

BANT: a reality check, not a formality

Confirm early that there is real money, real authority, a real problem and a real reason to act. If they are missing, the deal is not early-stage. It is unlikely.

B Budget

Is there a realistic path to funding?

ASK

"How are you handling this today, and what does it cost you in time and money?"

LISTEN FOR

A budget owner, past spend in this area, and a cost of doing nothing they can name.

RED FLAG

No owner, no precedent and no willingness to discuss trade-offs.

A Authority

Who influences, approves or could block?

ASK

"Besides you, who would need to be comfortable with this before it moves forward?"

LISTEN FOR

The full path: IT, finance, leadership and council or board.

RED FLAG

Your only contact cannot introduce you to anyone who approves.

N Need

Is the problem real, in their words?

ASK

"If this stays the same for two years, what does that mean for risk and service?"

LISTEN FOR

A problem tied to outcomes you reliably deliver: stability, security, less risk.

RED FLAG

The gap between acting and not acting is small. Priority will stay low.

T Timeline

Is there a reason to act now?

ASK

"What would need to happen for this to be solved by the end of the fiscal year?"

LISTEN FOR

A trigger: an audit, a renewal date, a staff change or a recent incident.

RED FLAG

"Sometime next year" with no event attached to it.

Rep self-check before you forecast the deal

- ☐ I know how they fund IT: operating or capital budget
- ☐ I know who approves, and I have met them or have a path
- ☐ There is a dated event driving the timeline

- ☐ I can state the cost of doing nothing in their words
- ☐ The problem ties to an outcome we consistently deliver
- ☐ I am positioned as a partner, not a vendor answering a request

Go / no-go scorecard

Score each element after discovery. Be honest: a generous score today is a lost quarter later.

Element	0 · Missing	1 · Partial	2 · Confirmed
Budget	No owner or path	Owner known, amount unclear	Funded or clearly fundable
Authority	Single contact only	Approver identified	Approver engaged
Need	Nice to have	Real but not urgent	Cost of inaction stated by the client
Timeline	No date	Target quarter	Dated event driving it
Total	What to do		
7 to 8	Pursue. Build the proposal and book the approver meeting.		
4 to 6	Nurture. Close the gaps with value-first follow-ups before investing proposal time.		
0 to 3	Pause. Thank them, share something useful and revisit in a quarter.		

Questions that work, and why

- 1** “If this problem were meaningfully reduced, what would that be worth to you over the next year?”
Ties budget to outcomes before price comes up.
- 2** “If you handled this internally, what would it take in people, time and expertise?”
Positions you against the true internal cost, not a competitor’s price.
- 3** “Which team would usually own the budget for something like this?”
Finds the budget owner without forcing an early number.
- 4** “How important is price compared with risk reduction and long-term fit?”
Reveals price sensitivity without starting a negotiation.
- 5** “What return would make this feel like a smart investment?”
Moves the conversation from cost to success criteria.
- 6** “What happens if this is not addressed in the next 12 to 24 months?”
Grounded and effective with public-sector and risk-aware buyers.

Remember: disqualifying early is a win. It frees time for the deals that are real.