

GUIDE:

CLARIFYING PHRASES & QUESTIONS



WHAT THEY ARE & WHY YOU SHOULD ASK THEM ?

Clarifying questions and phrases are designed to get clarity about an issue or perspective. The goal is to expand your understanding. You are looking for additional information or an explanation. They work best when used with active listening.

To give an idea of when clarifying questions or phrases are helpful, consider the following examples:

Take It or Leave it

“This is the final offer; you can take it or leave it!”

When you are well prepared, understand the product or service, as well as the competitive pricing in the industry, the best response to take it or leave it is, “What is that price based on?”



Wait silently for an answer. Listen.

Did you receive a legitimate answer? Respond with facts that counter the pressure tactic and encourage conversation by asking ***additional clarifying questions***.

Concession Request

Your counterpart presses for a concession. Perhaps they need extended payment terms. Your initial response should be “there may be a path to that.” Followed by, “is that the last issue of concern?”

Counterpart Questions

When you are on the receiving end of a difficult question it’s natural to feel pressure to provide a quick answer to impress, imply confidence, or show you are in control. Fight the urge to give a quick answer. Apply the “hot potato” method. Throw a clarifying question back.

CLARIFYING QUESTIONS & PHRASES

1. What I heard you say is...
2. Help me understand...
3. What will you be using this for?
4. We appreciate what you've done/are trying to do. What if...
5. What is that price based on?
6. Could I ask a few questions to determine if my facts are correct?
7. What is the principle behind your action/proposal?
8. Do you have other constraints related to the price?
9. Let me see if I understand what you are saying...
10. Let me get back to you on that by
11. I have trouble following some of your reasoning.
12. Is a trial basis/period possible?
13. If we disagree, the implication will be...
14. What are you trying to achieve?
15. Could you reword your proposal?
16. Are you the authorized to sign the final agreement?
17. Could you explain what we both can gain by your proposal?
18. If our product/price/service is unacceptable, help us understand why you asked for our proposal?
19. Let me see if I understand your concern.
20. Would you consider...
21. Could you explain where the challenges are with my proposal?
22. How can we decide what is reasonable? What is fair?
23. Can we break the issue into more manageable parts?
24. I understand your position, could you clarify what it is you are concerned about?
25. Why do you think that proposal / price is reasonable?
26. Is (delivery date, price, warranty, etc.) the only concern?
27. Can we break the issue into more manageable parts?
28. What features/points are you most interested in?
29. Do you have time constraints?
30. How can we help present the proposal to your internal team?