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HOW TO SELL IN PLACE

CLOSING DEALS IN THE NEW NORMAL



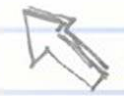
CHAPTER 6 TOXIC CLIENTS & BLACK HOLE PROSPECTS



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CARAJANE MOORE & TOM SEARCY



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CHAPTER 6 TOXIC CLIENTS & BLACK HOLE PROSPECTS

We've all had toxic clients: the people who don't honor their side of the scope agreement and are incredibly rigorous about your side. They're more damaging than just scope creep, though, toxic clients have a tendency to stretch out payments and not honor billing. In some cases, they can even be emotionally damaging to your team.

There's an easy way to tell if you're dealing with a toxic client: **look at your calendar.** How many hours are you and your company spending on a particular client? How much revenue are they generating compared to your other clients? When that ratio gets far out of proportion, you know you've got a toxic client on your hands.

If you remember Peter Falk's portrayal of Columbo, you've got an idea what a black hole prospect sounds like. Columbo always had "one more question... one more question..." Black hole prospects are always "this close" to getting a deal done... there's just always one more thing. Maybe you need to rescope the agreement, maybe the need to see what your numbers would look like if you changed this one variable. Whatever it is, **they'll never sign the contract.**

One of the great things about asking great questions is that they don't just help you win big deals, they help you disqualify the deals that your company doesn't really want. Great questions let you identify the prospects who would turn into toxic clients. They also show you which black hole prospects would never become clients and instead just use you for a price survey.

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