
Sales Methodology

Manager coaching guides for all 12 modern B2B sales methodologies. Each guide includes the coaching purpose, key coaching questions, red flags to watch for, a coaching scenario with ideal response, and mastery indicators.

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How to Use These Coaching Guides

These guides are designed for front-line and second-line managers who are coaching reps on sales methodology adoption. Each guide follows the same structure:

Purpose

What the manager is trying to build in the rep through coaching on this methodology.

Manager Coaching Questions

3-4 specific questions to ask in a deal review or 1:1 coaching session.

Red Flags

Observable signals that the rep is not applying the methodology correctly.

Coaching Scenario

A realistic deal scenario with a description of what the ideal response looks like.

Mastery Indicators

Observable behaviors that indicate a rep has mastered this methodology.

COACHING TIP: Do not try to coach all methodologies simultaneously. Identify the 1-2 methodologies your team uses most and coach them deeply before adding others. Methodology adoption happens through repetition in deal reviews, not training decks.

LAYERING METHODOLOGIES: High-performing teams use 2-3 complementary frameworks. Common stacks:

- MEDDIC for qualification + SPIN for discovery + Challenger for value positioning
- SPICED for urgency + Command of the Message for consistent language
- Command of the Sale for stakeholder mapping + JOLT for late-stage stalls

MEDDICC

Manager Coaching Guide | Qualification Framework

COACHING PURPOSE

Ensure reps have comprehensive deal intelligence before resources are committed. MEDDICC scoring should be the language of every pipeline review. If a rep can't score a MEDDICC element, that is the coaching topic -- not the forecast number.

MANAGER COACHING QUESTIONS

- ? Can you name the Economic Buyer for this deal? Have you met them directly -- or are you one step removed through the champion?
- ? What does your Champion say when you ask why your solution wins over the competition? Have you actually tested them with a real ask?
- ? Walk me through the Decision Process -- who is involved at each step, who can say no, what is the timeline to signature?
- ? What Metrics define success for this deal in the buyer's language -- not yours? What number did they put on the problem?

RED FLAGS TO WATCH FOR

- Rep has not met the Economic Buyer after 4+ meetings and significant SE or executive resources have been committed.
- Pain is described as "they want to improve their process" -- no root cause, no business impact number confirmed.
- The Champion has been identified but never tested with a real ask -- schedule the EB meeting, share materials internally.
- Competition is listed as "unknown" after Stage 3. This is never acceptable -- ask directly.

COACHING SCENARIO

SETUP

Rep says: "The deal is strong -- our champion loves the product and we're in final evaluation." Ask them to walk you through the MEDDICC score.

WHAT GOOD LOOKS LIKE

Manager expects: confirmed Pain with a dollar figure, named Economic Buyer with a meeting on the calendar, mapped Decision Process with a date, named Competition with a differentiation strategy. Any "unknown" element becomes the immediate action item before the deal moves forward in forecast.

MASTERY INDICATORS

- Scores every deal \$25K+ without being asked. Updates MEDDICC after every customer interaction.
- Can name the Economic Buyer, Champion, and Competition for every active deal from memory without looking at notes.
- Uses MEDDICC gaps proactively to request manager help -- SE support, executive sponsor introduction, or champion coaching.

SPICED

Manager Coaching Guide | Discovery + Urgency Framework

COACHING PURPOSE

Ensure reps build urgency by anchoring deals to real buyer timelines, not rep end-of-quarter pressure. Every Stage 3+ deal must have a documented Critical Event with a specific buyer-owned date. "End of quarter" is not a Critical Event.

MANAGER COACHING QUESTIONS

- ? What is their Critical Event -- and is it the buyer's date, or yours? What business event creates the forcing function?
- ? How did you quantify the Impact? What specific number -- dollars, hours, risk -- did the buyer put on the problem?
- ? What happens to this person personally if the problem is not solved by the end of this year? What is their professional risk?
- ? Have you confirmed the Decision process completely -- who signs, what is procurement's role, what is the timeline?

RED FLAGS TO WATCH FOR

- "The timing is flexible" accepted without working to surface or create a Critical Event with the buyer.
- Impact is described qualitatively: "they want better visibility" or "they want to scale" -- not a dollar amount or time measure.
- Pain is technology-level, not business-level: "they need an API integration" instead of "they lose \$X per week to manual reconciliation."

COACHING SCENARIO

SETUP

A SPICED deal at Stage 3 with a projected Q2 close. The buyer just told the rep: "we're still evaluating timelines." What does the rep do?

WHAT GOOD LOOKS LIKE

Diagnose: this is a Critical Event problem. Return to Impact -- re-quantify the cost of delay explicitly. Then ask: "Is there a business event in the next 90 days where having this solved would matter?" Use the champion to surface internal deadlines -- budget cycles, go-live dates, board reviews. Never accept timeline ambiguity without a plan to resolve it.

MASTERY INDICATORS

- Every Stage 3+ deal has a documented Critical Event with a specific buyer-owned date in CRM.
- Impact is always quantified in the buyer's own numbers, not rep assumptions or industry benchmarks.
- Can distinguish between buyer urgency and rep urgency -- and knows how to convert vague timelines into real forcing functions.

Sandler Selling System

Manager Coaching Guide | Consultative / Equal-Footing Framework

COACHING PURPOSE

Build reps who qualify hard, commit early, and never chase deals. Mutual respect is the goal -- both buyer and rep decide together whether there is a fit. A rep who cannot say no to an unqualified deal is not using Sandler.

MANAGER COACHING QUESTIONS

- ? Did you set an Upfront Contract for that call? What was the specific agenda and agreed outcome? What happened when the outcome was not achieved?
- ? What is the pain at the root-cause level -- not the surface symptom? What does it ultimately cost the business?
- ? Have you confirmed they have budget, authority, and time to act? How did that conversation go?
- ? What specific next step did you get -- with a date and calendar invite -- or did you say "I'll follow up"?

RED FLAGS TO WATCH FOR

- Rep says "I'll follow up next week" without a committed, calendar-blocked next step from the buyer.
- Pain is described as "they want to improve their process" with no root cause explored and no cost confirmed.
- Budget was never discussed because "it felt too early" -- after a demo and two discovery calls.
- Rep gave a full demo before Pain and Budget were confirmed. This is free consulting.

COACHING SCENARIO

SETUP

A prospect said "send me the proposal and I'll get back to you." The rep sent it 3 days ago. What should the rep have done differently?

WHAT GOOD LOOKS LIKE

A Sandler rep would have set an Upfront Contract before the proposal was sent: "Before I put this together, I want to make sure it's useful. Can we agree that once you review it, we schedule 30 minutes to go through it together and you'll tell me yes, no, or not yet?" No contract = no proposal. The proposal is not a closing tool -- it is a conversation tool.

MASTERY INDICATORS

- Every call starts with an explicit Upfront Contract -- the rep can recite it from memory for any stage of the deal.
- Never follows up twice without getting a concrete commitment. Qualifies out deals that will not give a clear next step.
- Budget is confirmed before any demo, proposal, or SE time is ever invested.

GAP Selling

Manager Coaching Guide | Problem-Centric Discovery

COACHING PURPOSE

Develop reps who diagnose before they prescribe. No confirmed Current State = no demo. No quantified gap = no proposal. The buyer must be able to articulate the gap in their own words before the rep presents anything.

MANAGER COACHING QUESTIONS

- ? Did you articulate their Current State with specifics -- symptoms, root cause, business impact -- before showing anything?
- ? Can the buyer describe their Future State in their own words? Did they co-create it with you, or did you describe it for them?
- ? Did you make the gap explicitly expensive? What number did the buyer confirm as the cost of staying in the current state?
- ? At what point in the process did the demo happen relative to Current State confirmation?

RED FLAGS TO WATCH FOR

- Rep jumped to demo within the first two discovery calls before confirming Current State problems.
- "Discovery" was asking about use cases and technical requirements -- not about problems and business impact.
- Deal is at Stage 4 but the current-state problem has not been documented in the buyer's words anywhere in CRM.
- Rep describes the opportunity as "they want our integration" not "they are losing \$X because of Y problem."

COACHING SCENARIO

SETUP

Rep had a great demo call. Buyer asked great questions. But in pipeline review, the rep cannot describe the buyer's current-state problems or quantify the gap. They are calling it Stage 4.

WHAT GOOD LOOKS LIKE

Reclassify to Stage 2. Assign the rep a specific homework task: go back and run a Current State / Future State discovery call. The demo happened too early -- the rep must re-earn the right to propose by confirming the gap in writing and ideally getting the buyer to confirm it in their own words over email or in a follow-up call.

MASTERY INDICATORS

- Never presents before confirming Current State problems with specific business impact numbers.
- Buyer can articulate the gap in their own words -- the rep can quote them directly from CRM notes.
- Solution presentations are anchored to specific confirmed problems, not generic product capabilities.

SPIN Selling

Manager Coaching Guide | Research-Backed Question Framework

COACHING PURPOSE

Shift reps from feature-pitching to question-led discovery. The goal is for the buyer to articulate the value of solving the problem -- not the rep. If the rep is doing most of the talking in discovery, SPIN discipline is not being applied.

MANAGER COACHING QUESTIONS

- ? In the last discovery call recording, how many Implication questions did the rep ask? Can they name two specific ones they used?
- ? Did the buyer articulate the value of solving the problem in their own words -- or did the rep tell them what the value was?
- ? What Problem questions surfaced explicit, stated dissatisfaction vs. just general "areas for improvement"?
- ? What was the question-to-talking ratio on that call? Was the buyer talking more than 50% of the time?

RED FLAGS TO WATCH FOR

- Rep summarizes discovery calls as "we covered their requirements" -- requirements are not problems.
- Implication questions are absent from call notes or recording. Rep moved from Problem identification directly to demo.
- Need-Payoff questions are closed-ended: "Would it be helpful if...?" instead of "How valuable would it be if you could...?"
- Call recordings show the rep talking more than 60% of the time during a "discovery" call.

COACHING SCENARIO

SETUP

Pull up the last discovery call recording. Count the number of S, P, I, and N-P questions the rep asked. What is the distribution?

WHAT GOOD LOOKS LIKE

Ideal distribution: fewer than 5 Situation questions, 3-5 Problem questions, 5+ Implication questions, 3+ Need-Payoff questions. Coach toward the I and N-P side -- these are the value-building questions. If the rep cannot name the Implication questions they asked, they did not ask them. Assign: on the next discovery call, the rep must ask at least 5 Implication questions and note them by name in the call debrief.

MASTERY INDICATORS

- Designs a SPIN question sequence before every key discovery call and reviews it afterward.
- Buyers consistently articulate the value of solving the problem unprompted -- the rep does not have to.
- Call recordings show the buyer talking 60%+ of the time during discovery.

Challenger Sale

Manager Coaching Guide | Insight-Led Sales Framework

COACHING PURPOSE

Develop reps who lead with insight, not rapport. The Challenger is a teacher first and relationship builder second. If the rep opens every meeting by asking about the buyer's weekend, they are a Relationship Builder -- the weakest profile in complex B2B sales.

MANAGER COACHING QUESTIONS

- ? What commercial insight did you open with in the last intro meeting? Did it reframe how the buyer sees their problem -- or did it just confirm what they already knew?
- ? How did you tailor the message for each stakeholder in the room? Can you describe each person's specific concern and how you translated the insight for them?
- ? When the buyer challenged you on price or pushed back on timeline, did you respond with expertise and value -- or did you concede?

RED FLAGS TO WATCH FOR

- Rep opens calls asking about the buyer's weekend, industry trends, or their last quarter before delivering any insight.
- "Tailoring" means changing the title and logo on the deck -- not changing the substance of the message per stakeholder.
- Rep concedes on price, timeline, or scope when challenged, instead of returning to the value framework and confirmed ROI.
- The "insight" is a product capability -- not a commercial or market-level reframe of the buyer's problem.

COACHING SCENARIO

SETUP

Rep is going into an intro call with a new VP of Sales at a Series C company. They have a product deck with screenshots ready to share. What needs to change?

WHAT GOOD LOOKS LIKE

Remove the product screenshots from slide 1. Open with a commercial insight: "Most VP Sales at your stage are focused on adding headcount to hit plan. But our data shows that the fastest-scaling teams grow slower in headcount and faster in rep productivity. Here is what separates them..." Lead with the reframe. Connect to the product only after the insight has landed and the buyer has engaged with it. The product is the solution to the insight -- not the opening.

MASTERY INDICATORS

- Has 3 ready commercial insights for their top 3 ICP segments, rehearsed and tested in discovery calls.
- Customizes every deck with stakeholder-specific framing -- not just name and logo changes.
- Can defend value under price pressure using the buyer's own confirmed ROI numbers without checking notes.

Solution Selling

Manager Coaching Guide | Pain-Led Consultative Framework

COACHING PURPOSE

Ensure reps diagnose before they prescribe. No demo before confirmed pain. Vision is built by the buyer, not the rep. If the rep cannot describe the pain in the buyer's own words, the deal is not at the stage it appears to be in the forecast.

MANAGER COACHING QUESTIONS

- ? At what point was the pain confirmed -- before or after the demo was scheduled?
- ? Did the buyer help build the vision, or did the rep describe it and ask "does that make sense?"
- ? What specific pain type is this -- admitted, diagnosed, or created? How does the pain type change the approach?
- ? What proof asset did you bring to this deal, and why did you select that specific reference for this buyer?

RED FLAGS TO WATCH FOR

- Demo was scheduled based on inbound interest or a feature request -- before any pain was confirmed.
- Vision was built with product features: "our tool does X and Y" instead of buyer outcomes: "you said you wanted to achieve Z."
- "They loved the demo" -- but the pain is not documented in the buyer's words anywhere in CRM notes.
- A generic case study was used that does not match the buyer's industry, pain type, or company size.

COACHING SCENARIO

SETUP

A rep gets an inbound request: "we'd like to see a demo of your product." Standard response is to schedule it. What should a Solution Selling rep do instead?

WHAT GOOD LOOKS LIKE

Before confirming the demo, run a 15-minute discovery call: "Before I show you the platform, I want to make sure I show you what is actually relevant to your situation. Can you tell me what's happening today that made you reach out?" Confirm pain type. Confirm the vision of what solved looks like. Then customize the demo to show exactly that -- nothing else. This produces a more relevant demo and confirms pain before investment.

MASTERY INDICATORS

- Pain is documented in CRM in the buyer's exact words before any demo is scheduled.
- Can identify pain type (admitted, diagnosed, or created) and adjusts approach accordingly.
- Proof assets are always selected to match the specific pain, industry, and buyer profile -- never a generic library pick.

Value Selling

Manager Coaching Guide | ROI-Led Enterprise Framework

COACHING PURPOSE

Develop reps who sell outcomes and defend price with business case logic, not discounts and apologies. The Business Value Assessment must be co-built with the buyer -- not created by the rep alone. Buyer-owned numbers are defensible. Rep assumptions are not.

MANAGER COACHING QUESTIONS

- ? Do you have a Business Value Assessment for this deal? Was it built with buyer data or industry benchmarks?
- ? Has the Economic Buyer confirmed the value metrics and the Value Hypothesis?
- ? When procurement pushed back on price, what specific ROI data did you use to defend it? Did you anchor to the buyer's own numbers?
- ? What is the payback period on this investment? Can the buyer articulate it without looking at your proposal?

RED FLAGS TO WATCH FOR

- Rep describes the deal as "they want our integration" instead of "they want to achieve \$X outcome by Y date."
- Business case was built by the rep without buyer input -- the numbers are not owned by anyone at the buyer's company.
- Rep conceded on price without first returning to and defending the ROI and payback period.
- Deal is in Stage 6 (Negotiation) with no documented business case. Procurement now owns the conversation.

COACHING SCENARIO

SETUP

Procurement has come back asking for a 25% discount. The deal is \$200K. Rep is preparing a revised proposal. What do they need to do before they respond?

WHAT GOOD LOOKS LIKE

Stop. Do not send a revised proposal. Schedule a call with the Economic Buyer -- not procurement -- and reopen the business case: "Before we discuss investment level, I want to make sure we're still aligned on the value we quantified together. You confirmed \$1.4M in annual savings. A \$200K investment gives you a 7-month payback. What question do we need to answer about the investment?" Let the value do the work. The EB negotiates value. Procurement negotiates price. They are different conversations.

MASTERY INDICATORS

- Every deal \$75K+ has a co-built Business Value Assessment before the proposal is sent.
- Can walk any Economic Buyer through the full business case in 10 minutes without a deck.
- Never opens price negotiations without first returning to the confirmed ROI and payback period.

Command of the Message

Manager Coaching Guide | Messaging & Value Framework

COACHING PURPOSE

Ensure every rep tells a consistent, value-anchored story -- and that the story is built from confirmed buyer inputs, not rep assumptions. If two reps describe the same product differently in the same week to the same buyer committee, Command of the Message has not been adopted.

MANAGER COACHING QUESTIONS

- ? Can you walk me through the Before State for this deal -- what specific problems did they confirm, with what cost?
- ? What Positive Business Outcomes did the buyer confirm, and what are the measurable metrics?
- ? Are the Required Capabilities documented in the buyer's language or your product's language?
- ? Can you tell the full CoM value story -- Before State to Positive Business Outcomes -- in under 60 seconds?

RED FLAGS TO WATCH FOR

- Reps describe deals with product features: "they want our [capability]" instead of outcomes: "they want to achieve [result worth \$X]."
- Before State and Future State were never explicitly confirmed with the buyer -- they are rep assumptions built from the sales deck.
- Demo agenda was set by the rep based on what they wanted to show, not driven by confirmed Required Capabilities.
- New rep cannot articulate a clear CoM value story for any active deal after 45 days in the role.

COACHING SCENARIO

SETUP

A rep is about to run a demo for a mid-market VP of Operations. They have had one discovery call and planned to show the full platform. What do you ask them before they go in?

WHAT GOOD LOOKS LIKE

"What is their Before State? What Negative Consequences did they confirm? What are their Required Capabilities in their words? What Positive Business Outcomes are they expecting?" If they cannot answer all four with specifics, the demo agenda has not been earned yet. Send them back to complete two-sided discovery before the demo. The demo is not the discovery -- it is the proof point for what was already confirmed.

MASTERY INDICATORS

- Discovery notes always document both sides: Before State / Negative Consequences AND Required Capabilities / Positive Business Outcomes.
- Demo decks are customized per deal to reflect confirmed Required Capabilities -- not templated with generic screenshots.
- Can deliver the 60-second CoM value story for any active deal from memory, in the buyer's language.

Conceptual Selling

Manager Coaching Guide | Strategic Account Framework

COACHING PURPOSE

Develop reps who understand what each stakeholder is personally trying to accomplish -- not just what the company needs. In strategic selling, personal wins drive organizational decisions more than org charts do.

MANAGER COACHING QUESTIONS

- ? What is this specific buyer's concept of success? Not the company's stated goal -- what does this individual person believe a successful outcome looks like?
- ? Did you complete a Golden Buyer Sheet before the last key call? What did you learn about their personal win?
- ? What specific commitment did you get at the end of the last meeting -- action, owner, date? Or did you say "I'll be in touch"?
- ? How did you connect your solution to their stated concept -- can you show me specifically where you made that translation in the conversation?

RED FLAGS TO WATCH FOR

- "Meeting went well" -- but no specific commitment was achieved and no next step is on the calendar.
- Rep does not know the personal interest of each key stakeholder -- only the company's stated business goals.
- Same pitch delivered to different personas in the same buying committee without concept-specific tailoring.
- Golden Buyer Sheet was not completed before the call and the conversation was improvised.

COACHING SCENARIO

SETUP

Rep is heading into a call with the CFO of a target account. They have a product deck prepared. What do they need to do before they walk in?

WHAT GOOD LOOKS LIKE

Complete the Golden Buyer Sheet for this CFO before the call. Answer: What is this CFO's concept of a successful outcome? What are their specific concerns -- budget risk, implementation risk, ROI timeline, board visibility? What is their personal win if this project succeeds? Then open the call in information-gathering mode -- not pitch mode: "Before I show you anything, I'd love to understand your perspective. From your vantage point, what would a successful outcome for a project like this look like?" Build from their concept, not yours.

MASTERY INDICATORS

- Golden Buyer Sheet completed for every key stakeholder before every significant meeting.
- Every call ends with a specific, calendar-blocked commitment -- never "I'll follow up."
- Can articulate each stakeholder's concept of success, concerns, and personal win from memory.

Command of the Sale (Miller Heiman)

Manager Coaching Guide | Account Strategy Framework

COACHING PURPOSE

Ensure reps can navigate complex stakeholder dynamics systematically, not reactively. Every buying influence must be identified, engaged, and understood. Deals lost at closing are almost always traceable to unengaged buying influences earlier in the cycle.

MANAGER COACHING QUESTIONS

- ? Have you mapped all four buying influences? What is each person's receptivity -- Growth, Trouble, Even Keel, or Overconfident?
- ? Who is your Coach in this deal -- and have they actually helped you navigate something? Have you tested them with a real ask?
- ? What is the Personal Win for the Technical Buyer? Have you addressed their specific concerns or just cleared the requirements checklist?
- ? Are there any buying influences you have not met or spoken to directly after Stage 3?

RED FLAGS TO WATCH FOR

- Rep has strong relationships with User Buyers and a champion but has not met the Economic Buyer after 4+ meetings.
- No Coach has been identified despite 3+ stakeholders and a 6+ month sales cycle.
- "Technical Buyer is blocking the deal" -- but rep has not mapped or addressed their specific concerns.
- Win Results are described only at the organizational level -- personal wins for each stakeholder are unknown.

COACHING SCENARIO

SETUP

Deal is at Stage 5. Rep has great relationships with two User Buyers and the project champion. But the Economic Buyer has never been in a meeting. Procurement is now involved and asking for a 30% discount.

WHAT GOOD LOOKS LIKE

This is a classic champion-only trap. The champion was never developed into an access path to the Economic Buyer -- now procurement owns the financial conversation. Immediate action: work with the champion to schedule an executive sponsor meeting with the EB focused on business outcomes and Win Results -- not features. Address the Technical Buyer's concerns through the procurement liaison simultaneously. Never negotiate price without EB alignment on value. This situation should have been identified and addressed at Stage 2.

MASTERY INDICATORS

- Blue Sheet is updated after every key interaction and reviewed in all formal deal coaching sessions.
- Can walk through each buying influence's receptivity, Organizational Results, and Personal Win from memory.
- Has a named and tested Coach in every deal past Stage 3 -- someone who has actively helped, not just someone who is friendly.

JOLT Effect

Manager Coaching Guide | Late-Stage Indecision Framework

COACHING PURPOSE

Develop reps who diagnose and resolve buyer indecision -- not ones who wait it out, add more information, or follow up passively. 56% of losses are no-decision. The rep who responds to indecision with more data is making the problem worse.

MANAGER COACHING QUESTIONS

- ? This deal has slipped again. Has the rep diagnosed the specific source of indecision -- are they overloaded, uncertain, or afraid of the downside?
- ? What recommendation has the rep made -- specific configuration, scope, timeline, and reason why it is right for this buyer?
- ? Is the rep adding more information -- case studies, options, use cases -- to resolve indecision? That is the wrong move.
- ? What risk has been taken off the table? What is the buyer's specific fear and how has it been addressed concretely?

RED FLAGS TO WATCH FOR

- "They just need more time" accepted as a reason without a plan to diagnose and address the indecision.
- Rep has been sending more use cases, configuration options, and case studies to a stalled buyer -- adding to overwhelm.
- No specific recommendation has been made -- rep is still asking "what would you like to do?"
- Deal has slipped 2+ quarters with no change in approach -- same follow-up, same materials, same result.

COACHING SCENARIO

SETUP

A deal has slipped three quarters in a row. Every quarter: "we are still working through it internally." The rep has been sending follow-up emails with new case studies and additional use cases each time.

WHAT GOOD LOOKS LIKE

Stop sending information. More information is feeding the indecision. Diagnose: schedule a call and ask directly -- "What specifically are you still working through?" Then: make a direct recommendation (not a menu of options), simplify the scope to reduce overwhelm, offer a structured pilot with defined success criteria to reduce the perceived risk of the wrong decision, and name the cost of another quarter of delay using the Impact number confirmed earlier in the deal. If they still cannot commit after these four steps, this may be a disqualification conversation. Close it or move on.

MASTERY INDICATORS

- Diagnoses indecision type before every late-stage follow-up and adjusts the approach based on what was heard.
- Leads every late-stage conversation with a specific, reasoned recommendation -- not open-ended questions.
- Has a documented risk mitigation plan for every deal that has been stalled in Stage 5 or 6 for more than 3 weeks.