

Discovery Questions

1. Before making a call, you should research the following information about a prospect. Your first question should be a verification question to confirm that the information you have gathered is correct. For example, “Our research indicates that your revenue is \$6 billion a year, your profit is \$550 million, and that you have 11,000 employees. Are my assumptions correct?”
 - A. Size
 - i. Revenue (sales)?
 - ii. Profit?
 - iii. Number of employees?
2. In your research, you should also develop a profile of the company and find answers to the following questions. If you can't find the information, you should ask appropriate, closed-ended questions.
 - A. How long have you been in business?
 - B. Business structure? (Examples: Public company, privately held, corporation, partnership, sole proprietor, franchisor, franchisee, e.g.)
 - C. Number of locations/outlets?
 - D. Distribution channel? (Retail, direct marketing, wholesalers, online, catalogues, e.g.)
 - E. Type of product/service? (Example: Impulse purchase, planned purchase, high priced, low priced, middle range, mass consumer, luxury, e.g.)
 - F. Peak selling season(s)?
 - i. Percent of yearly business at peak seasons
 - G. Business cycle? (Examples: Purchase once a day, once a week, once a year, once in a lifetime, e.g.)
 - H. Five largest customers?
 - I. How has your business changed in the past year?
3. Before making a call, you should research the following information about a prospect. Your next group of questions should confirm what you have learned.
 - A. Total marketing budget?
 - i. Direct selling?
 - ii. Advertising?
 - iii. Promotion? (% trade, % consumer; advertising/promotion ratio)
 - iv. Cause marketing, corporate relations, PR budget?
 - B. Total advertising/direct marketing budget in dollars?
 - i. Advertising rank in industry? (Who is #1, #2, and #3?)
 - ii. National, national spot, and local budgets?
 - C. Advertising as a percent of revenue (sales)—Ad/Sales Ratio.
 - i. Ad/Sales Ratio rank in industry (Who is #1, #2, #3?)
 - ii. Advertising rank in industry? (“What competitors spend more in what media?”)
4. During the discovery process (which will take several calls at different levels of an organization), you should find answers to the following questions:
 - A. “What research do you look at and what does it tell you?” (You need to know the answer to this question so that your eventual proposal doesn't contradict what they believe from their research).
 - B. Who in the organization will make the final decision?
 - i. A single decision maker (CEO, SrVP, Marketing, e.g.)
 - ii. The key influencers (CFO, SrVP Advertising, e.g.)
 - iii. Influencers (Ad committee, consultants, e.g.)
 - C. What is the organization's decision making process like (fast, slow, consensus, CEO only, consultants, e.g.)
5. “If I could wave a magic wand, and make three wishes come true for your company next year, what would you wish for?” (Examples: Increase profitability, reduce expenses, sell more product/service, introduce new products, increase share of mind (branding), increase stock price)
6. “What are your marketing goals?” Examples:

Introduce new product/service	Create demand
Introduce line extension	Change customer attitudes

Develop/increase traffic	Feature specialty products
Maintain market dominance	Develop seasonal buying
Recapture old customers	Build destination
Expand target market (age, geography)	Build private label
Establish or re-establish image	Increase profit margins
Build brand awareness	Increase response level
Reinforce leadership position	Promote special sales
Promote special events	Increase market share
Increase usage	Move up one market rank
Expand size of pie (market)	Dominate (own) a market

7. "What problems are you having in achieving those marketing goals?"
8. "What are your primary marketing strategies?" (Examples: Differentiation, Focus/niche marketing, or Low-cost Producer)
9. "What are your secondary marketing strategies?" (Examples: Defense, Offense, Flanker Brand, Fighting Brand, Guerrilla Marketing, Ambush Marketing, e.g.)
10. "What is your current market position?" (Examples: Dominant leader, number one, close second, follower, last, e.g.)
11. "Who are you trying to reach—who is your primary target customer?"
 - A. "What percentage of your business is done by your heavy users/big customers?" (Example: 85% of product bought by 15% of customers.)
 - B. "Who are your secondary target customers?"
 - C. "Who are your most profitable customers?"
12. "Why do your customers buy from you—what is your major appeal?"
13. "What messages or creative approaches have been most successful for you in the past?"
 - A. "Who (organization) does your creative?"
 - B. "Who (organization) does your media planning?"
14. "What advertising media are you currently using?"
 - A. "How is your budget allocated among the media you use?"
 - i. "Does this allocation reflect current media usage by consumers?"
 - B. "How effective are the media you are currently using?"
 - C. "How do you track the results/response to your advertising?"
 - D. "What advertising problems are you having and which ones are you trying to solve?"
 - E. "Are there any perceptions about your brand that you would like to change?"
15. "What do you want your advertising/direct marketing to do for you?"
 - A. "What are your advertising goals?" (Examples: Sales/transactions, branding, awareness, information, persuasion, or reminding/reinforcing)
16. "Who are your three/five biggest competitors?"
17. "Why do your customers buy from each of your major competitors?"
 - A. "What strategies do you have to capture share from your competitors?"
 - B. "How are you differentiating yourself from your competitors?" (Examples: Price, Quality, Convenience, Location, Selection, e.g.)
18. "What do you do better than your competitors?"
 - A. "What do they do better than you do?"
19. "What do you think of my medium of advertising?"
 - A. "Who owns the search terms most valuable to your business and industry?"
 - i. "Have you been monitoring your competitors' advertising activity, campaigns, and creative?"
 - B. "Are there any specific goals you have in mind for your advertising?" (Examples: Low CPMS, low CPCs, promotions, e.g.)
 - C. "What advertising/marketing element has produced the best ROI for you?"
20. "What time of year do you (A) plan and (B) buy advertising?"
21. "Are there any co-op dollars available?"
22. "Do you use promotions—if so what kind?" (Example: Sales, rebates, contests, sweepstakes, coupons, free samples, e.g.)
 - A. "Is your decision to purchase a medium based on doing a promotion?"

- B. "Do you create your own promotions or do you depend on the media or an outside agency or promotion company?"
- 23. "What are your criteria for judging the best proposal?"
 - A. "What are your metrics for success?"
- 24. "What do you think of my company?"
 - A. "What is the likelihood that you'd buy from us?"
- 25. "Is there anything I should have asked you, but haven't?"
- 26. "What questions do you have for me?"