



Sales Poetry- Get on the ‘Discovery Quatrain’

In these times of financial and market unrest prospects are confused; fearful of making a mistake. As new home sales professionals, we have to help them get to their comfort zone during this very unsettled time to be buying a home. This means understanding the concerns of buyers as well as their dreams. Then we must help them minimize the former and maximize the latter; in other words, help them buy.

Not only am I a sales trainer who gets to see sales efforts across the country, I am a home shopper myself as I transition from a family home to an empty nest lifestyle. I am a real buyer with a willingness to act on the right property. And what I have found as I look for my new place astounds me. Despite the clear message that sales people must be more attentive to discovering wants and needs, and able to combat objections and stalls, in this more difficult market, I find most still showing the product and hoping it strikes the buyer’s fancy. It is depressing.

Every sales process I have ever seen puts the presentation *after* Greeting, Bonding and Discovery/Qualifying. Yet, when I walk into sales centers, the first thing I hear is about the “deal” the builder is offering. What do I care about the deal until I know if the home fits my wish list? Start by slowing down your heated rush to “sell” something. I’m betting traffic isn’t nearly what it used to be so you certainly have the time. “Visit” as they say in the south, with your prospect.

Why do salespeople have this fear of asking discovery questions? They are in uncharted territory and it is very uncomfortable. Salespeople need:

A systemized way to do discovery that takes the fear out and allows them;

1. To take the time to listen to what prospects say *and to observe non-verbal signals*;
2. To relax and let our prospects tell us what excites them, and then,
3. To only present the things that are of interest to the prospect

I remember a high school English teacher, teaching a poetic device called a quatrain – a 4-line poem or verse. I’ve taken that simple formula and applied it to the selling question/discovery process, calling it the “sales quatrain”. What it means is that, from the moment you meet a prospect, you’re only questions away from getting to the next step in the sales process. Let me explain the “sales quatrain” and how it works.



The Sales Quatrain: 4 Stanzas to discovering your Prospect

Stanza 1: Start the conversation with an open-ended question that has nothing to do with the home purchase. It should be 1.) Small talk, 2.) Non-threatening, and 3.) About them.

One way to be sure you are asking an open ended question is to start with these words: “Tell me about...”

Example: *“I see you’re driving an Audi. Tell me about your Audi.”*

Whatever they tell you will be important to them because they chose it. *So, listen!*

Prospect responds to Q1 with: *“Yeah, I love my Audi. It’s got Quattro all-wheel drive and makes me feel secure in the winter when I’m driving my family around.”*

Stanza 2: Follow up with another open-ended question based on their response to the first question. Ask for clarification on a single point of interest out of all the things that they mention in their first response

S2: *“So, secure driving must be important to you. Tell me about that.”*

Their response might be: *“We love to ski and this car is terrific on snowy mountain roads. I wouldn’t trust my family’s safety to anything less.”*

You just learned valuable information about their hobbies, interests and lifestyle... *if* you were listening.

Stanza 3: Now, Share something about yourself. Let yourself open up a bit. The more you reveal about you, the more they will feel comfortable letting you know about them.

“I know what you mean, I ski, too, and because my time off is valuable, I hate being caught on slippery mountain roads because somebody has stalled...”

Leads into Stanza 4.

Stanza 4: A closed-ended question that confirms their thought or position.

“...Does that bother you, too?”

Questions can be about anything non-threatening that gets your prospect talking – the weather, fall colors, the new mall, etc. Avoid topics such as politics, religion, etc.

When you’ve completed the first ‘generic’ quatrain, begin another based on something they mentioned in the first quatrain. The more you learn about your prospect, the more home-specific your quatrains can become. Just be curious. Quatrains never sound threatening or like an interrogation, and it’s easy and relaxing for you.

And, by listening, you’re building major rapport.



If you listen to the responses, you'll know which direction to go in and what to ask next. Very soon you'll progress to discussing their housing needs. A typical quatrain might be:

S1: *"Tell me about the homes you've seen so far?"* Let them talk.

S2: Open-ended question based on their response, perhaps keying in on a feature they're looking for;

S3: *"I've got something in mind that I'd like to show you that might be what you're interested in..."*

S4: *"Would you like to see it?"*

Tie your quatrains together, listen to the emotions behind your prospects answers, watch their body language and non-verbal signals, and you'll always know with confidence what to show them and how to present your product.

With this process, you never have to *sell*. You're helping them buy, and closing becomes a non-event. There's no trickery involved, it's just honest discovery. And, you'll never have to push a client into a home that isn't right for them.

But there is one major caveat: You *must* practice asking a true open ended question and then patiently listening to the response...not thinking about what you plan to say next.

You will need an arsenal of well thought out and rehearsed responses to any objection you are likely to get so that you can respond comfortably and credibly. The NAHB Survival tool kit is one great source of the information you need to craft these messages.

Let them vent about their frustrations and fears. Let them share their dreams of what the perfect home would be. Relax and listen! Wait until there is a real opportunity to share information then give only enough to get them talking again. This may mean thirty minutes or more. At some point, you will know the time is right to show them something... it's time for a presentation tailored specifically to their wish list. When you get a few "wow" comments, then it is time to ask them to buy. When they demur, it is time to truthfully discuss their reluctance and offer reasonable solutions to their concerns.

In other words, you must craft a selling process and use it every time just like you were taught before sales made themselves. Good Luck and Good Selling.