

# What are the major stages of an effective selling strategy?

Too many sales organizations model their selling strategy on a sequence of steps that salespeople are expected to perform - prospecting, qualifying, fact-finding, etc. Our research reveals that an effective selling strategy must focus on the stages the customer goes through in the decision making process, not the steps the salesperson takes in making the sale. Here's how it's best done.

Customer Decisionmaking Stage	Sign That This Stage Is Over And Next Stage Is Starting	Common Sales Strategy Errors During This Stage
<b>1 Recognition of Needs</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>"Have we a problem?"</li> <li>"How big is it?"</li> <li>"Does it justify action?"</li> </ul>	Customer accepts that the problem is severe enough to justify change and therefore decides to take action.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Failure to explore and develop customer needs.</li> <li>Making product presentations too early.</li> </ul>
<b>2 Evaluation of Options</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>"What decision criteria should we use?"</li> <li>"Which competitor best measures up?"</li> </ul>	Customer has a clear decision mechanism in place and has used it to select one or more final contenders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Failure to uncover purchase decision criteria.</li> <li>Inadequate effort to influence decision criteria.</li> </ul>
<b>3 Resolution of Concerns</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>"What are the risks of going ahead?"</li> <li>"What if it goes wrong?"</li> <li>"Can we trust these people?"</li> </ul>	Customer makes the purchasing decision.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ignoring concerns in hope they'll go away.</li> <li>Pressing the customer to make a decision.</li> </ul>
<b>4 Solution Implementation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>"Is this decision paying off?"</li> <li>"How soon will we see results?"</li> </ul>	New needs and dissatisfactions arise.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Failure to treat implementation as a sales opportunity.</li> <li>Failure to anticipate what could go wrong.</li> </ul>

→This FAQSheet is brought to you by *Advantage Performance Group* and *Huthwaite*, partners in promoting best practices in selling and sales management. Our methods are research based and field proven. Our clients include dozens of industry leaders. For answers to your sales performance questions, contact Advantage Performance Group sales practice leader, John Hoskins at (800) 494-6646.

