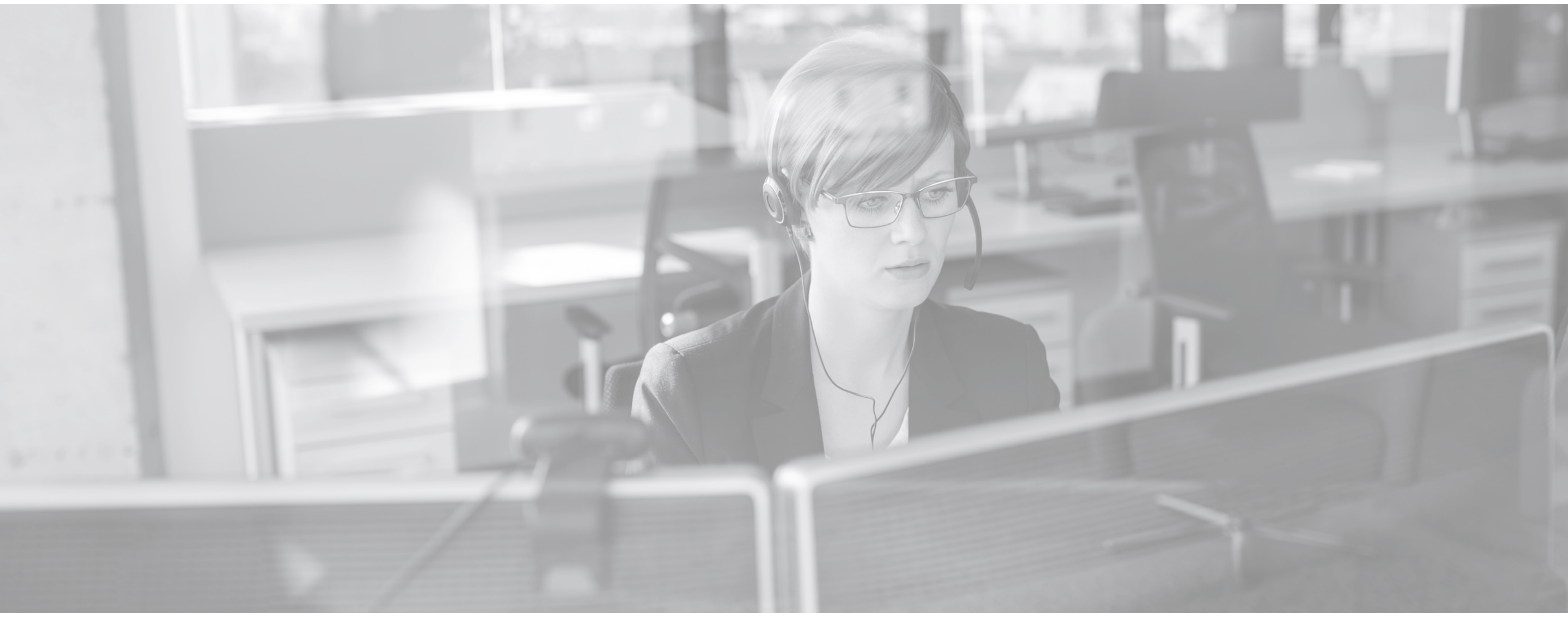
Costello



Discovery Call Template

A typical conversation flow that we've seen work successfully for both our customers as well as our team.

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The first few minutes of a sales conversation can impact whether or not a deal progresses. As sales professionals, we send hundreds of emails and leave multiple voicemails all leading up to that big moment when the decision maker actually gives us just a few minutes of their time. During that discovery window, we need to cut through the noise, share something valuable—and, hopefully, something that will get them to say “yes” to a next step. We also need to remember that discovery isn’t always a single event or a single meeting. We may be building our case over the course of multiple interactions -- and that’s okay.

But those first few minutes of a conversation can be paralyzing. Sales leaders may not realize we often freeze: we second guess our scripts, we forget to ask the important questions, we treat the individual as if they’re a different persona, or we face an objection we haven’t had before. As we all know, a single conversation can go down 2-3 common paths which, in and of itself, can either be exhilarating or terrifying (or more than likely a combination of both) for us as we handle the conversation.

Below, we’ll share a typical conversation flow that we’ve seen work successfully for both our customers as well as our team at Costello. The goal is simple: to work with the potential customer to identify whether or not there is a challenge or opportunity that we’re uniquely qualified to solve and to make the best use of the time in order to determine if our companies should move forward to a next step. We encourage you to take this template, personalize it, and and make it your go-to resource for every discovery conversation. And as your team learns from each conversation, determine how your template may change. Begin by asking questions such as:

1. **What are the goals for the conversation** (e.g., what you want to learn and what are the desired outcomes)?

2. **What is the high-level conversation flow** (e.g., outline of key topics)?

3. **What are the specific questions** that need to be asked and what is the right order in the conversation flow to accomplish our goals?

4. **What supporting content** like customer stories, objections, elevator pitches should be provided?

5. **Finally, how does the above change** if we’re selling to different personas?

In this template, we'll share the beginnings of what can become an agile document that your team can use as a starting point to make sure every discovery call results in a great conversation—regardless of the prospect on the other end. **Let's get started:**

Expectation Setting

This is one of the most often overlooked parts of a sales conversation. It's also one of the most important. Before you start asking questions, it's critical that you and your prospective customer are aligned on the goals, discussion topics, and potential outcomes of your time together. Their responses will also help you to frame up the conversation so it's valuable not just to you, but most importantly, to them.

Note: Throughout the conversation, make sure to add conversational aspects to the template by including soft language so that the conversation is as natural and as comfortable as possible for both parties.

TIME CHECK: Thank you for your time today. Just to confirm, does [TIME] still work for you or do you have a hard stop?

BUYER EXPECTATIONS: Before we get into the agenda, what are 2 or 3 things you would like to learn from today's conversation? *Note: if there is more than one person on the conversation, make sure to ask each one this question—particularly if you have not previously spoken to that particular individual.*

AGENDA: Before we get to the items you shared, I need to ask you some questions to better understand your business so I can tailor what we talk about to your needs. Are you okay with me asking those questions?

Tip: Suggest a next step for your prospect if they don't have something in mind. Add in phrasing such as: "Typically, the companies we've seen become successful will do X".

OUTCOME: If you don't think we can help right now, are you willing to tell me "no" at the end of this conversation? So if we don't hear "no" from either side today, what do you feel we should be the next step? *Note: This phrasing is important to establish a level playing field.*

Context

This section focuses on the prospective customer's current processes. If, for instance, your solution is for marketers, HR teams, Services professionals and so forth, your script will change to reflect this. Throughout the rest of this template, the persona we're speaking to is a VP of Sales or a "Sales Leader".

Note: These questions tend to be "fact oriented" and non-threatening. They provide useful information that will help you tailor the conversation or presentation later. For instance, a rep selling digital marketing software might ask, "What other marketing platforms do you use?" The information that's provided will be referenced later in the conversation.

Personas:

- Do you tailor your sales conversations to different personas?
- If so, can you share what those high level personas are?

Sales Model:

- What does your sales model look like?
- Outbound
- Inbound
- Channel
- Other?
- What is the size of your team?

Discovery

This section is truly the meat of the conversation. While we won't go deep into Costello's discovery process, make sure you and the other reps on your team are aligned on the questions to ask once the prospective customer chooses his pain point, taking into careful consideration the audience, industry, and persona: Who is involved? What is the process? What are the metrics? What does success look like? How long does it take? What are your goals? What questions do you ask? What is not working? If it's not working, how does it hurt your business?

Note: It's important to keep in mind that there are multiple methodologies available to sales teams. But at the end of the day, the acronyms and processes tend to roll up to the same set of things: Goals, Initiatives / Priorities, Challenges, Financial Value of Solving, Personal Value of Solving, Timelines, and so on. The structure of these questions will depend on your company's methodology.

Tip: If you understand the industry/role that you serve, then the number of levers the buyer can actually pull to move the needle are limited. The pain points a solution solves to address those levers won't change. By using this approach, you dig for pain in reference to whatever they say. In our scenario, our buyers may say something like, "we need to hire and ramp people" or "we need to get more core performers to quota" or "we want to get everyone using the same playbook."

Business Goals:

What are the top two goals for your team (or company) this year?

Business Goals Confirmation:

Allow me to share back what I heard:

- **Business Goal:** You want to...
- **Approach:** You would like your team to...
- **Challenge:** Your team isn't... and therefore...
- **Consequences:** As a result, ...
- **Value:** If you could solve this, ...

Tip: This is an important step because it confirms that you listened and will also help to surface any misunderstandings. As you're reviewing the business goals, think of it as the prospective customer's story. Rather than repeating word for word, use conversation cues like what we've included above so they better resonate with their own pain points and goals.

Note: This section is also a prime opportunity to share specific customer stories relative to the persona, industry, or business problem. Sharing customer stories helps to accomplish two things: 1) Show the buyer that they're not the only having this problem, which helps to disarm them, and 2) Demonstrate that you, the seller, have helped others solve this problem, which proves competence.

Decision

During the decision section, the conversation should focus on the process: who, how much, and when. Many sales professionals have a tendency to back off during this part of the conversation, but doing so will only make it more difficult to address later on. Above all else, transparency and confidence is key—your prospective customers will appreciate your candor and it will set the right tone for the entire sales process.

Key Stakeholders:

- In our experience working with companies like yours, we've learned that they sometimes want to involve other team members in the decision making process.
- Is there someone anyone else that should be involved?

Buying Process

- When you've purchased other solutions, can you explain what that process looked like?
- Were there any hidden steps that you didn't expect?

Budget:

- Leading companies typically make sizeable investments in their sales teams in order to see the results they want to achieve. Our software has a $X minimum for your first X reps, and then $X for each additional rep.
- Does this project already have approved funding, or is it something you'd have to request?
- How is budget determined at your company?

Tip: For those of us in sales, transparency is key—especially when it comes to budget. Don't be afraid to talk about pricing on the discovery conversation. It's much better to have the conversation upfront than to be faced with a major objection down the road!

Tip: When talking about timeline and on-boarding, be sure to explain the process so that the prospective customer has the right expectations as it pertains to timing and resources needed. Any timeline should include dates past the signature event and into the customer's version of success.

Timeline:

- If a customer is going to buy from us, they do so in X days. They do that because they want to accelerate the impact our solution can make on sales performance. For a typical customer, we anticipate on-boarding and rollout will take X.
- How are you thinking about timeline?

Tip: This part of the conversation tends to run long, which is why it's critical to save 5 minutes at the end of the conversation to address any remaining questions. It's very easy to push for too much info, only to be forced to get off the conversation and let next steps (addressed next) languish. Remember: time kills all deals!

Next Steps

- What are our agreed upon next steps?
- When should we set up our next conversation?
- What are our goals for this next conversation?

Tip: If there is no clear next step, understand what you should do if they don't respond. But ideally, the next step has an outcome attached to it. For instance, at Costello, we have an upcoming demo with SDR managers at a prospective client account. The purpose of that conversation is to get buy-in from the managers to move to a proof-of-concept. The decision at the end of the conversation should be "Should we send a proposal for the proof-of-concept?"

About Costello

Your sales professionals know what to do. Costello just helps them remember in the moment. Prep for conversations, ask timely questions, tell relevant stories, and easily sync key insights back to your CRM.

Manage deals proactively. Show managers and sales professionals the gaps in every deal so they can work together to move them forward. Turn tedious pipeline reviews into productive strategy sessions.

Know what's driving deal outcomes. Identify what's working on the frontline and replicate it across your entire team. Give your CEO and board confidence in your sales forecast. Integrated with platforms you love. Costello integrates seamlessly with Salesforce, G-Suite, Microsoft Outlook, and more.

Upload your template to Costello's real-time sales playbook platform and start closing more deals today. Learn more: [www.andcostello.com.](http://www.andcostello.com)