

Figure 1: SPICED Framework in the context of a Discovery Call

SPICED is a framework that helps you better diagnose your prospects.

Just like a doctor, your prescribed solution should help them achieve their desired outcomes—and that prescription requires you to solve the source of their pains, not just the symptoms.

Using SPICED as a framework, you can find and organize information systematically to make sure you understand your prospect’s background, pains, desired impacts, and how and when they will commit to your solution. Use SPICED as a framework to gather information on calls, for hand-offs between teams, (e.g., prospecting to sales, sales to customer success), or for summarizing deals during internal forecasting meetings.

SPICED, Defined

- S Situation**
Facts, circumstances, and background details about your prospect
- P Pain**
The challenges that brought the prospect your way
- I Impact**
How you impact your prospect's business
- CE Critical Event**
Deadline to achieve that impact
- D Decision**
The process, committee, and criteria involved in purchasing a solution

“ICE” Isn't Always Chronological

The “I” and “CE” of SPICED are not always uncovered in this order. If a prospect is aware they have a problem and educated on the different solutions available, they may tell you their desired Impacts and Critical Event in the first qualification call with an SDR. Unfortunately, this doesn't happen very often—but when you're actively listening, sometimes you can pick up on clues very early in the sales cycle and tease out Impacts and Critical Events with further questioning.

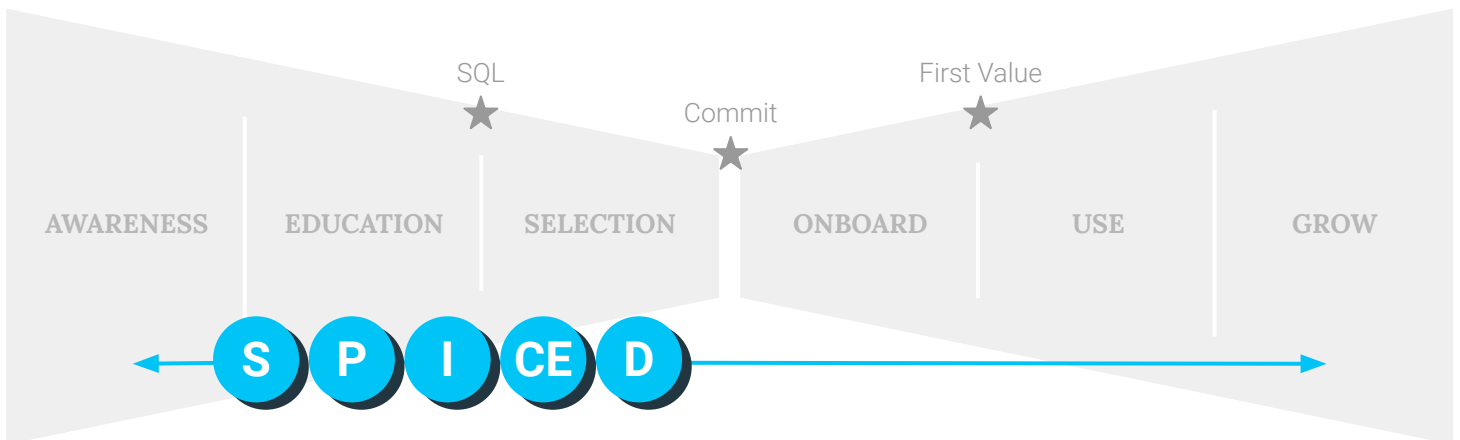


Figure 2: SPICED can be uncovered in the first qualification call, or over several discovery meetings.

How to use SPICED to diagnose

S SITUATION

The Situation defines the tools, people, industry, and landscape of the company. Situation questions help you understand the size of the opportunity, tools they use, and other facts to determine whether the prospect is a good fit for your solution.

Example Situational Questions:

- How many salespeople work in your San Francisco office?
- What CRM are you using today?
- I noticed on LinkedIn you're currently hiring for 30 SDRs. Did I get that right?

P PAIN

Pain addresses the acute challenges and frustrations the company, team, or individual has. These can sound like emotional issues caused by their current processes or desired improvements in workflow OR rational issues affecting the company as a whole, like cash flow, costly mistakes, or generating pipeline.

Example Situational Questions:

- How do you currently onboard and train your sales team?
- What is your process for building customized proposals for your customers through your CRM?
- How do prospective employees find relevant information about their positions?

I IMPACT

Impact questions reveal the core business objectives that your solution can help solve. Rational impacts typically fall into one of three categories: increasing revenue, decreasing cost, or improving the customer experience. But don't forget about the emotional impacts that your solution can solve for the prospect on an individual level.

Example Situational Questions:

- How do slow-ramping salespeople affect your ability to hit revenue targets?
- What happened the last time an inconsistent custom proposal caused your Finance team to work overtime to fix errors?
- What impact does a lack of visibility have on recruiting?
- To what extent is remote team collaboration important to you?

CE CRITICAL EVENT

Uncovering Critical Events requires recognizing similar patterns revealed by other customers to help you figure out the timing and events that matter to your prospect. Oftentimes, we confuse our Critical Event (hitting quota this month/quarter) with what the customer actually is driving towards.

If you discover an event or date that the prospect says is important, test how urgent that timing is by asking, "What happens if you miss that date?"

Example Situational Questions:

- Why is that date important to you?
- What happens if you do not have a solution by that date?

D DECISION

You will need to understand your prospect's decision process, decision committee, and decision criteria. Decisions are usually made by a group of stakeholders rather than a single decision-maker. Depending on the scope and size of the deal, you may need to map out your prospect's Decision Process. This requires understanding who needs to be involved, who will sign off, and all the approvals and steps involved in that process. You will also need to understand the criteria by which your prospect will evaluate any potential solution.

Example Situational Questions:

- Have you brought in a platform like this in the past?
- How does your buying process work? Are there any conversations we should start in parallel, like with Legal and Procurement? What about Security and IT reviews?



How to Use SPICED to Capture Opportunity Notes

SPICED - Opportunity Matrix (ACME Cyber Security Example)

<p>S Situation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3,000 Employees, 4 global offices • ACME has traditionally avoided cloud solutions entirely, but they started to push into the cloud in early 2017. • They are currently using Box, Salesforce, and Google across the organization. 	
<p>P Pain <i>(quantifiable)</i></p>	<p>Losing time and efficiency due to the inability to easily share data externally to global customers and partners.</p>	<p>Pain <i>(qualitative)</i></p> <p>Senior execs are concerned about the potential for a breach/leak (and the resulting bad PR) as the need to share sensitive data with third parties increases.</p>
<p>I Impact</p>	<p>A breach/leak of any sensitive IP data in Box would lead to significant monetary and reputational damage for ACME. They are seeking a solution to protect against this.</p>	
<p>CE Critical Event</p>	<p>The Board of Directors is looking for a solution to be in place by the company compliance meeting at the end of Q2.</p>	<p>Compelling Event</p> <p>ACME is hiring 20% more engineers in Q1, which will increase the risk of information leaks.</p>
<p>D Decision <i>(criteria)</i></p>	<p>Need a solution that can integrate with existing applications. They require full service, integration support, and cost-effective pricing.</p>	<p>Decision <i>(process and committee)</i></p> <p>The CFO signs all contracts above \$25,000. This decision will be recommended by the VP of IT, and approval will be needed from the CTO, CEO, and SVP of Product. Legal will likely require redlines of the contract.</p>
<p>Status Quo</p>	<p>ACME needs a solution in place and will move forward with something. They are considering several point solutions, but we are the only company that offers everything in one platform.</p>	
<p>Competitors</p>	<p>Dunder Mifflin, Luther Corp.</p>	
<p>Next Steps</p>	<p>ACME has an internal meeting in mid-January with the steering committee to share findings and discuss next steps.</p>	

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