oping questions it's important to word them so that you don't get loaded, self-serving, or defensive answers.

3. Be presented in an appropriate sequence. What would happen in a sales call if the first question you presented to the customer was "How about signing this order?" Or if the last one was "How do you do?" No matter how appropriate your questions, and no matter how well they are phrased, you can still come up dry on the needed information if you ask the questions in the wrong order.

The checklist we presented in this chapter will help you think in a more focused manner about the first criterion, the areas where you're missing information. In the following chapter we'll zero in more closely on those areas and provide a detailed explanation of how to use the second and third criteria. We'll show you (a) how to select the most appropriate questions for a given sales call, (b) how to phrase those questions most effectively, and (c) how to arrange them in a sequence that will create a positive flow of information between you and each of your customers.