

## Mini Competency Quiz

The purpose of this quiz is to determine the level of the candidate's knowledge about his or her chosen career – selling. Because it usually “takes one to know one,” this step of the interview process is best conducted by the sales manager or a seasoned and trained salesperson with the assistance of a HR specialist if available.

Seasoned salespeople will have a reasonable answer for most of the questions on this form. Their answers may not be exactly the same as those provided, but they will make sense. “Wannabe” salespeople won't have a clue about most of them. Watch for the ones who believe that BS baffles brains and try to snow their way through the quiz. They will do the same with your customers.

### Instructions:

1. You can start this step by saying something like, “I'm going to ask a few questions to assess your knowledge of selling. You'll probably find that some of my questions are right out of Sales 101.”
2. Ask the questions in a casual manner and allow a reasonable latitude in the answers. Being close counts. Those people who have had sales training will recognize that most of these questions are pretty fundamental while others who have not had any training will be completely stumped.
3. The questions are designed to be asked in the order presented and get more challenging as you progress. Watch how the candidate responds to the situation. Is the candidate nervous, showing signs of stress? Or is the candidate exhibiting the confidence of someone who knows that he or she knows how to do the job?
4. If you don't get reasonable answers to the first four or five easy questions, don't bother asking the rest. It will be too painful to watch.
5. If you complete the quiz, calculate the candidate's score by adding up the numbers you circled. The maximum attainable score is 50. We consider a pass to be 30 (60%) or more.

If the candidate doesn't score well, there is no reason or any value in indicating that fact to the person. Simply thank the candidate for coming in, let him know you'll contact him should you wish to pursue the situation further, and send the person on his way feeling good about himself.

*Note:* The form contains concise answers for your easy reference. Detailed answers to the quiz are included on pages 4 through 7.

## Mini Competency Quiz

Candidate: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Interviewed by: \_\_\_\_\_

	UNSATISFACTORY	POOR	FAIR	SATISFACTORY	GOOD	EXCELLENT
<b>1. What three things do you HAVE to know to qualify a prospect?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does the prospect have a <i>want or need</i> for what I am selling?</li> <li>• Do they have the financial <i>ability</i> to pay?</li> <li>• Who has the <i>authority</i> to make the final purchase decision?</li> </ul>	0	1	2	3	4	5
<b>2. Give an example of two popular closing techniques.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The four most popular closes:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Assumptive</li> <li>- Alternate Choice</li> <li>- Minor Point</li> <li>- Direct Question</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Other closes:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ben Franklin or Weighing</li> <li>- Summary</li> <li>- Recommendation</li> <li>- Puppy Dog</li> <li>- "Sign Here" or Order Form</li> <li>- Right Angle</li> <li>- Scare</li> </ul> </li> <li>• If the candidate can't identify a specific closing technique, ask him what he says or does to close a sale.</li> </ul>	0	1	2	3	4	5
<b>3. Are you familiar with the term "trial close"?</b> (If the answer is no, go to the next question. If yes, ask: <b>What is your definition of a trial close?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A trial close is an opinion-asking question that tests the prospect's willingness to buy.</li> </ul>	0	1	2	3	4	5
<b>4. What is the fastest way to get a prospect's favourable attention?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Talk about something that is of interest to the prospect.</li> </ul>	0	1	2	3	4	5
<b>5. When you are describing your product or service to a prospect, what is the prospect listening for?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The prospect is listening for benefits, a reason to buy.</li> </ul>	0	1	2	3	4	5

UNSATISFACTORY  
POOR  
FAIR  
SATISFACTORY  
GOOD  
EXCELLENT

- |   |                    |
|---|--------------------|
| <p><b>6. Are you familiar with the term Unique Selling Proposition (USP) or Elevator Pitch?</b><br/> <i>(If the answer is no, go to the next question. If yes, ask:</i><br/> <b>What is your definition of the term and why is it important?</b><br/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>The USP is a short statement that clearly and simply expresses an obvious reason why the prospect should do business with you.</i></li> <li>• <i>Can the candidate give you a USP for his current employer?</i></li> </ul> </p> | <p>0 1 2 3 4 5</p> |
| <p><b>7. What is the main reason for the price objection?</b><br/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Your price exceeds the value of what you're selling in the prospect's mind.</i></li> </ul> </p>  | <p>0 1 2 3 4 5</p> |
| <p><b>8. What is the first thing you should do when you get an objection?</b><br/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Avoid a confrontational response by acknowledging the objection with an empathetic statement and/or seeking clarification of the prospect's concerns.</i></li> </ul> </p>  | <p>0 1 2 3 4 5</p> |
| <p><b>9. When are the four times you can handle an objection?</b><br/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>The four times are now, later, never, or before the objection comes up.</i></li> <li>• <i>How creative is the candidate?</i></li> </ul> </p>   | <p>0 1 2 3 4 5</p> |
| <p><b>10. Are you familiar with the concept of the prospecting pipeline or sales funnel?</b><br/> <i>(If the answer is no, the quiz is completed. If yes, ask:</i><br/> <b>Describe how you use it in your current or recent sales position.</b><br/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>A prospecting pipeline is a source of sales leads.</i></li> <li>• <i>The sales funnel is the sales process that leads to a closed sale.</i></li> </ul> </p>   | <p>0 1 2 3 4 5</p> |

**Score = \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_% (score ÷ 50 x 100 = %)**  
**Maximum score is 50. Minimum acceptable score is 30 (60%).**

## Mini Competency Quiz for Prospective Salespeople — Detailed Answers —

### 1. What three things do you HAVE to know to qualify a prospect?

The three things a salesperson absolutely needs to know in order to qualify a prospect are:

- **need** (or want)
- **ability** to pay, and the
- **authority** to buy

Does the prospect have a real need (or want) for your product or service, does he have the ability to pay for it (can he afford it!), and does he have the authority to make the final decision (if not, then who?).

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*NOTE: We find that people either haven't a clue and give some very creative answers, or get two out of the three. Of the three factors, most people will usually miss "authority."*  
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### 2. Give an example of two popular closing techniques.

The four most popular closes are the:

- **Assumptive**
- **Alternate Choice**
- **Minor Point** and
- **Direct Question**

Other less popular closes are the:

- **Ben Franklin**
- **Weighing** or **Summary**
- **Puppy Dog**
- **Sign Here**
- **Right Angle**
- **Scare** and
- **Order Form**

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*NOTE: Don't worry if the person can't give the actual names. They get more points for describing how a particular close is executed. Ask the individual to describe his favourite closing technique. Watch to see if he has one or two specific closing techniques he is comfortable with. If he doesn't, he may not be attempting to close very often. If a person doesn't know what or how to do something, chances are he isn't doing it.*  
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### 3. Are you familiar with the term trial close? What is your definition of a trial close?

A trial close is an **opinion-asking question**, the answer to which indicates where you are in the sale or how responsive the prospect is to your proposal. It's a way of **testing the prospect's buying temperature** before attempting a close.

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*NOTE:* Many salespeople confuse the Alternate Choice close with a Trial Close.  
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### 4. What is the fastest way to get a prospect's favourable attention?

The fastest way to get someone's favourable attention is to **talk about something that is of interest to the prospect**. The best way to do this is to ask questions pertaining to the prospect's needs or interests. Ask about the *prospect*.

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*NOTE:* The real sales pro will get this one. Others will say that the best way to get the prospect's attention is to tell the prospect about the product/service. These are the people who think that "telling is selling."  
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### 5. When you are describing your product or service to a prospect, what is the prospect listening for?

**Benefits!** More specifically, benefits to *the prospect*. **A reason to buy**. Like everyone else, prospects listen to radio station WIFM-FM, "What's In It For Me – FOR ME!"

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*Note:* On our initial mini-competency test, the question was, "What three key questions are on a prospect's mind and why is it important to answer them?" Only the most seasoned sales pros or someone who just came off a sales training program could answer that question easily. You may still want to use it in some situations, so here is the answer:

- 1 - Why should I buy your product or service?
- 2 - Why should I buy it from you?
- 3 - Who says so? (Prove it!)

If a salesperson doesn't answer these questions for the prospect, the prospect will answer them for himself and you may not like the answers he comes up with. Give the prospect a reason to buy by answering these three questions.  
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## 6. Are you familiar with the term Unique Selling Proposition (USP) or Elevator Pitch? What is your definition of the term and why is it important?

Also known as the “elevator pitch,” the USP is a **short statement** that clearly and simply expresses an obvious reason for the prospect to do business with you. It’s important in order to clearly distinguish your firm (or you) from all others in your field. **It often answers the question, “Why should I buy from you?”** A good USP **differentiates you from your competition.**

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*NOTE:* If the answer is no, then ask if he/she would like to take a guess at the answer. Or, if the interview isn’t going well, simply say, “Then I won’t ask you why it’s important,” and go on with the interview. The sharp ones figure it out and the creative ones get close.  
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## 7. What is the main reason for the price objection?

**The prospect doesn’t see the value. His want or need is less than the cost of the product or service.**

That’s why salespeople should never talk cost (or price) until they have established value. There are three reasons why the price objection usually comes up. They are:

- 1 - Your price *is* too high.
- 2 - The prospect *can’t* afford it.
- 3 - The prospect *doesn’t want* to afford it.

Number three is the main reason people don’t buy. If they don’t want it, they won’t buy it!

## 8. What is the first thing you should do when you get an objection?

**Acknowledge it.** Too many salespeople start to answer the objection without first cushioning it **with an empathic statement.**

Acknowledging the objection doesn’t mean you agree with the prospect, but it does imply a degree of understanding on the part of the salesperson. A simple, “I understand how you feel,” or, “That’s a good point,” will go a long way towards smoothing out the objection-answering process.

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*NOTE:* This is a simple question so look for a simple answer. Many people turn this question into a disaster just like they turn simple objections into a disaster. You may have to restate the question in order to get a reasonable answer.  
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## 9. When are the four times you can handle an objection?

The four times you can handle an objection are:

- **Now** – when the objection arises (half-baked objections or objections based on misunderstandings).
- **Later** in the sale (trivial objections or a put-off).
- **Never** (trivial objections).
- **Before** it comes up (price or other common objections).

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*NOTE:* We usually preamble this question by saying that the next two questions are trick ones. Sometimes we'll disclose the first part of the answer (when the objection arises) as an example and hope that the person picks up at least two of the remaining three times.  
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## 10. Are you familiar with the concept of the prospecting pipeline or sales funnel? Describe how you use it in your current or recent sales position.

The “prospecting pipeline” refers to the various sources of leads, prospects, suspects, possible opportunities, etc, that are fed into your “sales funnel” for processing. A simple definition of a prospecting pipeline might be sources of leads. Most salespeople will have several sources of possible opportunities.

The “sales funnel” is the process flow that happens once the salesperson has identified someone as being a real prospect. Salespeople will have different terms for the various stages of their sales funnels. Some identify the stages by where they are in the sales process (i.e. pre-qualify, qualify, presentation, close, etc), while others may use the prospect’s state of mind (i.e. cold, lukewarm, warm, hot, etc).

Unless the candidate works in an environment of transactional sales or sales with an extremely short sales cycle, he or she should have heard of one or both of these terms.

Be wary of a candidate who works in B2B sales and has not heard of these terms.

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*NOTE:* While technically different, some salespeople will use the terms “prospecting pipeline” and “sales funnel” interchangeably.  
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