



ACTIVATE

What Should Happen Next?

A practical decision guide for choosing the next move in an active B2B opportunity.

Find the constraint. Choose the move.

Suncoast Spark · Free Resource for B2B Account Executives

THE CORE QUESTION

Do not ask, "What activity should I do next?"

Ask: "What is preventing this deal from becoming more certain?"

The next move should address the most important unresolved condition. That condition is usually one of these:

Problem Clarity

Business Impact

Urgency

Stakeholder Access

Champion Strength

Decision Process

Technical Confidence

Commercial Alignment

Business Case

Internal Commitment

📌 THE NEXT STEP SHOULD REDUCE UNCERTAINTY OR INCREASE BUYER COMMITMENT. Activity is not the same as progress.

CONSTRAINT: WEAK PROBLEM

If the Problem Is Still Weak

Situation: The buyer is interested, but the business problem is vague.

Do This

- Return to specific examples of the problem
- Clarify who actually experiences it day to day
- Understand the current approach and its limitations
- Quantify impact where possible
- Test whether the problem is important enough to drive change

Possible Next Moves

- Focused follow-up discovery session
- Conversation with another affected stakeholder
- Impact-validation exercise
- Current-state workflow review

Avoid

- Jumping to proposal
- Demo expansion before the problem is grounded
- Assuming interest equals clarity

A vague problem cannot justify a decision. Get specific before moving forward.

CONSTRAINT: NO URGENCY

If There Is No Urgency

Situation: The problem seems real, but nothing is forcing action.

Investigate Whether Any of These Exist

- A strategic initiative with a deadline
- An expiring contract or renewal event
- An executive commitment already made
- A regulatory or compliance requirement
- Financial pressure or budget cycle timing
- A customer impact or service risk
- Competitive pressure building externally

Possible Next Moves

- Validate the real consequences of delay with the buyer
- Identify whether a credible trigger exists or can be surfaced
- Agree on what would need to be true to make action timely
- Move to nurture if no compelling reason to change exists

📌 A real problem without a reason to act can still be a poor opportunity. Nurture is a legitimate outcome — not a failure.

If the Right People Are Missing

No Economic Buyer Access

Next move: Create a reason for executive involvement tied to a specific business decision — not a product update. The champion must see value in making the introduction.

Weak Champion

Next move: Test willingness and actual influence before treating this contact as a champion. Ask for something that requires internal effort. Observe what happens.

Unknown Buying Committee

Next move: Map who owns, influences, blocks, approves, evaluates, and uses. A deal shaped around one contact is a fragile deal.

Technical or Security Stakeholder Missing

Next move: Bring them in before commercial momentum outruns feasibility. Late technical discovery creates delays that damage credibility.

Interest Is Not Commitment

If the buyer likes what they see but is not committing to anything, look for whether the buyer is actually doing anything.

Signs of Real Buyer Engagement

- Buyer-owned actions on a shared timeline
- Information voluntarily shared for validation
- Internal introductions initiated by the buyer
- Calendar commitments to next steps
- Willingness to involve other stakeholders
- Data provided to build the business case
- Agreed decision milestones with dates

If None of These Exist

Ask honestly whether the seller is doing all the work. A deal where only one side is moving is a deal without internal sponsorship.

- Seek a specific buyer commitment before the next step
- Name the imbalance directly with the champion
- Consider whether internal priority is lower than stated



A DEAL IS STRONGER WHEN THE BUYER IS DOING SOMETHING TOO.

CONSTRAINT: LATE-STAGE STALL

If the Deal Is Late-Stage

Late-stage deals stall for specific reasons. Match the next move to the actual constraint.

Constraint	Next Move
Business case unclear	Validate value and decision economics with the economic buyer directly
Commercial terms unresolved	Clarify scope, pricing, tradeoffs, and the internal approval path
Procurement process unclear	Map the process, owner, requirements, and realistic timing
Legal or security items open	Create an explicit owner and resolution plan with agreed milestones
Decision date vague	Clarify what event actually determines timing — not just a hoped-for date
Executive alignment missing	Earn an executive decision conversation — do not assume alignment from below

Next-Move Worksheet

Use this to identify the real constraint before choosing a next step.

Opportunity:

Current stage:

What is known:

Biggest unresolved condition:

Evidence:

What buyer action would increase confidence:

Best next move:

Owner:

Timing:

What should be true after this step:



AE ON DEMAND

"What should I do next?" should not require starting from scratch.

AE on Demand helps account executives combine opportunity evidence, company context, stakeholder information, buyer conversations, and deal history to identify the most important gap and determine the next move — inside ChatGPT or Claude.

Ask

"What should I do next?"

Get

- The most important deal constraint
- Missing evidence to surface
- Recommended next move
- Suggested seller action
- Buyer action to seek

Explore AE on Demand at aeondemand.com