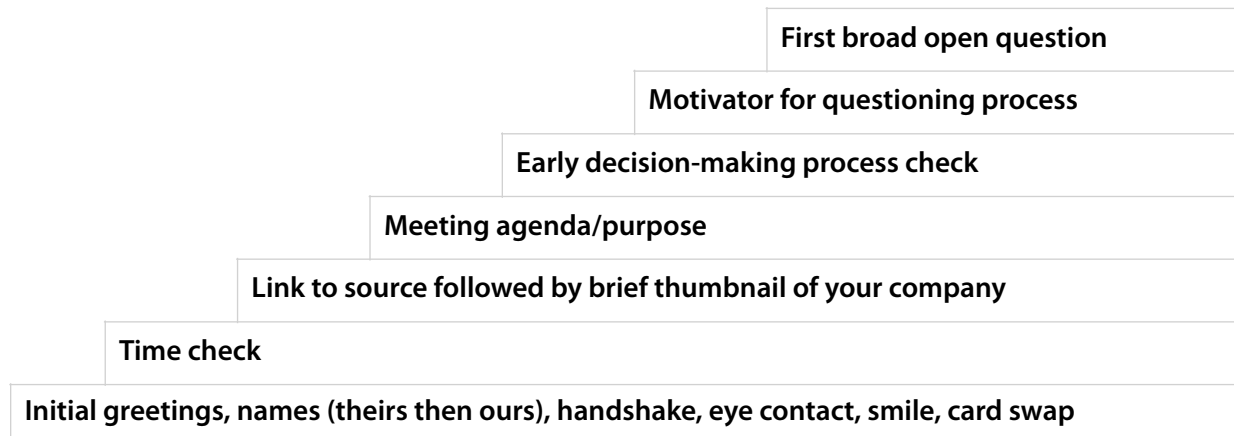


Opening and Positioning Meetings

“You never get a second chance to make a first impression”

People make very quick judgements when meeting others for the first time. Much of this process is unconscious and is driven by an embedded need to ‘feel safe’. It is essential therefore that we have a structured approach to how we handle the first few minutes. The suggested steps for opening a Sales Meeting are shown below:



Each sales person should develop their own content for each of these stages so that the words flow naturally but, as a guideline only, the following phrases may be useful:

- **Initial greeting** – *Hello, Mr.....? I’m (name). How are you today? Here’s my card*
- **Time check** – *When we spoke on the phone, we said that we’d need about an hour today...are you still ok for that? Or How much time have we got today?*
- **Link to source** – *It was (name) who made the original introduction wasn’t it? What did they tell you about me/us? Or I know you found us through.....How much do you know about us at this stage? Would it be helpful if I expand on that a little?*
- **Thumbnail** – This is *not a pitch*, it is a simple statement of facts, ie. who we are and what we do. Key bullet points to make could include:
 - ✓ *We are specialist...providing clients with....*
 - ✓ *We use a wide range ofso we can structure and tailor our facilities in the best ways to suit a client*
 - ✓ *We’ve been in business since....now have turnover of....; we are the only....*
 - ✓ *We are a global organisation operating throughout Here in... we have a team of and look after a wide portfolio of clients from....to....*
 - ✓ *Is that enough of an outline for you at the moment?*

- **Meeting agenda/purpose** – *Given that this is the first time we've met, what I'd like to do today is first of all understand a little more about your business, your plans and opportunities, and then explore if, and how, we may be able to help – are you ok with that?*
- **Early decision making process check** – *Is there anyone else you'd like to involve in the meeting at this stage?* (optional - only if you feel there may be other decision makers)
- **Motivator for questioning process** – *OK, probably the easiest/quickest way for me to understand where and how we can help is to run through some questions...are you ok with that? Do you mind if I make notes as we go along?*
- **First broad open question** – *Obviously I did my homework before I came here today, but I don't want to make any assumptions, so tell me, how would you describe this business?*

It is essential that you have a structured, practised way of opening and positioning meetings to ensure that the client, within the first two minutes of meeting you, concludes that you are Professional, Trustworthy, Credible, Friendly and Responsive; this will build the necessary level of rapport and trust so that you can go on to gain a good understanding etc.

As with all communication, it is not just the words which count; it is the way they are said. Other elements of this structure include your body language/posture and the tonality of your voice. Refining and then practising a consistent opening structure will enable you to do the most important thing in building rapport: to be responsive to how the client is reacting, so you can adjust your approach throughout the meeting..