

The Art of Asking Questions

*Leading powerful client
conversations and discovery meetings*

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KEYNOTE SPEAKER & AUTHOR

The lost art of conversation?

Selling is about...

“Creating an environment where an act of faith can take place.”

Credibility

- Expertise
- Business Acumen
- Authenticity (Believe)
- Keeping Commitments

← Which one would you choose? →

Option 1

- Closer
- Up-seller
- Product expert
- Tenacious at follow-up
- Objection handler
- Disruptive questioner
- Key account manager
- Sales professional

Option 2

- Advisor
- Expert
- Industry thought leader
- Problem solver
- Coach
- Mentor
- Valued peer
- Confidant

Move from being a
someone that *explains*
value...

...to being a peer and
businessperson that **creates**
business value.

In many cases,
great solutions
providers are not
problem solvers,
**they're problem
sellers.**

“Prescription without diagnosis is malpractice.”

Average Salespeople Sell:

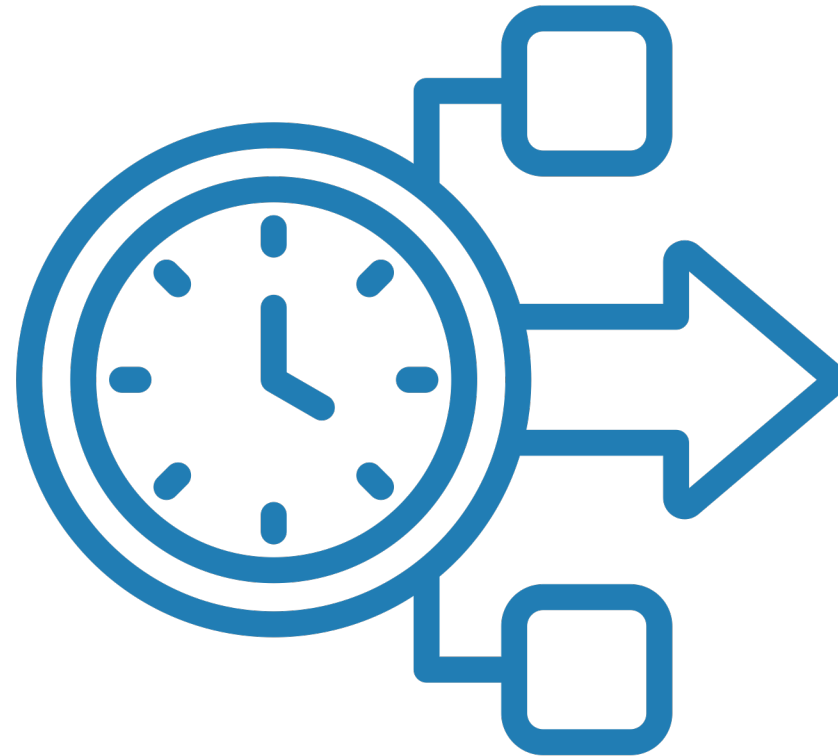
1. Price
2. Product
3. Organization
4. Self

Exceptional Salespeople Sell:

1. Self
2. Organization
3. Better future state
4. Value

Better Future State

- Results
- Outcomes
- Goal attainment
- Problem solving
- Loss avoidance
- Risk mitigation
- Vision fulfilment
- Opportunity creation



Discovery Prep Sheet (micro niche/client)

Problem Challenge or Goal	Cost or benefit?	Our product, feature or solution	Business Outcome	Benefit Metrics?

Discovery Cheat Sheet – SaaS company SME

Problem Challenge or Goal	Cost or benefit?	Our product, feature or solution	Business Outcome	Benefit Metrics?
Access to funding for growth is challenging.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of funding means slow organic growth. Competitors can gain market share. Development and new features are slow to launch. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One-on-one coaching to retool your pitch deck and value proposition. Peer feedback and advice from people who have done it – possible referrals for finance. 	A road map and refined value proposition and network to help improve access to capital.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Faster growth ✓ Better advice ✓ Raising the right kind of money ✓ More market share faster ✓ 10-15% more market share
Need to hire sales and marketing talent so that revenues aren't founder dependant. I have failed at this several times.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Taking me away from operations and systemizing. I can only sell, start and support 5 new clients per month. Limits me to adding 10K MRR each month. Bad hires cost me time, money and rev. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 30% of our guest speakers focus on HR and Sales strategy One-on-one coaching can help you refine your recruitment We have access to a network of great marketing consultants 	<p>Increased capacity to find and hire the right people.</p> <p>On-going coaching and peer feedback to help sustain sales and marketing success</p> <p>More time to lead and more revenues</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Go from increasing MRR by 10k to 30k+ per month ✓ More time for founder to focus on product development and raising capital.

Future State Drill Down

Prospective Member: “I am looking for insights on how to scale my business.”

Advisor: “When you say scale, what does that mean to you?”

Advisor: “Were there insights on a specific part of scaling that you were looking for?”

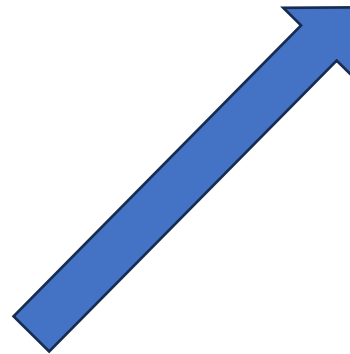
Advisor: “What impact will that have on you personally or your business?”

Prospective member: “More free time to pursue my passion projects and other business ideas.”

“I am looking for insights on how to scale my business.”

“More free time to pursue my passion projects and other business ideas.”

Deeper “Why”



“Tell me about...”

Blindspot questions:

- **What happens if you live, but can't work anymore?**
- Just to confirm, it's taken you 10 hours to review sales team members client calls each week?
- Are you using any type of AI or automation to help you with that? You know there are tools for that?
- If your competitors are using AI and doing the same task in 1 hour versus your 10, how does that impact you competitively?

Most people don't listen,
they just wait
for their turn to talk.



Listening Assessment

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70/30 Selling



Who produces more revenues in sales?

shane gibson

extrovert



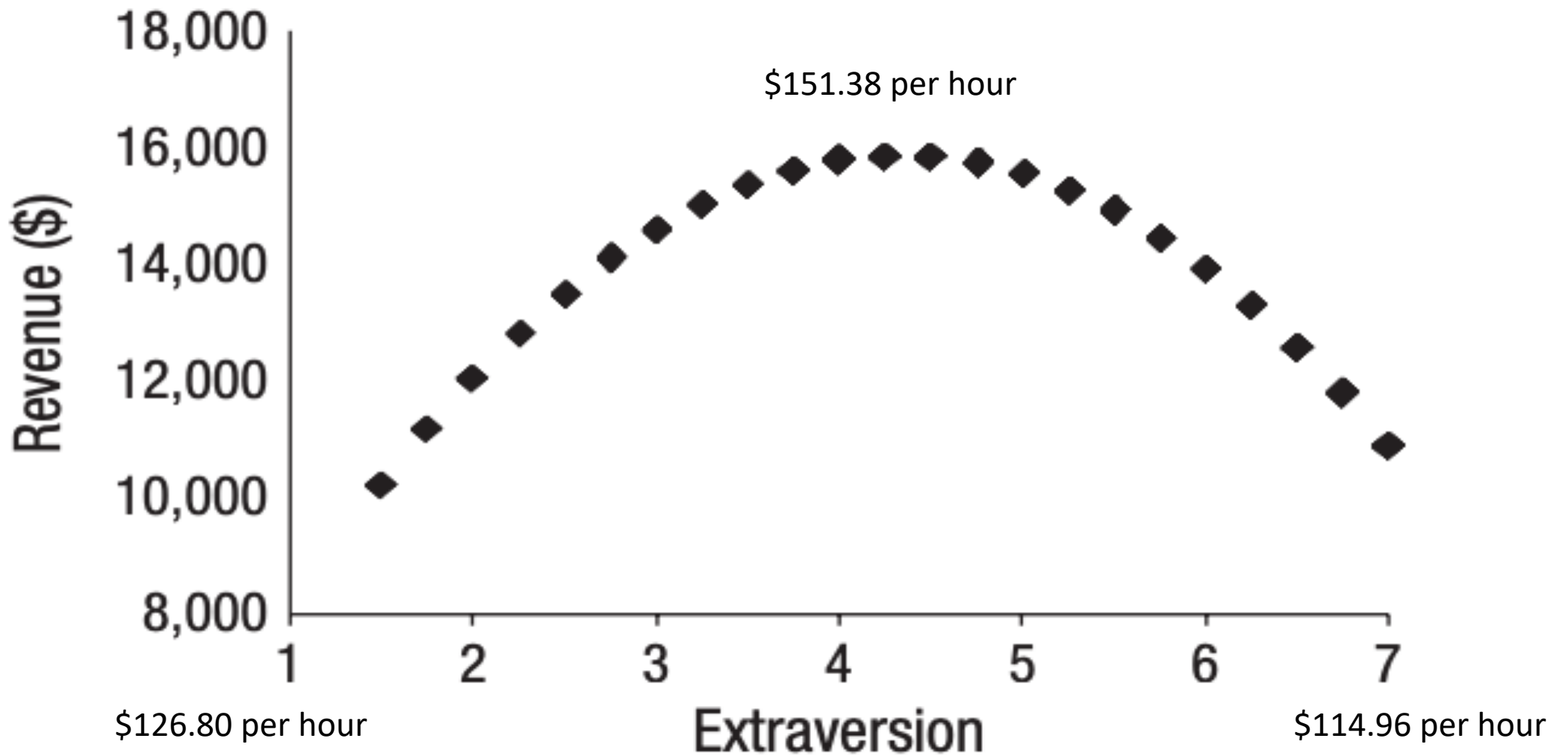
I'm staying in tonight

introvert



I'm staying in tonight!!

- Adam M. Grant The Wharton School, University of Pennsylvania



Slow down to speed up



Needs Analysis

- Forces you to listen
- Shows real interest
- Nothing is missed
- Is a record
- Free education
- Leads the customer



Would it help to know the clients':

Likes

Dislikes

Fears

Beliefs

Problems

Achievements

Challenges

Objectives

Values

Goals

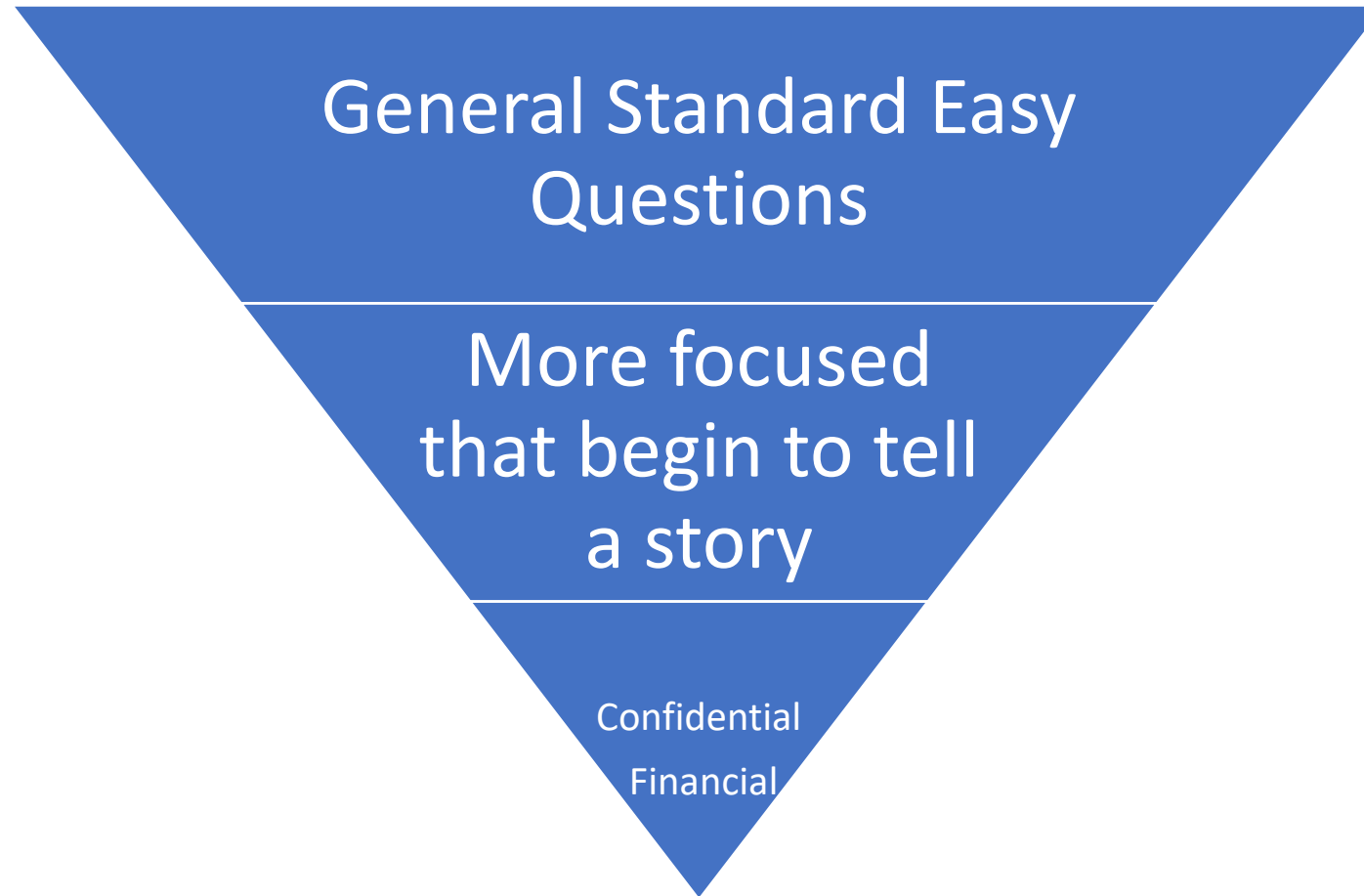
Motivations

Dreams

20 % of your questions provide vital information,
80% build rapport and lead the customer.



Needs Analysis Process



3 Rules

1. Never sell during the needs analysis
2. Watch their tone and body language
3. Watch your tone and body language

Varied Questions Create Contrast



- Open
- Closed
- Leading
- Requests

Open Questions

- Tell me about where your business is heading in the next 12-18 months?
- What outcomes from this membership would make you feel it was worth the investment?
- What's your on-going leadership development program?
- What made you decide to look at joining our organization?

Closed questions

- Is there anyone else on your team that we need to present this to?
- When is your year end?
- What's your biggest priority right now, sales or product development?
- What's your annual employee turn-over rate?

Leading questions

- Do the coaches you're using have personal experience scaling a tech company?
- Do you have other leaders and entrepreneurs that you tap into when needed?
- Are you ready to tackle some of the common pitfalls of exponential growth?
- Do you feel you have all the tools they need to lead and develop your team? Is it happening fast enough?

Requests

- Tell me... when are you planning to shift your business model?
- What do you like most about _____?
- Tell me about your other two divisions?
- What's your GTM roadmap look like for the next 12 months?

What? Questions

- “What changes in the marketplace prompted you to focus on this new client type?”
- “What has to happen in order for you to feel that this was a good investment of money and resources?”
- What was happening in your business that made you want to look at supplementing your existing consultants and coach with a peer group?

The Complete Listener

- Passive listening
- Use acknowledgement phrases
- Listen Actively
- Use their word

Passive listening

- Open body language
- Affirming gestures
- Eye contact
- Facial expression
- Distraction free
- Pauses



Acknowledgement Phrases

- That's a unique challenge...
- Makes good sense
- I can see that...
- Interesting...

Active listening



“If I could summarize what you just shared... your big concern is that you see the value you BUT would need to re-prioritize your schedule to join?”

Use their word(s)

Customer: “I am interested, my concern is a lot of the topics and members may not be relevant for my type of business.”

Salesperson: So **relevant?** [pause]
or “**your type of business?** [pause]

3 Vital Questions

1. Have I missed anything?
2. Do you have any questions for me?
3. Based upon what you have shared with me, would you mind if I shared with you how I think we could help you?

Implementation Step: Design your own needs analysis

1. Brainstorm multiple open, closed, leading and request type questions
2. Rate them from least to most confidential
3. Pick your top 5-7
4. Practice out loud to test comfort and flow with your peer group or coach

From Features, Advantages
and Benefits to...

Stories and context

Feature, Advantage or Benefit ?

- A **Feature** is a characteristic or description of your people, your organisation, your products, your services, your activities and your strengths.
- An **Advantage** is what the characteristic does for the client
- A **Benefit** explains how that characteristic can benefit the client - specifically



using generic benefits!



Stories

- ✓ Illustrate Benefits
- ✓ Show social proof
- ✓ Contextualize solutions
- ✓ Verbal case study



“Tell stories
because
stories
aren’t
boring.”

- Jay Conrad
Levinson

Features, Advantages & Benefits - EXAMPLE

Feature

We are Canada's largest and longest running professional peer group focused on entrepreneurs. We also offer one-on-one coaching and we have over 28,000 members worldwide.

Advantage

We have a proven formula for running effective entrepreneur focused peer groups. Our one-on-one coaching makes sure you implement on the decisions and advice you get and our vast network can be tapped to get you specific advice and partnerships you're looking for.

Benefit

Advice from people who have been where you are now. Improved implementation to drive your business forward faster. Access to better and broader business data that can save you time and accelerate growth.

Story

Last year we had new member ABC Engineering who was hovering at \$3 million in revenues for 5 years. Their big challenge was the time and people hours it took to service accounts.

One of their peer group members introduced them to a construction management software company and consultant that was able to automate their processes and reduce average project time by 40%.

With the improved efficiency they were able to take on almost 50% more clients and tackle bigger more profitable clients. They also worked one-on-one with their coach to fine tune their value proposition with larger accounts.

This year they're on track for \$4.3 million in revenues and \$5 million next year. That's the power of putting the right entrepreneurs together in the right environment with a little coaching to support the process.

Implementation Step

- Review a core offering or product.
- Establish the FAB's (at least 5) for the offering.
- Try to think of stories or verbal case studies you can share.
- Present to your team or peer group.

Augmented Listening Through AI



Impromptu Zoom Meeting Oct 3, 2023 Add to Folder

[Share](#) [Copy summary for](#)

Recording visible to your team

ACTION ITEMS

[Extract Action Items from Transcript](#)

YOUR QUESTIONS

- ① "What you think?"
- ① "So is it a direct sales strategy for North America, instance, or are you thinking developing channel partners, resellers?"
- ① "And then the size of your team, what is the like the numbers of your team, how many people have you got on your team as far as from a sales perspective or the people you'd like to be selling?"
- ① "And then when is the date for this event? Do you have a..."
- ① "Big picture, is there any specific from a drill down perspective that are most important to deliver during that session?"
- ① "You're not out there filling your funnel, eh?"
- ① "Now within Salesforce, are you investing, are you investing in third party databases that connected to Salesforce like Zoom Info or an equivalent technology database that has key decision makers in the industry?"
- ① "What time of day are you looking for as far as for that event?"

TRANSCRIPT SUMMARY AI NOTES

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Deal Information

Prospect:
rathin, Head of Strategy for Cardio, a 57 year old instrumentation and geo-trending company based in India.

Call Context:
rathin set up the call to discuss potentially bringing in Shane as a sales trainer/speaker for Cardio's upcoming strategic retreat on October 16th.

Seats:
Not discussed

[Sales](#)

General
Capture any call's insights and key takeaways.

Candidate Interview
Delve into a candidate's experience, goals, and responses.

Customer Success
Experiences, challenges, goals, and Q&A.

Demo
Showcased journeys and impact.

One-on-One
Updates, priorities, support signals, and discussion.

Project Kick-Off
Vision, targets, and resources.

Project Update
Breakdown each task's status, discussion, and next steps.

Q&A
Recap questions with answers.

Retrospective
Capture processes to start, stop, and continue.

Sales
Unpack a prospect's needs, challenges, and buying journey.

Stand Up
Track daily progress, tasks, and obstacles.



Key Your Sales Growth

Don't let your sales growth stall. Your organization's success depends on your sales team's ability to identify and engage with the right prospects. This is where our AI-powered sales intelligence platform can help. Our platform provides you with the insights you need to identify and engage with the right prospects, so you can focus on selling and growing your business.

I am going to paste two documents. The first one which will be titled "Doc 1" will be a discovery call with a client [REDACTED]. The second document titled "Doc 2" is a one-page keynote seminar description. Using these two documents write 4 business outcomes the client will receive from the keynote. These outcomes should be in the context of what was shared in the discovery call:

 Doc 1:





Based on the information provided in "Doc 1" and "Doc 2", here are four business outcomes that [REDACTED] will receive from the keynote by Shane Gibson:

1. **Empowerment of Technical Sales Team:** The sales team, primarily made up of technically-focused engineers, will gain a comprehensive understanding of sales processes and techniques. They will be equipped with the skills needed for effective prospecting, building long-term relationships, and running impactful sales discovery calls, addressing their current discomfort with such sales activities.
2. **Shift in Growth Mindset:** Through Shane's session on "Exponential Selling", the sales team will be inspired to transition from an incremental mindset, limited to their existing network, towards an exponential growth mindset. This aligns with [REDACTED] goal of supporting a 5x growth over the next three years.
3. **Enhancement in Sales Strategy with Technology:** The keynote will offer insights into the impact of CRM and social media on quota attainment, and introduce the sales team to six essential SaaS/Cloud-based sales tools. This technological integration will boost [REDACTED] sales strategy, making them more competitive in the market.
4. **Leadership Sales Coaching:** Sales leadership at [REDACTED] will benefit from specific coaching tips and processes shared in the keynote. This will assist them in effectively guiding their teams, overcoming objections about virtual sales training, and ensuring consistent growth and reach expansion.

Mastering the Art of Conversation

- ✓ Work on being a complete listener
- ✓ Know your target markets key challenges and how your solutions create a desired future state
- ✓ Apply the needs analysis approach to all critical sales conversations
- ✓ Sell with context and stories
- ✓ Leverage AI to augment your people skills