Training Camp Drill 1: The Discovery Conversation

Commission Sales track · Printable practice drill · About 10–15 minutes · Free

> **Private practice.** This sheet is for you. Nothing you write here is collected, saved online or shared, and it is not connected to any online rating. Keep it, toss it, or bring your notes to a mentor if you choose.

Objective

Practice the first few minutes of a sales conversation: ask open questions, listen, and **recap what the customer needs in their own words** before you suggest anything.

What you need

- A pen and this sheet
- A timer (your phone is fine)
- Optional: a friend to read the customer lines. If you practice alone, read the customer lines yourself and answer out loud.

Fictional practice scenario

Everything below is made up for practice. The people and company are fictional.

You are a sales rep for **Ridgeline Home Exteriors**, a fictional roofing company. **Jordan**, a fictional homeowner, filled out a web form: “Water stain on the back bedroom ceiling after last week’s rain.” You’ve arrived for the appointment Jordan booked. Jordan opens the door, says hello, and waits for you to start.

Your job in this drill is **not** to diagnose the roof or quote a price. It’s to understand Jordan’s situation well enough to explain a sensible next step.

Steps

1. **Read the scenario (1 minute).**
2. **Write five open questions (3 minutes).** Open questions can’t be answered with yes or no. They often start with *what, when, how* or *tell me about*. Write them in the box below.
3. **Practice the conversation out loud (5 minutes).** Greet Jordan, ask your questions, and respond to the customer lines in the practice script. Listen for details you’d want to remember.
4. **Recap (1 minute).** Say back, in two or three sentences, what Jordan told you and what Jordan cares about most. End by asking, “Did I get that right?”
5. **Self-check (3 minutes).** Use the self-check table to rate yourself based on what you actually did.

My five open questions

Practice script: customer lines

Have your partner read these, or read them yourself, in order, after you ask a question:

1. “We noticed the stain a few days after the storm. It’s about the size of a dinner plate.”
2. “It hasn’t dripped, but I’m worried it’s going to get worse.”
3. “We’ve been in the house about eight years. I don’t know how old the roof is.”
4. “Honestly, the main thing is I don’t want this to turn into a huge, expensive project.”
5. “I work from home, so mornings are hard for me. Afternoons are better.”

Example of a strong approach

> **EXAMPLE — fictional, one of many good ways to do this.** Not a script to memorize.
>
> **Rep:** “Hi Jordan, I’m Sam with Ridgeline. Thanks for having me. Before I look at anything, can I ask a few questions so I understand what’s going on?”
>
> **Rep:** “When did you first notice the stain?” … “What has it looked like since then?” … “What worries you most about it?” … “What do you know about the roof’s history?” … “What would a good outcome look like for you?”
>
> **Rep (recap):** “So you noticed a plate-sized stain a few days after the storm. It hasn’t dripped, but you’re worried it’ll grow. You don’t know the roof’s age, and the biggest concern is avoiding a big, expensive project you might not need. Afternoons work best for anything else. Did I get that right?”
>
> **Rep (next step):** “The next step would be an inspection so we can see what’s actually causing the stain. I won’t guess at a price until we know. Would this afternoon work, or is another afternoon better?”

Why it works: the rep asks before explaining, uses Jordan’s own words in the recap, checks understanding, and doesn’t guess at a cause or price.

Self-check

Be honest — this is only for you. Use what you actually said, not what you meant to say.

Skill	Strong	Solid	Developing
Open questions	Asked 4 or more open questions; built on Jordan's answers with follow-ups.	Asked 2–3 open questions; some follow-up.	Mostly yes/no questions, or started explaining before asking.
Listening	Remembered specific details (timing, size, worry, best time) without rereading.	Remembered the main problem and one or two details.	Missed what Jordan cared about most (avoiding a big, expensive project).
Recap	Recapped in Jordan's words, named the top concern, and asked "Did I get that right?"	Recapped the problem but missed the concern or didn't check.	No recap, or the recap was mostly about the company.
Next step	Suggested a clear next step that fits Jordan's schedule, with no guess at cause or price.	Suggested a next step but didn't connect it to what Jordan said.	Pushed for a decision or guessed at cause or price.

Evidence: what I actually said or did

Next practice action

Pick **one** skill you rated Developing or Solid. Run the drill again tomorrow and focus only on that skill. For extra practice, ask a friend or family member about a recent purchase they made and practice asking three open questions and a recap. Then try **Drill 2: Explaining an Estimate Honestly**.

Outwork Jobs Training Camp · https://outworkjobs.com/training-camp/ · This drill practices conversation skills only. It does not teach roofing work, and completing it is not a license or certification.