

HubSpot



Mixmax



Prospecting and Objection Handling

Templates and Best Practices For Sales Success



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Introduction

Dealing with objections is a core part of a salesperson's everyday life. Whether it's timing, perceived needs, or budget concerns, prospects can always find a reason to push back on what you're offering. The good news? Sellers who successfully defend their product against buyers' objections can have a **close rate as high as 64%**.

How you behave when a prospect pushes back can make or break your sale. Your ability to overcome objections and brush-offs calmly, coolly, and with the right data-rich stories, will differentiate you in these times of virtual selling.

Read this ebook to learn:

Tactics & Tips

Actionable advice that reduces objections

- Data-backed phone behaviors top sellers use to combat push back
- A 3-step objection-handling framework (with examples)

Templates

The 5 most common sales objections (and scripts for how to address them)

Tools

How to incorporate your tech stack into your virtual selling efforts

Why Prospects Push Back

Reframing Objections as Opportunities

Objections are when buyers push back on what you are offering in the moment. While handling these concerns can be frustrating, especially when the majority of your conversation is not held in person. In reality however, objections are an opportunity for progress towards a mutual agreement. Any time your prospect raises a concern is a chance for you to establish and cement credibility with them. The more credibility you can create quickly, the further along you will be towards winning the deal.

Generally, a prospect objects for one of a few reasons:

- Because they are not yet a believer
- You haven't explained the value fully enough
- They are establishing points for future negotiations.

Each of these options gives you an opportunity to move the conversation forward. In every sales call, the prospect is challenging the salesperson to deliver a solution that meets their needs in a specific time range at an investment level that aligns with their perceived budget. These challenges come in the form of sales objections.



PRO TIP

Salespeople can get a head start on this by building their personal brand such as frequently posting value-based information or actively participating in discussions on professional social media platforms.

Successful remote sales requires effective objection handling to reduce all friction in your sales process down to the moment your prospect believes the value of your product or service far outweighs the risk in making an investment with you.



How to Handle Objections: Tactics & Frameworks

Phone Behaviors that Get Results

Gong, a revenue intelligence platform for sales teams, recently conducted a study on the frequency of sales objections, where they occur in the call, and how long the objection conversation lasts when overcome.

Here are tips you can take away from these top sellers:

Take a Pause: Successful reps paused 5x longer than their counterparts and remained calm in the face of adversity. When a prospect introduces a concern, don't be afraid to take a breath to consider exactly what you want to say.

Slow Down: Top reps slowed down their talking speed when addressing objections speaking at 176 words-per-minute, while others maintained an average of 188 words-per-minute. Project authority when addressing concerns by speaking slowly, calmly, and with certainty.

Talk Less: When a prospect voices a concern, it can be tempting to rattle off multiple reasons to reassure them. In fact, the average sales rep in this study addressed objections with a 21.45-second monologue. However, top reps talked far less overall.

Counter with a Question: In our objection-handling framework below, we recommend that sellers help buyers feel understood by clarifying their concerns with a question. Top sellers counter objections with questions far more often than the average seller (54.1% vs. 31%).

Validate Their Concern: Give your buyer the gift of feeling understood and you'll carry powerful influence. Use the phrase "That's a valid concern. It seems like you're _____." Fill in the blank with an emotion they expressed. For example: "That's a valid concern Kate. It seems like you're pretty torn on what to do here." You'll have them feeling like you are an ally that can truly help because you get it.

Another tactic that you can employ to address buyer objections is what former FBI Negotiator and *Never Split the Difference* author Chris Voss, calls “mirroring.” This theory argues that by repeating the last few (1-3) words that your prospect uses, Mirror your buyer’s final few words with an upward tone:

“The price is too high?”

“Your boss said no?”

“Timing is not right?”

By reflecting your prospect’s language and concerns back to them, you can make them feel heard and understood.



PRO TIP

Learn more about Chris Voss’ mirroring technique

[Learn More](#)

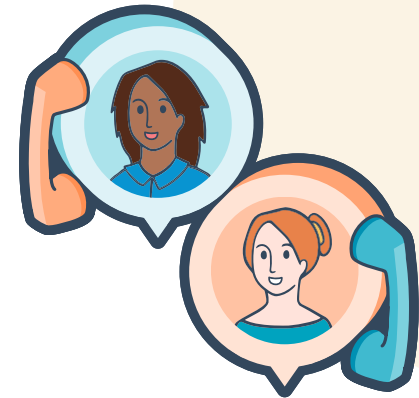
Objection-Handling Framework

Nothing beats being prepared for common objections. The more comfortable you are at handling these with confidence, the more credible you will sound. And the more credible that you sound, the more you can build trust with your prospect.

1. Maintain a Running List of Buyer Objections

You have probably run into similar questions or concerns across calls. Start grouping them into a running list of objections. Every time you hear a new one, add it to the list.

Write out your response to that objection and practice the back-and-forth dialogue. We recommend that you write out multiple responses so that you are prepared for several rounds of back-and-forth. For help crafting a strong response, you propose a solution using the Feel/Felt/Found method detailed in Step 3.



Topic	Buyer Concern	Response #1	Response #2	Response #3
Example: Price	"Your price is too high"	"Our average return on investment is X% in the first 6 months."	"We have the highest investment in our space around security which, in the long run reduces your risks and ultimately costs."	"We offer the highest level of support in comparison to anyone in our space."

This practice will help you reduce any anxiety that occurs when you are put on the spot.

2. Break Down Any New Objections

Even with a running list of prospect scripts, you will sometimes encounter a concern that you haven't heard before. Don't panic. Pause and take a deep breath. Your first objective isn't to solve the problem, but rather make sure that you understand what your prospect is saying. Take a moment to digest what the prospect is asking you and why it is important to them. If you don't understand either of these factors, it's important to pose the right follow-up questions.

Specifically, be sure to do the following:

- 1. Acknowledge the objection and ask to confirm you understand it correctly.**

Example: "OK, Tom, let me play this back to you so I can confirm we are on the same page. You feel like our software takes too long to deploy based specifically on what your friend told you, is that accurate?"

- 2. Ask clarifying questions to find the source of the objection and the business impact that it concerns.**

Example: "What type of time frame for implementation would be in alignment with your company's expectations and goals?"

After you fully understand the buyer's difficulty, it's time to propose a solution that addresses it.



3. Propose a Solution (Feel, Felt, Found) and Confirm it Satisfies the Concern

When proposing a solution, don't just tell prospects what you think they want to hear. Build trust by explaining how you have helped other customers with similar issues. Take them on a journey to help them set realistic expectations. We recommend framing this journey using the Feel/Felt/Found method.

Feel: Reiterate the buyer's objection. Show that you understand and are listening to their misgivings.

Felt: Help the buyer feel that they are not alone in this concern. You have helped other customers with similar issues.

Found: Explain the misconception behind the original expectation. What truth did other customers learn to satisfy their problem?

Here's an example of the Feel/Felt/Found method in action:

"Customers that we recently brought on used to **feel** that way. They **felt** concerned that historically, our industry is notorious for complex implementations. We actually build our business model on disrupting our industry for this very reason. Our customers that are in your industry and are of similar size have **found** an average time of purchase to implementation to be between 3-5 weeks and time to value to be 1.5 months. Does this fit into the same time frame your executive team requires?"

"When you speak with prospects, try to walk in their shoes. Ask them directly 'What are you feeling?' and 'What are your thoughts on the changes happening at your organization?'

Empathy requires that you shift your perspective and attempt to feel what someone else is going through. In practice, that means using active listening techniques, not interrupting, asking for clarification, withholding judgement, and sharing the dialogue."



Tatiana Feola

Manager, Sales Development @ Gong

Finally, you will want to close this section by confirming that your solution does actually address their objections. Having the prospect verbally confirm your solution helps cement your relationship. And, if the prospect isn't satisfied yet, asking for confirmation lets you continue the conversation until he or she feels confident that their problem is addressed.

Before moving forward, make sure you have all of the concerns out of the way by attempting to surface other objections. When you've finished putting an objection to rest, ask for more: "What other reservations do you have?" This gets you to focus the rest of the conversation where it matters for them.

Let's now dive into the most common objections you may have struggled with in the past.



Top 5 Objections that Stop a Sales Deal

No matter what you're selling, you're likely to run into one of these five common objections from your prospects.

- 1. Lack of interest:** "I'm not interested" or "Send me information to review."
- 2. Pricing:** "I can't afford this" or "It's too expensive" or "We don't have the budget."
- 3. Lack of agency:** "I'm not the decision maker" or "I don't have approval."
- 4. Competitor or status quo:** "We use a competitor" or "we already do this" or "we built a solution ourselves".
- 5. Timing:** "This isn't the right time" or "That timeline doesn't work for us."

Luckily, because these concerns are so common, we've created specific strategies to combat them.

Objection #1: Lack of Interest

What NOT to do: Say "ok" and send generic information.

What to do instead: Ask further questions to uncover topics of interests or pain points that you can tailor to the prospect's needs.

This objection is the most common and usually the first one you'll receive in an engagement. While you may sometimes get a straightforward statement (ex. "I'm not interested"), this challenge is often nicely masked as a request for details (ex. "Send me info").

You can leverage this response as an opportunity to ask a few qualifying questions. Then, you can establish credibility by delivering information that carries relevant value to your contact.

Here's a script if you are asked for more information:

"Absolutely! May I ask a few questions about your business/your role to ensure I'm sending the most relevant information to you?" (follow with key qualifications questions).

Jump into this [LinkedIn post](#) by Devin Reed at Gong to learn more about how to respond to this objection.

Objection #2: Price

What NOT to do: *Give in on your price being too high without establishing the value that your product/service delivers.*

What to do instead: *Focus on the value that you have delivered for clients just like them. Challenge them to focus on the benefit over the cost.*

We won't sugarcoat it: we could write an ebook on budget negotiations alone. According to HubSpot, over 35% of today's sellers say their biggest challenge is overcoming price objections. The main thing to remember is this: for prospects to consider moving from the status quo, the perceived value must be greater than the price. Spend your time building higher value with stories of similar clients and the ROI they achieved both qualitatively and quantitatively.

Here's a script for a prospect who tells you that your product costs too much:

"I understand the price might have been more than your team initially budgeted for, but I've got many examples of us establishing a lot more value than you had initially expected too. If we can show you clearly throughout this process that our value far outweighs the cost, would you be open to continuing working with us towards a solution?"



Objection #3: Lack of Agency

What NOT to do: *Immediately move away from this person to engage someone else higher.*

What to do instead: *Empower someone of lower influence to be your champion. Make it worthwhile for them to help you by establishing that you will address some of their needs.*

Most business-to-business transactions, even in small startups, involve multiple stakeholders. Some members have full decision-making authority while others are influencers behind the scenes. Be prepared to align the value of your product/service to potential influencers. This positioning can help you establish a champion within your deal.

Here's a script for reaching out to a potential influencer:

"I understand that you might not be the final decision maker here, but our product/service impacts your role significantly. I'd really appreciate the opportunity to learn a bit more about your needs so that when I engage with the decision maker, I'll have the right information to share with them. (Follow with key qualifications questions along with an ask for a direct introduction to one of the decision-makers)."



PRO TIP

Write and send a shareable email for your contact to forward to a decision maker on your behalf. This strategy will ensure that all of the value points are included.

Objection #4: Competitors or Status Quo

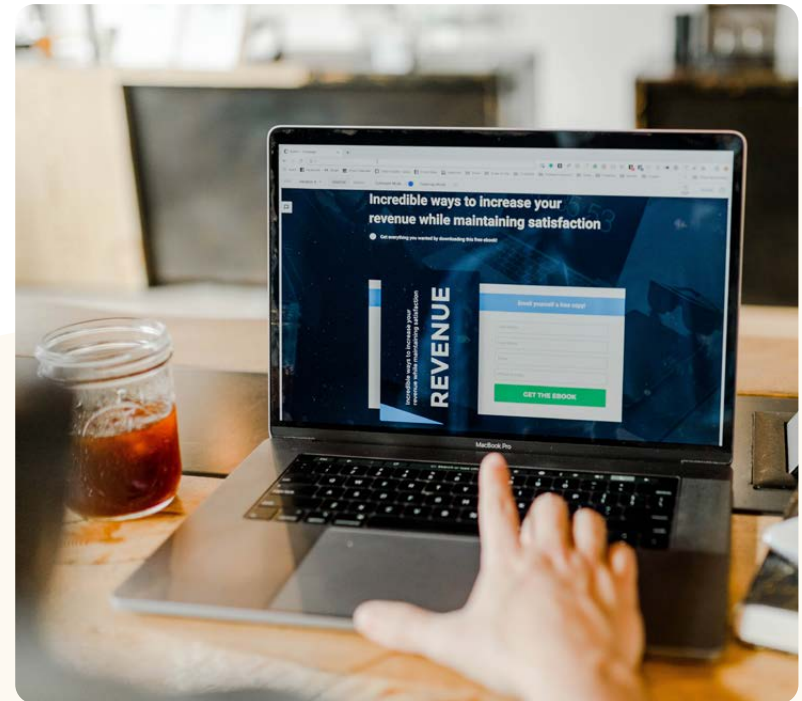
What NOT to do: *Get defensive and/or bad-mouth the competition.*

What to do instead: *Be prepared and knowledgeable about the competitor they are using or evaluating. Ask questions that address areas that competitors/their current system may lack and where you are at a position of strength.*

Every salesperson should be able to make a strong case against their competitors. If you don't have a strong sense of your position in the market, bring together your top sellers, CRO, and Product Marketing. Then, create a SWOT analysis grid of your top competitors to truly understand where you are stronger and/or weaker. This exercise can help you develop a series of objection-handling and conversation strategies that play to your strengths and move away from your weaknesses.

Here's a script for when your prospect mentions a competitor.

"It's great that you are looking at all of your options. My goal is to help you make the best decision for your company. While I can't speak for the competition, we've built our product/service with the specific needs of someone like you in mind. Here's how we handle solving this challenge..."



Objection #5: Timing

What NOT to do: *Plan to follow up months later without actionable next steps.*

What to do instead: *Dig deeper to find the real reason that your prospect is missing the value. Or, if timing is genuinely off, make sure to get a commitment from the prospect that you can hold them accountable to in the future.*

Here's a script on what to say when buyers report that timing is an issue:

"I totally understand timing might not be perfect right now. Most of our customers took several months to consider this type of product/solution before ultimately making a choice. I'd just like to ask a few questions to help me diagnose an appropriate time to reconnect with your team in the future (follow with key qualifications questions). If I can show you how we can deliver value X, would you be open to connecting with me in Y time frame?"

Like the old adage goes, "timing is everything." Well in sales, it might not be *everything*, but timing is a key factor in every deal. The reality is, it's nearly impossible to get the timing exactly right naturally. Instead, salespeople have to create urgency and shorten the timeline. It's not easy. In fact, a HubSpot survey found that 42% of salespeople struggle to create urgency.

One of the most effective strategies we've found to push timelines up is by establishing value. Ask questions that uncover any compelling events or reasons to move from the status quo to sooner. If timing is an objection, it's an indicator that your prospects aren't actually bought in. Find out how the prospect defines their success criteria and paint a picture of what a successful journey looks like when they partner with you. Finally, if the timing really isn't ideal, be sure to get a clear commitment on a future timeline.



Sales in a COVID-19 World

Budget is a known factor in getting any deal done—especially during the end of the month and quarter. Previously, savvy sales pros could overcome a budget freeze to land a deal. A “virus-caused-economic-slowdown” budget freeze is a new obstacle. Today’s selling landscape is unique because the budget objection itself has changed. Check out [this data from HubSpot](#) showing how sales deals have changed since COVID-19.

Gong’s CFO, Tim Riitters, has some ideas on how budget holders are managing purchasing decisions. Here’s what is getting approved: Purchases with quantifiable ROI, because every dollar matters right now.

“Before COVID-19, Growth CFOs spent much of their time approving technologies and investments focused on growing the business. While still important, with the new environment we are living in, we are now focusing significant amounts of our time on ways to save money, improve productivity, and mitigate risk.

The best way to get a deal done today is to prove how you’re going to help increase remote productivity, enhance visibility into their business, and/or increase agility. You have to come prepared to show how a specific investment will indeed save the company hard dollars. The bar for measurable and rapid Return on Investment is much higher than it was before.”



Tim Riitters, CFO @ Gong

Focus on cost savings when positioning your offering. That's what will grab (and keep) a budget manager's attention today. You'll want to frame how your cost savings tie into the new remote workforce. Stories of exponential growth, onboarding new folks, and the like, are at high risk of getting a stamp of disapproval. Now more than ever, you need to present what Tim called "measurable and rapid return." Make it easy for buyers to see the fiscal impact of your offering.

As our selling landscape changes, take advantage of video and call software to create a more empathetic connection with your prospect:

"This is an emotional time for people, and you'll have more control over how you're perceived over the phone. Tone is easily lost via email, empathy specifically. These are complicated conversations that deserve a human touch."



Jameson Yung, VP Sales @ Gong

Being upfront about your flexibility in your contractual terms and pricing can make a huge difference in helping you negate some of the budget and cash flow concerns of your buyers:

"During these uncertain times, buyers want contracts with favorable payment terms, such as monthly or quarterly payments, or contracts with less stringent exit clauses. Offering these terms upfront will greatly reduce the cash-flow concerns of your buyers, and help you close quickly. In return for that flexibility, you could negotiate time-bound discounts, so that they can return to paying normal prices, once the economic situation changes."



Olof Mathe, Founder & CEO @ Mixmax



Here's a [blog post from HubSpot](#) that gives you 22 responses to the "it's not the right time to buy" objection.

Execution: Using Your Tech Stack to Operationalize Objections

These tactics can help you maximize sales conversations. But, in order to really up your sales game in a virtual context, you need to utilize your tech stack to improve engagement in other areas. Today's technology stacks are far more advanced than even two years ago, so use them to your advantage. Ask yourself: what part of my workflow could be automated? If you're repeating actions on every sales engagement, that might be an opportunity to work smarter and increase your efficiency. You can use technology to operationalize objections and learnings across not just your own efforts but that of your entire team.

Sales Engagement Platforms: Address Common Objections With Injectable Templates

According to a study from ClickFunnels, only 36% of a salesperson's time is actually spent on selling. Sales Engagement platforms help you understand who is opening your emails when. They can also enable you to automate your best responses. Combining these tools with proper preparation allows you to spend less time strategizing and crafting appropriate responses to objections, and more time listening and selling.

As you're addressing objections, consider building out the injectable templates for some of your most common objections. Some sales engagement platforms have a snippets feature designed to house your most common rebuttals to buyer concerns or serve as an optimal place for things like battle cards. Adding this information into your sales engagement platform gives your sales team fast access to key information at their fingertips. They could easily add pre-written responses to an email in just a few clicks.

Check out this [Mixmax blog post](#) on creating an automation and implementing a process for handling objections.



PRO TIP

While these can be effective tools, remember, sending the same generic rebuttal for each common objection may not be enough. Leverage personalization features within your template (like custom data fields) to tailor your response to an objection in a way that's relevant to your prospect. For example, if your enterprise prospect is objecting to your ROI statement, make sure to support your rebuttal with an example of another similarly-sized enterprise customer.

Revenue Intelligence: Solving Sales Dilemmas One At A Time

The best way to improve sales techniques? Uplevel objection handling? Understand what works (and what doesn't)? Practice, and listening to call recordings.

With Revenue Intelligence, you can break down what a successful sales call looks like for your team using data (talk-to-listen ratio, questions, customer monologues, and more). Revenue Intelligence lets teams monitor some of the data-driven phone behaviors we recommended earlier in this ebook. Now you can determine whether your methodology and process is working, where it can be improved, and where you should double down.

Jump into the [HubSpot sales plan template](#) to start planning your sales strategy.

Recap: 6 Key Steps to Objection Handling

- 1. Build a repository** of the most common objections and the best rebuttals to overcome them.
- 2. Standardize** your best responses to common objections and leave placeholders or room for customization.
- 3. Stay calm and focus on listening.** There's no such thing as a perfect response. You won't say the exact thing to turn a prospect's objection around every time, but you can listen well and remain human. Stay calm, pause, address concerns logically and in a matter-of-fact way, and provide customer examples backed by data.
- 4. Provide a solution that addresses the prospect's concern.** Repeat the buyer's objection and walk them through how you have addressed this concern with other customers who felt the same way. Use the Feel/Felt/Found framework to take the prospect on a journey.
- 5. Incorporate responses into your Sales Engagement Platform.** Then, take it a step further by **building in automated workflows** that address these common concerns.
- 6. Revisit call conversations** to learn how to handle objections immediately over the phone versus waiting for a prolonged email back-and-forth much faster than email. Incorporate behaviors that slow down the call and pose more questions back to the prospect.



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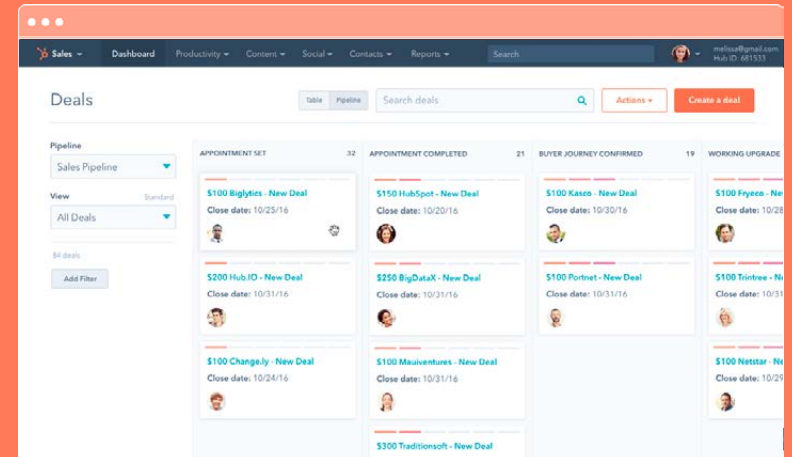
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Want more data-backed objection handling tips? Get all the missing tips in this bonus chapter.



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