

# Buying Process Aligned Sales Pipeline Stages

Stage	Prospect	Vendor
<b>PRE-PIPELINE</b> <b>SATISFIED WITH STATUS QUO</b>	The prospect is passively absorbing information that could affect their business, but currently appear to be satisfied with the status quo	We are positioning ourselves in the market, looking out for trigger events and proactively reaching out to identified target accounts and stakeholders
<b>Milestone &gt;</b>	The prospect becomes interested in an issue we are targeting	
<b>STAGE 1</b> <b>INTEREST TRIGGERED</b>	Something has happened to trigger the prospect's interest in an issue that we have chosen to target and they are deciding if it is worth active investigation	We want to learn more about their situation, educate them about the issue, start to shape their thinking and qualify whether there could be a solution fit
<b>Milestone &gt;</b>	The prospect decides to actively investigate the issue	
<b>STAGE 2</b> <b>ASSESSING CASE FOR CHANGE</b>	The prospect is assessing their situation, investigating their options, and deciding whether there is likely to be a solid business case for taking action	We want to influence their thinking, help them develop a business case, qualify whether they are likely to do anything and assess our chances of winning
<b>Milestone &gt;</b>	The prospect agrees that there is a clear case for change	
<b>STAGE 3</b> <b>DEFINING VISION OF SOLUTION</b>	The prospect is determining their solution requirements, which options to shortlist, how to choose between them, and how to manage the decision process	We want to understand their decision process, engage with the decision team, influence their requirements and maximise our chances of winning
<b>Milestone &gt;</b>	The prospect defines their solution requirements and vendor shortlist	
<b>STAGE 4</b> <b>SELECTING BEST OPTION</b>	The prospect is evaluating their most promising options and trying to achieve decision team consensus around a single preferred solution	We want to co-develop a compelling proposal and business case and persuade the decision team to select us as their single preferred solution
<b>Milestone &gt;</b>	The prospect identifies a single preferred solution	
<b>STAGE 5</b> <b>VALIDATING DECISION</b>	The prospect is eliminating any remaining concerns, negotiating the best possible deal and submitting the project for final approval	We want to eliminate any remaining concerns or obstacles, negotiate acceptable commercial terms, and emerge with a bookable order
<b>Milestone &gt;</b>	The prospect places their order	
<b>POST-PIPELINE</b> <b>IMPLEMENTING SOLUTION</b>	The prospect is implementing their chosen solution and will not be satisfied until or unless the issue that caused them to act has been addressed	We want to ensure that our solution delivers the intended results and that the customer is completely satisfied with the outcome
<b>Milestone &gt;</b>	The prospect confirms the issue has been addressed to their satisfaction	

"The prospect" = the relevant stakeholders within organisations that match our target customer profile.

For more information about applying buying process aligned thinking to the management of your sales pipeline, please phone Bob Apollo of Inflexion-Point Strategy Partners on +44 7802 313300 or email him at [bob@inflexion-point.com](mailto:bob@inflexion-point.com).