

How to Drive the Decision Criteria

Most prospects have an arbitrary decision process where they inquire with a variety of stakeholders in the company on the decision criteria they will use to evaluate a solution. As a sales professional, you have to guide the prospect on the decision criteria they should be using.

Four Steps to Establish the Decision Criteria

- 1 Establish the decision criteria by talking to those involved in the use of the solution.
- 2 Identify a variety of options for addressing the decision criteria, such as competitors and substitute solutions.
- 3 Rank these options based on their decision criteria using research. This could include gauging each solution's ability to execute based on analyst reports, or customer feedback via a public review site.
- 4 Determine the impact that each criterion has on the customer's business.

Criteria	Options	Step 2				Step 4		
		You	Competitor	Substitute	No action	Impact	Revenue	Cost
1. Price		3	1	2	4		-\$	
2. Performance		1	2	3	4	\$\$\$	-\$\$\$	♡
3. Integration		3	2	1	4	-\$	-\$	♡
4. Support		2	3	4	1		-\$	♡♡
		Rank						

Step 1 is indicated by a bracket on the left side of the table, encompassing the 'Criteria' column.

➤ **An Uneducated Buyer Uses Weighting, an Educated Buyer Uses Impact**

During every vendor selection process, your buyer will likely think through something similar to the decision criteria chart in the previous step; this helps them rationalize their decision. They may rank you based on research they've done. An uneducated buyer often makes the mistake of weighing criteria and basing their decision on which solution has the most points checked off. However, an educated buyer decides based on impact.

The diagnose framework is a method for helping you establish impact with the customer during your discovery meetings. Now you need to use impact to help them re-prioritize their decision criteria.

Your prospect may make this kind of purchasing decision only once or twice over a period of years, but as a sales professional, you likely are helping dozens of customers every month. This makes you an expert, and your expertise is needed to help demonstrate to your prospect the impact of each criterion.

In the figure below, you'll notice that impact is measured by an increase in revenue, a decrease in cost, an improvement in customer experience (e.g., simple dashboards), and an improvement in customer interaction (e.g., fewer clicks to get work done).

Criteria	Options	Step 2				Step 4		
		You	Competitor	Substitute	No action	Impact	Revenue	Cost
Step 1	1. Price	3	1	2	4		-\$	
	2. Performance	1	2	3	4	\$\$\$	-\$\$\$	♥
	3. Integration	3	2	1	4	-\$	-\$	♥
	4. Support	2	3	4	1		-\$	♥♥
		Step 3						
		Rank						

➤ How Impact Improves Your Position

Emphasizing impact can help you improve your position in the prospect's rankings by doing the following:

DEPRIORITIZE: Your impact may help you de-prioritize one of the customer's criteria, like price. For example, your service may "cost" \$500/month more. However, your product may offer increased performance that generates \$2,000/month of additional revenue for your customer. This should prioritize the impact of the revenue increase from product performance over the impact of lower price.

INSERT NEW CRITERIA: Showing the impact of a new feature unique to your product can create new criteria the prospect wasn't considering before. For instance, a feature that builds momentum with the users (to eventually generate more revenue) is another powerful criterion you can insert. This type of feature often creates emotional impact felt by the team.

IMPROVE RANKING: You can also improve your ranking in any of the prospect's existing criteria by demonstrating more impact. By releasing your latest API to improve your solution, for example, you may generate greater impact by simplifying the customer's life. You can often make this clear to the prospect by using an existing customer as a reference.

1 De-prioritize	Impact	2 Insert New	Impact	3 Improve Impact	Impact
Performance	+\$\$\$	New Performance	+\$\$\$	Performance	+\$\$\$
Support	-\$\$\$	Feature X	+\$	Feature X	+\$
Integration	-\$	Support	-\$\$\$	Support	-\$\$\$
Price	-\$	Integration	-\$	Integration	-\$ < -\$\$\$
		Price	-\$		

➤ Competing Means Educating Your Customer Better Than Your Competitor

A well-educated customer will generally make the right decision for their business, so you should focus on educating the customer better than anyone else. The key to helping your prospect make the right selection is helping them understand the impact that their decision criteria have on their overall business. Do this by showing the business impacts of increasing revenue, decreasing cost, and/or improving the user experience.

Stack rank based on the impact it provides to the prospect's business.

Add a new criterion into the mix that provides impact.

Price has the least amount of impact on a business.

Threshold of major impact.

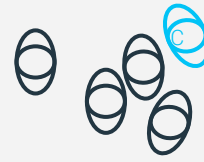
Trade-off Matrix	Impact on the business
Performance	Increases revenue by \$2,000/mo
New X	Increases revenue by \$1,500/mo
Integration	Save \$15k one-time + \$500/mo
Support	SLA of 2-hour response time
Price	Increases costs by \$500/month

Coaching Notes

Below is a sample weekly coaching schedule for practicing the concept of decision criteria.

Monday (50m)

1. Training on Decision Criteria
2. Coach forms two teams who will each create a Decision Criteria table for a prospect.



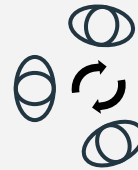
Tuesday (25m)

1. 25-minute roleplay with four people
 - Roleplay Decision Criteria
2. Practice how to improve your position (four ways).



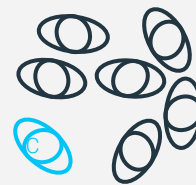
Thursday (25m)

1. 25-minute roleplay with four people
 - Roleplay Decision Criteria (different from yesterday)
2. Practice how to improve your position (four ways).



Friday (50m)

1. 50-minute meeting with the entire team
 - Roleplay a demo
2. Draw a decision table on the whiteboard.
3. Discuss lessons learned this week.



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