



SUNCOAST SPARK · ACTIVATE

20 Ways to Unstick a Deal Without Discounting

Change the condition. Not just the price.

Practical moves for restoring momentum when an opportunity stops progressing.

Suncoast Spark · Free Resource for B2B Account Executives

Do not try to restart the deal until you know what stopped it.

Every stalled deal has a specific cause. Treating them all the same way — another follow-up, another asset, another price adjustment — is why most stuck deals stay stuck. Diagnose first.

Common causes of a stalled deal

- Problem lost priority
- No compelling reason to act now
- Weak or isolated champion
- Missing executive support
- Hidden stakeholder not yet engaged
- Unresolved technical risk
- Budget uncertainty
- Unclear decision process
- Competing internal initiative
- Status quo regained strength
- Buyer is overwhelmed
- Seller has not created a useful next step

"They went quiet" is a symptom.
Not a diagnosis.

Before choosing any of the 20 moves that follow, identify the most likely constraint. The right move depends entirely on why the deal stopped — not just that it stopped.

A stalled deal usually needs a **different conversation** — not another version of the same follow-up.

Reopen the Business Issue · Expand the Buying Group

1 Revalidate the original problem When: Time has passed and you're not sure the issue still resonates. Why it helps: Problems evolve. What mattered in Q1 may have shifted. Confirming it's still real earns you a legitimate reason to re-engage. Language: <i>"The reason we started talking was [X]. Is that still the right framing, or has something changed?"</i>	2 Ask what has changed since the last conversation When: The deal went quiet after what felt like a positive meeting. Why it helps: Opens the door without pressure. Buyers often have a reason for the silence — and they'll tell you if you ask directly. Language: <i>"A lot can shift in a few weeks. What's changed on your end since we last spoke?"</i>	3 Revisit the cost of doing nothing When: The deal has stalled on "we're still evaluating." Why it helps: Reframes inaction as a decision with consequences, not a neutral holding pattern. Language: <i>"What does another quarter without solving this actually cost you — in time, revenue, or effort?"</i>	4 Connect the issue to a current initiative When: A new company priority has emerged since the deal started. Why it helps: Reattaches your solution to something that already has momentum and budget attention internally. Language: <i>"I saw your team announced [initiative]. There's a direct connection to what we've been working on — worth five minutes?"</i>
1 Ask who sees the issue differently When: Your champion is supportive but the deal isn't moving. Why it helps: Surfaces hidden stakeholders or skeptics before they kill the deal quietly. Language: <i>"Who else in the organization would have a different perspective on this problem — or on the decision itself?"</i>	2 Earn access to the economic buyer When: You've only engaged at the manager or director level. Why it helps: Deals without executive awareness rarely close. A champion who can't get you a 20-minute call is a signal worth noting. Language: <i>"Would it make sense to include [name] in a brief conversation so we're not creating re-work later?"</i>	3 Bring in a technical or operational stakeholder When: Unresolved implementation concerns are the likely blocker. Why it helps: Removes ambiguity that your champion can't answer alone and signals that you're serious about making it work. Language: <i>"It might be worth having your [IT / Ops] team join one call to walk through the integration questions directly."</i>	4 Identify who could block the decision later When: The deal feels close but something keeps not quite closing. Why it helps: Late-stage blockers are common. Naming them early lets you address their concerns before they derail the final step. Language: <i>"When a decision like this gets to the finish line — who typically needs to weigh in, even informally?"</i>

Create Useful Evidence

When a deal stalls, sellers often reach for proof that hasn't been asked for. These moves create evidence that's specific, relevant, and tied to the buyer's actual situation.

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Provide highly relevant customer proof

When: The buyer has expressed risk concern or is comparing you to a known alternative.

Why it helps: Generic case studies are ignored. A story that mirrors the buyer's industry, problem, and scale creates credibility that broad brochures can't.

Language: *"I want to be specific here — I'm thinking of one customer who was in almost exactly your situation. Would it be useful to hear how that played out?"*

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Build a simple business-case hypothesis

When: The buyer needs to justify the investment internally but hasn't asked you to help.

Why it helps: A rough, honest hypothesis — clearly labeled as an estimate — gives your champion something to carry into internal conversations. It also reveals whether your numbers land.

Language: *"I've put together a rough view of what the impact could look like — based on what you've told us. It's a hypothesis, not a projection. Want to pressure-test it together?"*

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Validate one technical assumption

When: An unresolved technical question is likely the source of hesitation, even if it hasn't been named.

Why it helps: Ambiguity creates inertia. Resolving one concrete technical question — even a small one — creates forward motion and signals competence.

Language: *"Before we go further, I want to make sure we've answered the [integration / security / data] question properly. Can we schedule 30 minutes with your technical team?"*

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Map the current workflow or process

When: The buyer hasn't fully connected your solution to how their team actually operates today.

Why it helps: Visualizing the current state — including its friction points — makes the gap concrete and positions your solution as a specific improvement rather than a general one.

Language: *"Would it help to spend 20 minutes walking through how your team handles this today? I want to make sure what we're proposing actually fits how you work."*

- ❏ Useful evidence is specific to this buyer, this problem, and this moment. A case study from a different industry sent without context is noise — not evidence.

Reset the Process

Sometimes the deal is stalled because the process itself was never clearly defined. These moves rebuild structure around the decision so both sides know what needs to happen next.

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Ask directly whether the priority has changed

When: You've followed up multiple times with no response or non-committal answers.

Why it helps: A direct question respects both parties' time. Buyers often appreciate the honesty. A clear "not now" is better than indefinite ambiguity.

Language: *"I want to be straightforward — has the priority around this shifted for you? I'd rather know now than keep going in circles."*

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Rebuild the mutual action path

When: Next steps have become vague or weren't agreed on jointly in the first place.

Why it helps: A shared plan with mutual commitments — not just seller tasks — reveals whether the buyer is actually engaged. It also creates accountability on both sides.

Language: *"Let's agree on what needs to happen for both of us between now and a decision. What does your side need to complete before you can move forward?"*

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Clarify the actual decision process

When: You don't have a clear picture of how decisions like this actually get made in this organization.

Why it helps: Many sellers assume a process that doesn't exist. Understanding how similar decisions have been made before reveals the real path — and the real blockers.

Language: *"Walk me through how a decision like this would actually move through your organization — not the org chart, but how it really happens."*

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Define what needs to be true for a decision

When: The buyer keeps saying they're "almost there" but nothing closes.

Why it helps: Forces specificity. If the buyer can't name what's missing, that's important information. If they can, you now have a clear target to work toward.

Language: *"If you imagine saying yes to this — what needs to be true first? What's the last thing that would need to click into place?"*

Change the Conversation

If the deal is stuck, continuing the same type of outreach guarantees the same result. These moves change what kind of conversation you're having — not just the frequency of contact.

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Share a useful point of view instead of another check-in

When: You've sent multiple follow-ups and received no meaningful response.

Why it helps: A genuine perspective on something relevant to the buyer's business demonstrates that you're thinking about their situation — not just managing your pipeline. It reestablishes you as someone worth talking to.

Language: *"I've been thinking about what you shared on [topic]. Here's a perspective that might be relevant to where you're heading — no ask attached."*

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Ask the buyer what is preventing progress

When: You've tried several moves and still can't identify the real blocker.

Why it helps: The most direct path to the constraint is often just asking. Done without pressure or frustration, it signals respect and invites honesty.

Language: *"I don't want to keep guessing on my end. What's actually getting in the way of moving this forward right now?"*

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Give permission to pause or stop

When: You sense the buyer feels awkward about going quiet but isn't ready to re-engage.

Why it helps: Removing the social pressure often produces more honesty than continued follow-up. A "not now" is recoverable. A permanently avoided seller is not.

Language: *"If the timing isn't right, that's completely fine — I'd rather know. We can pick this up when it makes sense for you, or close the loop entirely. Which would be more useful?"*

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Replace an ambiguous next step with a specific decision event

When: Next steps keep getting rescheduled or end in "I'll follow up internally."

Why it helps: A defined decision event — with a clear question to answer and a date attached — is structurally different from a status update. It requires the buyer to make a commitment about when they'll decide something, not just agree to meet again.

Language: *"Instead of another update call, let's schedule a session where the specific question we answer is: do we move forward or not? What date works for that?"*

Common stalled-deal reflexes that rarely solve the real problem.

These responses feel productive. They're usually not. Recognize them before reaching for them.

Reflexes to avoid

- "Just checking in"
Adds contact without value. Trains buyers to ignore you.
- Sending another case study without context
Evidence without relevance is noise. It signals that you're not listening.
- Adding more people from your side
Bringing in your manager or SE without a clear purpose creates pressure, not progress.
- Automatically discounting
Price is rarely the real constraint in a stalled deal. Discounting teaches buyers to wait you out.

More reflexes to avoid

- Creating fake urgency
Quarter-end pressure and manufactured deadlines erode trust — and buyers know exactly what they are.
- Moving the CRM stage anyway
Optimistic pipeline hygiene doesn't change the deal. It just hides the problem from you and your manager.
- Sending a proposal to force progress
A proposal without agreement on the problem and decision process doesn't accelerate anything.
- Chasing because the logo is attractive
Persistence on a dead deal has an opportunity cost. Your time is finite.

Sometimes the correct way to unstick a deal is to stop treating it as active. A clean no now is worth more than six more weeks of ambiguity.

A stalled deal needs diagnosis before action.

Most sellers know the moves. The harder part is identifying which constraint is actually operating — and choosing the right conversation for this deal, at this moment, with this buyer.

What AE on Demand helps you do

- Analyze what is actually known versus assumed about a stalled deal
- Identify the most likely constraint preventing progress
- Separate missing evidence from seller-side gaps
- Choose the right next move — and prepare for the conversation

Available inside ChatGPT or Claude

AE on Demand turns ChatGPT or Claude into a company-specific sales operating system — so you can think through what to do next and get practical help doing it, without leaving your workflow.

Explore AE on Demand at aeondemand.com