Six Question Frameworks

Uncover Hidden Deal Killers

(For Sellers and Managers)

Demandbase™

30 MINUTES TO PRESIDENT'S CLUB

There are so many things in sales that can kill your deal if they go unaddressed. There are the obvious ones that are captured in frameworks like BANT or MEDDPICC, but there are also hidden deal killers that require you to sniff them out.

So whether you're a manager or a rep, we're breaking down the 6 question frameworks you can ask to suss out these hidden deal killers:

Deal Killer: Your problem matters to your champion but no one else cares

- Framework #1 for Sellers: Situation:Problem:Impact
- Framework #2 for Managers: Why 3x

Deal Killer: There's a silent evaluator who blows up the deal

- Framework #3 for Sellers: Big Team Demo? Go around the horn.
- Framework #4 for Managers: Up, Down, Around

Deal Killer: A hidden competitor reveals themselves too late

- Framework #5 for Sellers: Reveal a competitor… without introducing one
- Framework #6 for Managers: Vendor of choice lockdown

And guess what, your good friends at Demandbase are jumping into the detective work too.

You'll get questions you can ask as a rep, questions you can ask as a manager, and questions Demandbase can answer so that you never get blindsided in a deal again.

Deal Killer #1:
Your problem matters to your champion but no one else cares

The Situation

Oftentimes a champion will complain incessantly about the problem that they have. But the issue is that it's a problem that… only they have.

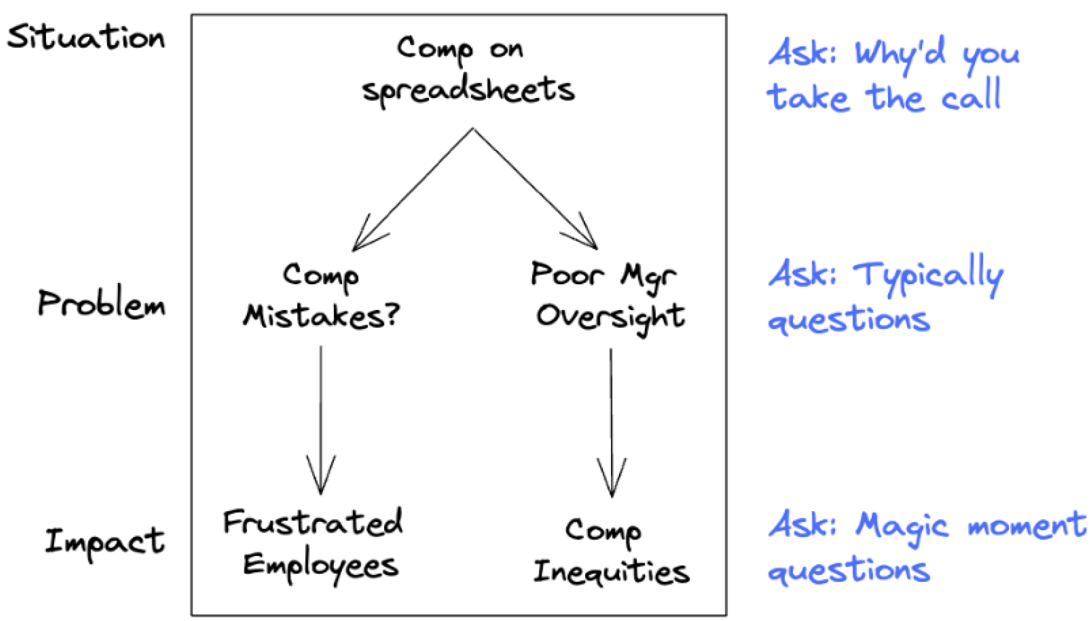
For example, when I was at Pave, we sold software that made it easy to run compensation reviews. Oftentimes there would be one Director of HR responsible for orchestrating the whole thing: their life would suck but no one else would feel the pain of the problem.

So in order to win the deal, you had to convince the organization why their **problem led to a chain reaction of bigger problems across the organization:** manual compensation reviews leads to errors, which lead to pay inequities due to lack of manager oversight.

That's a problem everyone cares about.

So how do you get that?

Rep Framework: Situation:Problem:Impact



As a rep, use the situation, problem, impact framework to drive deeper discovery. You want to map out three levels to the problem:

- **The situation they're in:** Using the Pave example, that'd be managing their compensation reviews on spreadsheets.
- **The problem with that situation:** The problem is that it takes an obscene amount of time and double-entry for one person to audit 300 compensation spreadsheets.
- **The impact of that problem:** That leads to compensation mistakes and an inability to properly oversee manager decisions due to insight, which creates comp inequities.

The way you navigate from situation to problem to impact are through these 3 questions:

To get their current situation: Ask why they took the call… or honestly just ask how they're doing this today (this one's not hard).

> ***Example:*** *I'm sure you don't take every call that comes your way. I'm curious, what prompted you to jump on the call with us?*

Use typically questions to turn that into a problem: If they don't share a problem when asking why they took the call, ask a typically question:

> ***Example:*** *Typically when I'm talking to people planning compensation on spreadsheets, it either takes so much time that they can't oversee the managers properly, or they find that they're making compensation mistakes trying to keep all 37 spreadsheets together. To what extent do either of those resonate?*

Use magic moment questions to turn problem into impact: The moment you find a problem, ask when they realized that it's a problem and you'll almost always get a story that points at the business impact (in this case, often they'll tell a specific story about a compensation mistake):

> ***Example:*** *My guess is you didn't wake up yesterday and think 'man, these managers can't make compensation decisions…' I guess, when did you realize that was a problem in the last cycle?*

Manager Framework: Why 3x

Many times I'd have a rep tell me that a deal was going to close. I'd ask why they would want to buy, and the rep would tell me: They love Pave.

"I love Pave" is not a problem.

Instead, I ask for three levels of granularity in pipeline reviews when discussing problems:

- Why is this a problem for your <u>champion</u>?
- Why is this a problem for the <u>organization</u>?
- Why is this a problem they need to solve <u>now</u>?

Additionally, can the rep answer this problem statement formula? If not, **more discovery** is needed.

The Problem Statement Formula

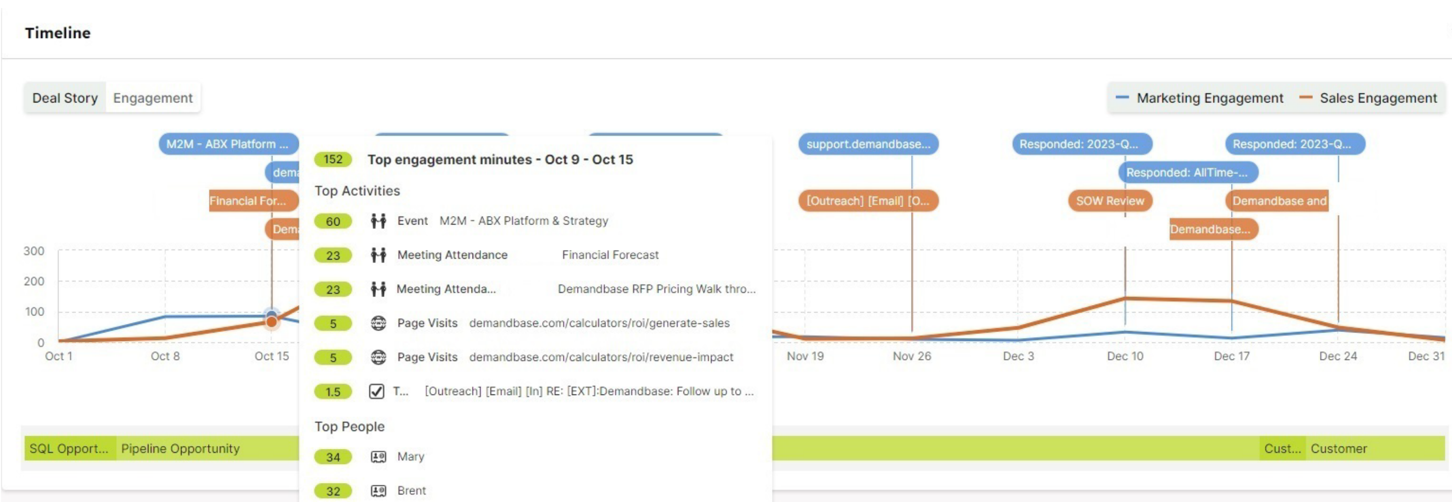
Despite trying [failed solution], we still can't achieve [desired outcome]. That's because of [problem], costing us [negative outcome].

Overall, if you can answer each of those questions with P&L impacting problems like lost employees, revenue, or customers (not process problems like clicks or hours spent), we're looking at a real deal.

Where Demandbase Helps: Does power even care?

As a manager and rep, oftentimes you wonder if this deal is even on the radar of power (the above-the-line budget holder). You can ask your champion, but the reality is you can't always trust that your champion has political power.

So Demandbase will allow you to quickly see [a] who you need to get involved in a deal and [b] if they actually have relevant engagement signals (ie: searching for your keywords or visiting your website):



Chances are, if you've never heard from power and they haven't even looked at your website... you've got some work to do.

Deal Killer #2: There's a silent evaluator who blows up the deal

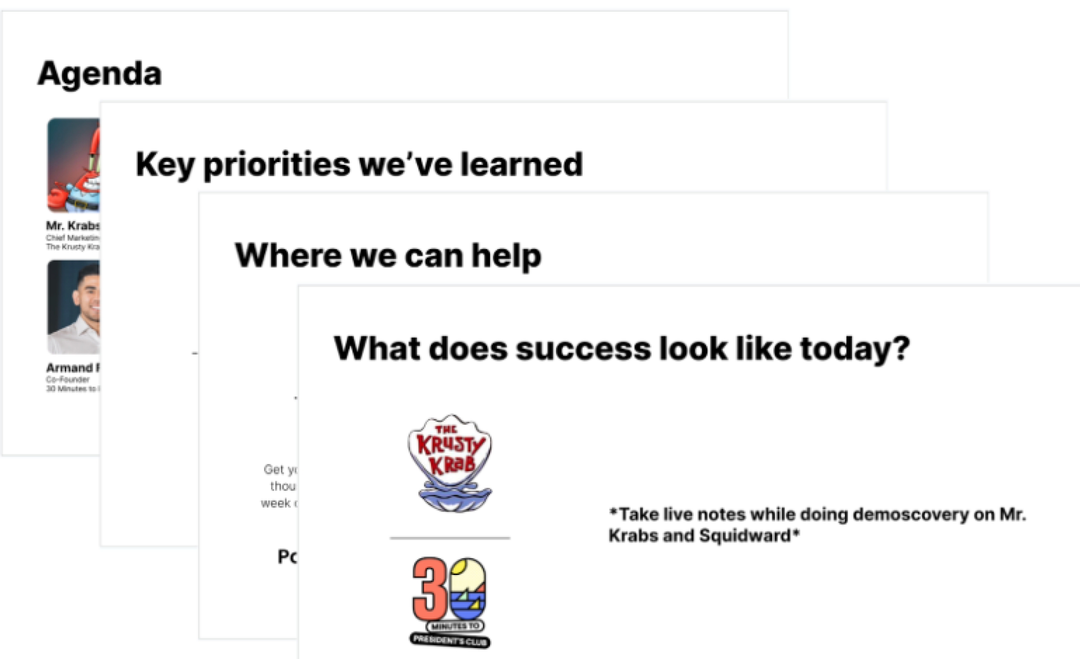
You go into a 5 person demo. Your champion is thrilled. Even power seems engaged. But there was one person who stayed silent the entire time.

You thought that was a below-the-line fly on the wall, but that was the most technical person on the team and now they're blowing up your deal.

You have to cross every T and dot every I. That doesn't mean you should get distracted by every person who gets thrown into your sales cycle, but it does mean that you need to do enough detective work on each person to make sure they're not going to try to blow up the deal behind closed doors.

Here's how.

Rep Framework: Big Team Demo? Go around the horn.



In our big team demo deck, there are four key slides as pictured above:

- An agenda slide
- A recap of the priorities
- A brief overview of where we can help
- A blank slide to take live notes

Go around the horn and ask every single person:

(1) Which of the priorities should we double underline?
(2) What did we miss?

Then as you demo, call back to every single one of these using **validation questions**:

> ***Example:*** *Jane you mentioned you wanted controls so that you'd be notified if any manager tried to make a compensation increase over 10%. I'm curious, how do you feel about what we just walked through inside of Pave?*

Manager Framework: Up, Down, Around

Whenever a deal was approaching the multithreading stage, I'd always ask my reps to give me the up, down, and around. That means:

- **Up:** Who do we need to win at power and why should they care?
- **Down:** Who's going to implement this and have they validated this actually works?
- **Around:** What are the other department leaders that we can corral for support?

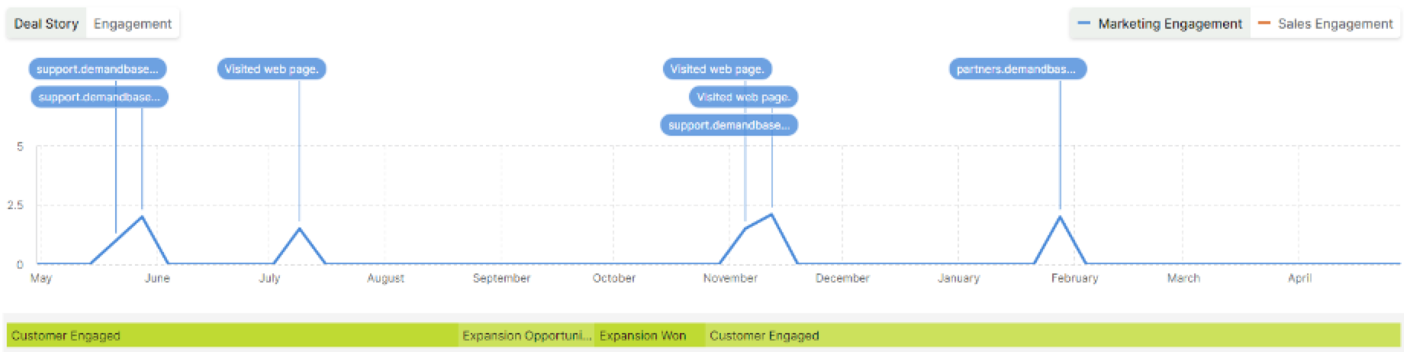
If you can come up to power with 2-3 department leaders around and already have support from the people down on the front lines who actually have to use this thing… **there's nothing an executive loves more than a fully aligned team.**

That's your job as a rep. You are playing the role of the external executive.

Where Demandbase Helps: Identify the blockers

You can use Demandbase to track every single person that was in the big team demo. **Specifically, you want to know who's checking out your pricing page, case studies, feature pages, and other bottom-of-funnel assets.** For instance, this shows how one account has a history of returning to relevant pricing web pages across their journey from Customer to becoming an Upsell opportunity to winning the Upsell.

For the same account, see how their engagement continues during the same time span pertaining to visiting pages regarding our Integrations.



If there was a silent participant who didn't say a single word in the demo, but is scouring the earth for every case study, FAQ, and integrations page on your website – **you should probably reach out to that person 1:1 to unpack their concerns.**

Ask your champions for the honest feedback from the team, but always skim this page after the big team demo to get the hidden concerns that even your champion might not be aware of.

Deal Killer #3:
A <u>hidden competitor</u> reveals themselves too late

Every once in a while, you get a prospect asking you way too many questions that sound like:

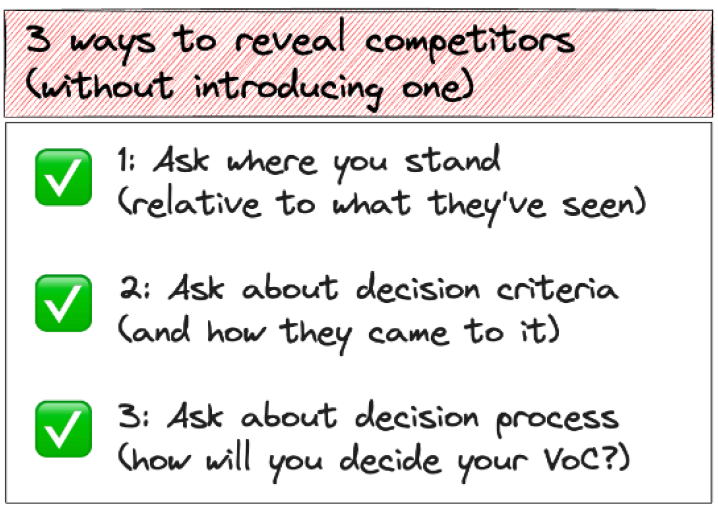
Do you do this? Do you do that? Do you integrate with this?

There are three reasons this can happen:

(1) You weren't doing great discovery to figure out what they need, so they're taking the evaluation into their own hands.
(2) They're below the line and extremely in the weeds on their feature checklist as if they were completing an RFP for someone at power.
(3) **These questions were seeded by a competitor.**

The moment you sense situation #3, start looking for trouble.

Rep Framework: Reveal a competitor... without introducing one



The tricky part about asking for competitors is that you don't want to ask them a question that literally makes them seek out a competitor. Unless you're in a well-established space (ie: CRM) where you know they're going to be looking at multiple solutions, I prefer to <u>ask around the competition to reveal them.</u>

The first way you can suss out a competitor is to ask where you stand. Get a sense of how they feel about you relative to the solutions in the market. You might say something like:

> ***Example:*** *Jane, you've gotten a sense of what we bring to the table. I'm curious, how do we stand relative to anything else you've seen out there?*

The second way is you can ask about decision criteria and how they came to it. They'll often reveal the things most important to them, and when you ask how they came to those, they'll usually tell you that they looked at other solutions:

> ***Example:*** *Jane, you mentioned A, B, C were important to you. I'm curious, that's quite a curated list, how did you come to those as your key criteria?*

The last way is to ask about the decision process. Ask about the steps in their evaluation. Oftentimes they'll say they're going to look at a group of solutions, then create a shortlist, then pick the best from there:

> ***Example:*** *Jane, as a next step, we're going into a deep dive demo. I'm curious, I'm sure you have the next few steps in your evaluation planned. What would be the next steps in your evaluation from there if that went well?*

Manager Framework: Vendor of choice lockdown

You can lose to a competitor on problem, price, and process:

- <u>Problem:</u> If your competition did a better job solving or uncovering problems for your prospect, you won't win the deal.
- <u>Price:</u> If your competition is solving similar problems at a much lower price, you won't win the deal.
- <u>Process:</u> If your competition ran a better sales process and got to power first, you won't win the deal. Oftentimes the deals at Pave were won not by the best product, but by who could win over the person at the top first.

So as a manager, ask those 3 questions to your reps:

> <u>*Example (Problem):*</u> *Why are we best equipped to solve their problem over the competition?*

> <u>*Example (Price):*</u> *Does the prospect believe we're worth the premium over the competition?*

> <u>*Example (Process):*</u> *Where are they in their evaluation of competitors relative to us? Do we need to catch up because we're behind or lay traps because we're ahead?*

Where Demandbase Helps: Reveal the competitor

This one is my favorite of all. Take every deal in your pipeline and see who's looking at competitors. This list from Demandbase shows a segmented account list of who is showing competitive intent over a set duration of time:

Account (122)	Intent Engagement Minutes ↓	Top intent keywords
Account A	28	adroll, mediamath, techtarget +11
Account B	28	adroll, bombora, mediamath +5
Account C	26	adroll, bombora, terminus +6
Account D	25	mediamath, techtarget, terminus +6
Account E	22	adroll, bombora, terminus +4
Account F	18	mediamath, techtarget, terminus +6

A fun, unrelated kicker: this is also a phenomenal way to find prospects. Figure out who's looking at competitors and send them well-timed emails that explain your differentiators.

That's it folks! You've got 6 frameworks for those hidden deal killers: 3 for reps, 3 for managers.

And you've also got some unbelievable ways to use Demandbase to derisk your deals. But don't take my word for it – they're able to show you things that you'd never be able to ask your rep or even your champion.

Go request a demo so you can see the magic in action yourself.