



TO: Sales Consultants & Sales Managers
SUBJECT: SSI Quick Tip #1 – Fundamentals of the Needs Assessment
DATE: April 5, 2019

Did you know that a needs assessment is important even if the customer states they know what they want? Studies show that **customer satisfaction is doubled** when customers note their sales consultant understood their needs.

Even if the customer knows what they want, satisfaction is increased by as much as 25% if they were asked needs-based questions*.

There are three types of questions that can help you learn more about your customer and their interests:

1. **Introductory questions:** These are usually open-ended questions to begin exploring new topics
2. **Follow-up questions:** These can be either open-ended or closed-ended questions to obtain additional information and/or clarification about a topic
3. **Summarizing/Confirming questions** (paraphrases): These are used to check your understanding and demonstrate to the customer that you are listening

So, be sure to ask some of the introductory and follow-up questions below to determine the customer's vehicle needs, and then paraphrase the customer's reply to confirm your understanding. This will ensure that your customers know you have their best interests in mind and want to provide a superior customer experience. Please see below for more detailed tips and verbiage that can help with the needs assessment in various common situations:

Introductory Questions	Follow-up Questions
Where are you in your buying process?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How did you find out about Kia?• Share the Kia Story if the customer is unfamiliar with Kia.• What do you want to accomplish during your visit today? What's your goal?• How much time do you have for your visit today?
Which Kia trim level(s) are you most interested in?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How did you find out about the Kia [trim level]?• What interests you most about the Kia [trim level]?• What research have you already done? What else do you want to learn?
Tell me about your current vehicle.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What do you like about your current vehicle? What is your favorite thing about it?• What do you want your new vehicle to provide that your current vehicle doesn't?• What is prompting you to make a change now?
How will you use your new vehicle?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Who will be the primary driver of the vehicle? Who else will drive it?• What type of driving will be done with the vehicle (e.g., city/highway, work/leisure)?• How long do you intend to keep your new vehicle?
How do you want your new vehicle to be equipped? (As necessary, confirm choices that need to be made.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Type of powertrain/Type of transmission/FWD vs. AWD• Driver assistive/Convenience technologies• Other available equipment
What other vehicles are you considering?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What do you like about the vehicle?• What would you change about the vehicle if you could?
What's your most important consideration in selecting the vehicle you are going to buy?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What do you mean by [consideration]?• Find out why that consideration is of particular importance to the customer: "Tell me more about that."• It sounds like there is a story behind that."• (Make note of the specific "trigger" words the customer uses.)

*Source: 2018 U.S. Sales Satisfaction Index (SSI) Study



It's important to balance your goal (which is to uncover as much information as possible) without seeming overly intrusive. You may not have to ask each question, depending on how much information the customer volunteers - this is not a linear process. Customers will be at different points in their buying and decision-making process when you first meet them, so you may need to ask the questions in a different order. For example, with a customer who "just wants a test drive," you may begin by asking about the desired vehicle and equipment while you prepare for the drive.

Things to Try with Various Types of Customers

"I'm just looking" customer
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Inform the customer he/she is welcome to look as much as desired.• Ask, "What would you like to see?" (This demonstrates that the customer is in control of the interaction and helps the customer feel safe.)
Chatty customer
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ask open-ended questions to keep the conversation on track. The customer will tell you everything you need to know!• Early in the conversation, ask the customer what they want to accomplish during the visit and how much time they have for their visit. That way, you can get the customer on track as needed. For example, you can say, "I know you have a limited amount of time, and I want to make sure you are able to receive all the information you need. I have a few more questions."
Know-it-all customer
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Smile and show respect for the customer's knowledge. (Approach the situation as a collaboration and an opportunity to understand the customer's point of view.)• Engage the customer by asking for his or her opinions. For example, you can say, "Based on your research/experience, is this what you expected?"• "I would like to hear your opinion about the pros and cons of the all-wheel drive (AWD) within our market."• "What were your impressions of the [competitive vehicle] when you looked at their vehicle and drove it?"• "In your opinion, how does the Kia [trim] compare with the '[competitive vehicle]'?"
"I only want to drive" customer
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• "I'd be happy to take you for a drive. Would it be okay if I asked you a few questions to make sure I'm getting the right vehicle for you to drive?"• "Which trim would you like to drive?"• "What equipment do you want to have on the vehicle you drive?"
Antagonistic/Angry customer
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• "Thank you for allowing me to help you find your next vehicle! This is a very exciting time for you, so please tell me what I can do to ensure a positive experience with us."• "Buying a new car should be fun, so I'll do my best to make sure you have a pleasant experience at our dealership!"

All customers are unique. Your role during the needs assessment is to ask open-ended and follow-up questions to uncover their unique needs and to put them into the right Kia vehicle. Doing this can help to win repeat business and referrals to friends and family.

Sincerely,
Kia Motors America, Inc.

Huy Ngo,
Senior Sales Satisfaction Manager