



Assumptions - the Silent Deal Killer

It's the end of the month, and your sales team is sweating bullets. Forecasted deals are hanging by a thread. Will they close? Will quota be met?

For some of the team, this anxiety is constant as they ride the sales roller coaster. Why are some reps always caught off guard at month-end, stuck on the sales roller coaster of uncertainty? And more importantly, how can you help them break free?

There are a few possible reasons, and in today's Sales and Leadership Spark, we will discuss: Assumptions - A silent deal killer in sales.

So what are assumptions? Assumptions are beliefs or conclusions we accept as true without verifying the facts. In sales, they often come from past experiences, biases, or surface-level observations rather than direct evidence.

Let's break that down:

- **Unverified assumptions - Salespeople take things at face value instead of confirming facts.**
- **Bias from experience - Past wins (or losses) shape decisions, even when the landscape has changed.**

In the first instance the salient point is "without verifying the facts." A gifted or even an average sales professional wins and loses in the quality of questions that they ask. Faulty assumptions lead you down the wrong path. The only way to circumvent this error is to inspect what you expect to be true through thorough discovery.

In the second instance, let's start with a quick discussion on tenure. We can likely all agree there is a significant blessing in tenure. A sales professional with significant years under their belt in the industry, in the company, with a client...all of this is a blessing. Tenure is powerful. Tenure is a blessing.

And yet...

Tenure is a curse. One may wonder how both statements can be true. Tenure can be a curse if you assume what you once knew is still and/or always true.

A successful sales professional knows that they need to slow down to speed up. The more thorough (slow) the discovery the faster the close.

Leaders - at your next sales meeting, challenge your team to identify one assumption they've made this week. Ask them: "What's one thing you assumed about a deal that might not be true?" Encourage a culture of curiosity over certainty. In your next sales meeting examine if assumptions are getting in the way of closing deals.

Here are the top 10 reasons why assumptions cause problems:

1. Misjudging Customer Needs - Pitching without confirming real pain points.
2. Overlooking Decision-Makers - Selling to the wrong person slows or kills deals.
3. Pricing Misconceptions - Underselling or discounting unnecessarily.
4. Interest ≠ Intent - Engaged prospects aren't always ready to buy.
5. Ignoring Competitors - Assuming you're the only option is dangerous.
6. Unclear Expectations - Misalignment on next steps leads to stalled deals.
7. Underestimating Objections - Failing to prepare for pushback weakens your position.
8. Past Success ≠ Future Wins - Every customer is unique.
9. Body Language & Misreads - Misinterpreting cues leads to lost opportunities.
10. Skipping Discovery - Shallow questions result in missed needs and smaller deals

A simple mindset shift—asking instead of assuming—can dramatically improve sales performance. Which of these do you see happening most in your team?