Rapport building skills

Alongside the skills required to qualify leads, sales reps also need to be able to build relationships with potential consumers pretty quickly. Sometimes, you won't be able to identify whether a prospect is a good fit for your company just by looking at their profile or CRM page.

Instead, you'll need to invest in effective conversations, where you actively listen to your prospect, find out about their business, and assess opportunities. Good rapport building skills will also help you to preserve relationships between businesses and future potential buyers.

Signs You Should Disqualify a Sales Prospect

Sometimes, it will be obvious when a prospect or lead isn't a good fit for your business. If they don't fall into the category of industries you serve, or they don't show any interest in changing products or solutions, it's probably worth moving onto your next opportunity.

However, there are also various other signs that might indicate it's time to move on, such as:

- **Hyper-focus on pricing:** If prospects demand to know your pricing strategy straight away, there's a good chance they've already found a solution and just want to know if your option is cheaper. A significant focus on pricing can also indicate inadequate budget for your solution.
- **Inability to communicate:** Sometimes, no matter how hard you try to [connect with a prospect](#), they won't be willing to talk to you. If they're constantly ignoring you, refuse to set up meetings, and won't answer questions, move on.
- **Change aversion:** Even if a prospect knows a solution isn't giving them the results they want, they won't always be willing to change to something new. If your prospect demonstrates an unwillingness to change, look elsewhere for an opportunity.
- **Guardedness:** Many stakeholders are cautious about the information they share with sales people. However, if your prospect is unwilling to share information about their business or budget, and they won't introduce you to other stakeholders, you should probably disqualify.
- **They don't need your solution:** If your prospect is already happy with their current solution, or they don't face the specific problem your company resolves, then they're not going to make a purchase. Start looking for someone else who can benefit from your offer.
- **No authority:** Just because your stakeholder has a strong standing in their company, doesn't mean they can make purchasing decisions. If they don't have the authority to assign budget to projects and make final decisions, move on.

The Proper Approach to Disqualify Sales Prospects

There are a few reasons why learning how to disqualify sales prospects can be challenging for sales professionals. First, it can be difficult to determine whether a prospect who isn't suitable for your company

now might change their mind or become more valuable in the future.

Secondly, it's often hard to deliberately remove people from your pipeline when you're working towards specific quotas or sales goals. At the same time, even when you're disqualifying leads, you don't want to burn any bridges. You need to ensure you can maintain a positive reputation for your company, and leave the door open for future opportunities.

Here are some simple steps for disqualifying leads the right way:

1. Ask the Right Questions

In any lead qualification or disqualification, asking the right questions is crucial. You need to learn as much as you can about your prospect to determine if they have a real need for your products or services. Using open-ended questioning techniques is a good way to reveal useful information.

You can also use methods like the BANT framework to assess a lead's value based on their budget, authority, need, and timing factors. Invest in asking the right questions before making a decision.

1. Use the Right Technology

Technology can be extremely helpful in the modern sales landscape. It helps professionals to [gain new skills](#), assists with sorting through prospects, and even makes it easier to keep track of your potential customer's behavior over time.

You can use your CRM to track the movement of the prospect throughout the sales cycle, and determine whether they've engaged in any behavior that makes them valuable to your pipeline. You can also use tools to automatically follow up with prospects and move them through the funnel.

1. Communicate Correctly

Once you've identified an unqualified lead, it's important to communicate your decision in a professional way. Be honest and transparent about your reasoning for disqualification, and be empathetic towards their pain points and goals.

You can improve your relationships with potential prospects, and your brand's reputation by offering value, even when a lead is disqualified. For instance, you might provide access to guidance or resources that will help your lead, or you could refer them to another product or solution provider.

Being helpful towards a qualified lead can encourage them to show the same behavior to you in return. For instance, they might be willing to guide you towards prospects who are better suited to your needs than them.

Don't Underestimate Lead Disqualification

As a sales professional, you'll always be looking for ways to increase the number of leads in your pipeline. Sometimes, this can make it extremely difficult to disqualify leads when they're not suitable for your

business or solution. However, disqualifying leads effectively is crucial.

It ensures you don't waste time and resources on the wrong opportunities, improves your brand's reputation and relationship with future prospects, and helps to improve your overall conversion or win rates as a seller.

Learn more about the art of qualifying and disqualifying leads from the experts, by joining the [Hard Skill Exchange](#) today.??

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