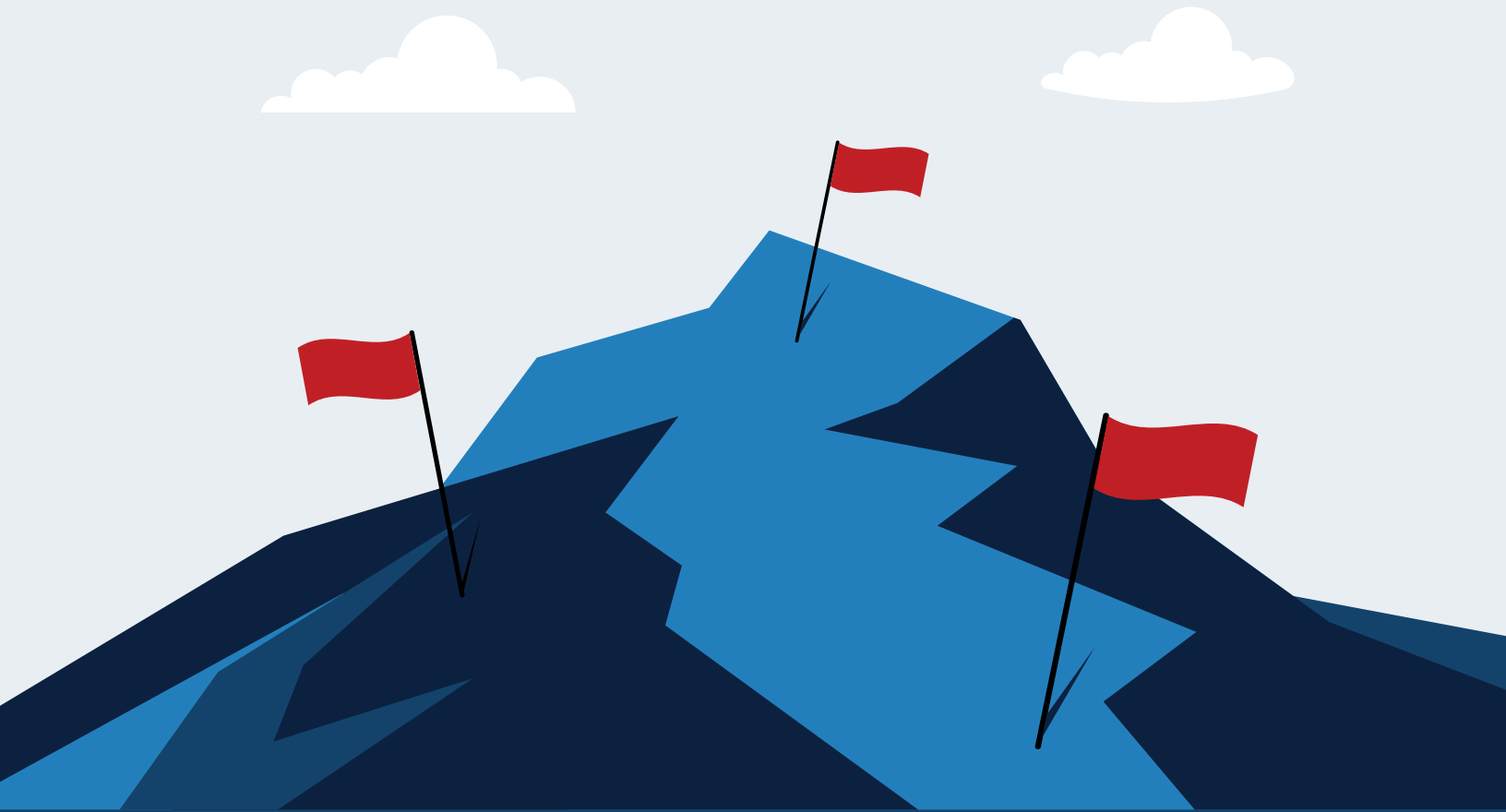


**Sales Leader Guide**

# Qualifying Sales Prospects

**8 Red Flags Your Buyer Isn't Ready**



THE BROOKS GROUP



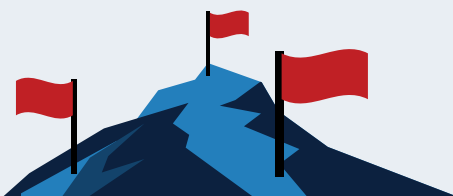
## Qualifying Sales Prospects

Prospecting is a balancing act. You want your sales team to fill their calendars with as many meetings as possible. But these opportunities have to be the right fit.

After all, you don't want your sellers to invest in prospects who aren't going to progress. And if they're not qualifying the right people, they have a much lower chance of closing.

And just because they can sell to someone doesn't always mean they should. Are they able to service the account profitably?

Your sellers need to know the **five characteristics of a qualified prospect**. It's also critical to look for common red flags: warning signs that suggest a particular customer is not worth their time.



Share these eight red flags with your sales team to help them focus on the right opportunities.



### Red Flag 1: Uninterested

One of the most blatant warning signs a prospect isn't interested in doing business with you is their apparent lack of interest in what you have to say. The customer will avoid eye contact, fidget, or seem preoccupied. If you see a customer displaying any of these tendencies, it may be time to move on to another opportunity.



### Red Flag 2: Unresponsive

Another warning sign is when a prospect doesn't respond to your efforts to communicate with them. If the customer doesn't answer email or return calls, this indicates they're not ready to move to the next stage of the **sales process**. The same goes for customers who are difficult to schedule meetings with. Picking up on this early ensures you don't annoy the prospect.



### Red Flag 3: Hard to Pin Down

A third red flag is when a prospect gives evasive answers to your questions. If the customer avoids answering straightforward questions, changes the topic, or seems apprehensive, these are all possible indicators they're not ready to move ahead. Avoidance is a telling sign the customer may not be as invested as you are.



### Red Flag 4: Stand-Offish

Another warning sign you may encounter is when a prospect uses a flat tone to respond to your questions or statements. The customer may be trying to tell you they're not ready by also disagreeing with everything you say, being skeptical of your ideas, or becoming confrontational.



### **Red Flag 5: Overly Demanding**

When a prospect requests something you consider unreasonable—a discount, freebie, or add-on—that's another red flag. Making demands that are impossible to fulfill, expecting too much, attempting to force a transaction, or acting entitled shows they're not ready to buy.



### **Red Flag 6: Disrespectful**

Another sign is impoliteness or condescension toward you. The customer who talks over you, interrupts you, or completely ignores your suggestions is unpleasant and possibly worse. While some individuals just have a brusque personality, prospects who are consistently rude are probably not a good fit.



### **Red Flag 7: Manipulative**

Look out for prospects who try to manipulate the discussion in any way by bringing up competitors or withholding information. A customer who attempts to dominate the discussion, gives hazy replies, changes their story, or comes across as fake is signaling they're not ready to buy.



### **Red Flag 8: Unprofessional**

One additional sign a prospect isn't a good fit for your company is a lack of professional behavior. While rapport is crucial, so is respect. If the potential customer is cursing, disregarding conversational norms, or behaving in a manner that isn't acceptable, it may be best to cut ties entirely. Noting this early can help reduce the chances of it getting to this point.



# 5 Characteristics of a Qualified Prospect

Qualifying prospects before they progress to the next stage of the sales pipeline is critical for reducing wasted time and increasing forecast accuracy. Make sure your sales professionals know the five characteristics of a prospect who's worth pursuing.



## Awareness of Need

Prospect is aware that they have a problem.



## Authority

Prospect has authority to take action or to influence the decision-making process.



## Sense of Urgency

Prospect has a timeline and feels the clock is ticking.



## Trust

Prospect feels they can rely on you, and they believe you're credible.



## Willingness to Listen

Prospect is open to engaging in a two-way communication about solutions.

## How to Develop Prospecting Skills

Most sales teams struggle with how to qualify prospects, even those that are meeting goals. Prioritizing qualification skills will pay off in the short and long term.

Find out how The Brooks Group's **Prospecting Strategies workshop** can help your sales team improve their prospecting results.

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