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MANAGER FIELD GUIDE · DEAL IQ

MANAGER FIELD GUIDE · DEAL IQ · SDR / BDR · SPICED · GAME IS SERIOUS

SPICED framework training: discovery questions SDRs can use

Research-first customer-centric discovery evidence, decision mapping, and handoff readiness for live B2B programs

SPICED rewards sequence and buyer-owned urgency. On the SDR / BDR track, win is a meeting an AE can take, not closed-won. Deal IQ opens on territory and account research: intel, market size, opener, then qualification. This guide is for enablement leads and frontline managers who inspect discovery quality, not checklist recall.

ORIENTATION

Quick scan

WHO THIS IS FOR

- Enablement teams on Winning by Design or customer-centric GTM
- Managers coaching SDR / BDR and AEs on discovery and handoff
- RevOps owners aligning pipeline stages to qualification evidence

WHAT THIS IS NOT

- Not a SPICED certification programme
- Not a separate product: same Deal IQ engine, framework chosen per room
- Not the game rulebook (see link for Alex, Klara, and turn mechanics)

SDR / BDR track contract

Join SDRIQ for training or HIRESDR for recruitment. Both force track=sdr on the public NovaTech room. Terminus is sql_handoff. Deliverable is a spiced_sql_handoff. Active spine: Territory, Account Research, Pipeline Generation, Qualification. Preview labels: Territory, Account Research, Pipeline, Qualification (handoff).

- **L1:** Signal triage, territory focus, basic SPICED handoff. Win = clean SQL, not closed-won. *Triage three Relay-patch accounts, defend NovaTech focus, qualify SwiftLane for a basic SPICED SQL handoff.*
- **L2:** Multithread qualification, opener objections, richer SPICED evidence from SwiftLane docs. *Multithread NovaTech: research Weber and Park signals, handle opener objections, SPICED handoff with cited docs.*
- **L3:** Disqualification discipline under time pressure. Avoid Jennifer Ross trap; defensible SQL only. *Defend NovaTech under time pressure, disqualify Ross trap cleanly, deliver a defensible SPICED SQL with full evidence.*

Hiring: HIRESDR sets sessionPurpose=recruit. Klara is a silent evaluator (no training scaffolds). Seniority bands: foundation (30 min, clear qualification handoff), experienced (40 min, plus evidence-backed next step), senior_lead (50 min, high stakeholder pressure). A human reviewer interprets evidence; the assessment does not make an autonomous hire decision.

CSM link: Handoff readiness verdict describes what CSM could inherit. After a ready SPICED pack, the CSM track (CSIQ) audits remaining MEDDPICC gaps and defends expand or renew. See the Expand/Renew manager guide.

Situation starts at the desk

In SPICED rooms, Situation is not a checkbox after the first call. Reps build it from intel documents, TAM reasoning, and a cited opener before Alex narrates. Stage 0 lead lifecycle labels attach once Situation evidence exists.

Manager tip: Coach whether Situation facts came from customer conversation or desk research only. SPICED sequence breaks when reps pitch before they can restate the buyer environment.

Room setup

1. **Create room:** Manager wizard, Step 2 Scenario Setup. Under Qualification framework, select SPICED. MEDDPICC remains the default for other cohorts.
2. **Stage 0:** SPICED rooms default Stage 0 (pipeline generation) on. Reps earn Situation and Pain before deep Impact work.
3. **Lead lifecycle:** Optional MQL, AQL, SQL labels on Stage 0 when enabled. Light promotion when Situation is validated and meetings carry a pain hypothesis.
4. **Extensions:** Paper Process and Competition stay off unless you explicitly need late-stage MEDDPICC-style extensions inside a SPICED run.

Seven SPICED cells

> ### S Situation
>
> The buyer's current environment: tools, org context, and how they operate today.
>
> **Evidence:** Customer describes their world in specifics, not your persona slide.
>
> **Moves up:** Research before outreach. Ask how their team supports company goals, not generic role questions.
>
> **Early mistake:** Pitching before you can summarise their situation back accurately.
>
> **Manager questions**
>
> - Can the rep restate the buyer environment without notes?
> - Which facts came from the customer vs LinkedIn only?
> - Is Situation validated before Pain depth?

P Pain

Quantitative and qualitative problems the buyer feels today.

Evidence: Named pain with source. Separate operational pain from executive narrative.

Moves up: Separate symptom from cause. Ask what breaks when the workaround fails.

Early mistake: Treating politeness as pain. Accepting vendor-supplied pain language.

Manager questions

- Did the customer name the pain, or did we suggest it?
- Is quantitative pain documented where it exists?
- Who feels it daily?

I Impact

Rational business outcome and emotional stakes if pain persists.

Evidence: Customer links pain to money, risk, or reputation without our ROI slide.

Moves up: Ask what happens if they do nothing. Connect one person's pain to team outcomes.

Early mistake: Impact slides before Impact is confirmed in conversation.

Manager questions

- What number or deadline did the buyer attach to delay?
- Is impact organisational, not only individual frustration?
- Did we test "so what?" on the stated pain?

CE Critical Event

A buyer-owned date or event that forces a decision. Not seller quarter end.

Evidence: Customer names the event, consequence of missing it, and who owns the date.

Moves up: Test urgency with "what happens if you miss that date?" Never invent deadlines.

Early mistake: Seller-created urgency. End-of-quarter pressure without buyer milestone.

Manager questions

- Who set the date, us or them?
- What is the cost of missing it in their words?
- Is the event tied to Impact already validated?

DP Decision Process

Steps from evaluation to signed agreement inside the customer org.

Evidence: Customer-drawn path with names and gates, not our CRM stage names.

Moves up: Walk a recent purchase. Ask where deals like this stalled last year.

Early mistake: Assuming verbal interest equals process clarity.

Manager questions

- What happens after the next meeting?
- Where do security or legal enter?
- Who must approve before signature?

DC Decision Committee

People who influence and approve. Economic authority mapped to names.

Evidence: Named roles, access plan, and who blocks vs sponsors.

Moves up: Map committee before assuming one contact is enough. Test access with small asks.

Early mistake: Single-threaded deals. Friendly contact treated as full committee coverage.

Manager questions

- How many stakeholders have we engaged?
- Who can say no after our champion says yes?
- Is economic authority named, not inferred?

DCR Decision Criteria

How the buyer will compare options, including unstated risk criteria.

Evidence: Ranked criteria in customer language. Proof requirements per criterion.

Moves up: Ask how they chose the last vendor. Shape criteria with evidence, not feature dumps.

Early mistake: Competitive positioning before criteria are explicit.

Manager questions

- Top three criteria in their order?
- Which criteria favour us vs status quo?
- What proof do they need for each?

ACE on objections

- **Acknowledge:** Acknowledge: name what you heard without defensiveness.
- **Clarify:** Clarify: one sharp question that exposes the real blocker.

- **Evidence:** Evidence: customer story or proof tied to their criteria, not a feature list.

Klara references ACE in SPICED rooms when reps rush to pitch or dodge clarification. Coach reps to slow down on objections, not win arguments.

Handoff readiness

Deal IQ scores handoff readiness from SPICED depth: Situation, Pain, Impact, and Critical Event documented, plus Decision context started. Player and manager both see the verdict in debrief.

READY

CSM could inherit a usable SPICED summary. Core elements have evidence.

PARTIAL / NOT READY

Gaps remain in one or two core elements. Coach before live customer handoff.

Discovery incomplete. Do not treat the run as production-ready documentation.

Manager questions

- Would CSM know why the customer bought from this debrief alone?
- Are Critical Event and Impact buyer-validated?
- Is Decision Committee named with access gaps flagged?

Pilot agenda

0–5	**Frame**	Confirm SPICED room and research-first spine. Review seven cells and Stage 0 lead lifecycle if enabled.
5–15	**Account Planning**	Reps complete intel, TAM, hypothesis, and opener. Pause once Situation evidence is logged.
15–45	**Run**	Facilitated play after research gates. Pause once Situation and Pain land in live turns.
45–60	**Debrief**	Review element scores, ACE moments, handoff readiness verdict.
60–75	**Manager plan**	Assign one element per rep for next live deal review.

Debrief worksheet (per rep)

Rep	Weakest cell	ACE moment	Handoff verdict	Next live ask

FAQ

Is SPICED a different Deal IQ product?
No. Same simulation. Manager selects SPICED at room creation, or joins SDRIQ / HIRESDR which force the SDR / BDR track. Board, coaching, scoring, and reports follow that framework for the cohort.

Can one room switch frameworks mid-programme?
No. Create a new room or reset the scenario if you need to change framework. Prevents mixed evidence on the board.

Do we still get champion mechanics in SPICED?
Champion is a stakeholder mechanic, not a board column. Reps still build advocates; coaching emphasises committee and criteria instead of MEDDPICC champion tests.

How is this different from the MEDDPICC manager guide?
MEDDPICC guide covers AE fellowship through live deal inspection and fold discipline. This guide covers SDR / BDR customer-centric sequence, Stage 0 lifecycle, ACE, and SQL handoff readiness.

How does this relate to the CSM expand/renew guide?
SPICED handoff readiness is what CSM inherits. The Expand/Renew guide covers post-sale gap audit and expand versus renew after a closed-won pack lands.

How is this different from the Deal IQ rulebook?
Rulebook covers the research-first spine, role tracks, turns, Alex, Klara, AP, and levels. This guide covers what managers inspect in SPICED evidence after the run.

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For game mechanics see deal-iq-rulebook.html · For live pilots: hello@gameisserious.com