Listed below are the sales opportunities addressed in Chapter 16 of the book, "*Profitable Sales, A Contractor's Guide*", with this introduction:

*"The following 'opportunities' may come up before or during a sales call. The approaches I suggest are by no means the only way to deal with them, they are just a starting point."*

*"Most of these are situations I've experienced over the years, and you will experience many as well. Some are humorous, most are not. Many are simply attempts by the customer to waste your time or gain your expertise without paying for it. Remember, you are on a sales call for one reason only and that is to make a sale. You should be prepared to deal, almost instinctively, with anything that arises, and reading this chapter will help you prepare."*

*"Most of these scenarios assume that you are dealing with a husband and wife combo, but that's not always what you'll see. Be prepared to modify the responses to fit the situation."*

**THE FOUR BASIC QUESTIONS**

* Customer won't give straight answers to your questions
* Customer claims they don't know what they want
* Customer won't give you a start or completion date
* Customer won't tell you if they are going to be the only ones making the buying decision
* Customer won't tell you how the job is to be financed
* Customer won't let you meet or talk to second party that is paying for job
* Second party is out of town and can't/won't meet with you to review job
* Customer won't tell you their budget (after you give the three price ranges)
* Their budget is unrealistic

**THE SALES CALL**

*Attendance*

* Customer not at home at the appointment time (or shows up late)
* Customer(s) not at home on the second appointment
* Customer's spouse not at the appointment or shows up late
* Customer wants to exclude spouse from sales call
* Customer's spouse is sleeping and can't be disturbed
* Spouse not at home on second appointment to get design agreement
* Customer tells you that their spouse is just too busy to be involved

*Interruptions*

* Neighbor, friend or family member drops in during sales call
* Customer continually uses phone during appointment
* Customer eating meal when you arrive for the appointment
* Customer asks you ahead of time to have a meal with them
* Customer doesn't pay attention to the sales call
* Customer keeps wandering off
* One spouse leaves during appointment
* Customer has TV on or on too loud
* Customer has sick, whiny or ill behaved child
* Customer has parent living with them that keeps interrupting process
* Customer involved in other activity (housework, yard work, puttering in garage) and won't stop to talk with you
* Customer dealing with "crisis" during sales call
* Customer gets important phone call from family member, doctor or attorney
* Customer notified of death in family during sales call

*Family Relationships*

* Customer keeps interrupting their spouse when they are talking
* Spouse making comments behind their partners back
* Customer makes an agreement with you for design services, then spouse refuses to sign the agreement
* Customer is abusive to spouse or family member
* One spouse is an alcoholic or drug user
* Adult children bad mouthing you or your company to parents
* Adult children telling parents to not work with your company, or don't do the job at all, while you are there
* Dealing with a jealous or untrusting spouse
* Family member is in construction, but not doing the job
* Family member is a former contractor
* Customer is your family member

*Customer "Wants"*

* Customer asks you for the names, addresses and phone numbers of the specialty contractors and suppliers you will use on the job
* Customer wants to be their own general contractor
* Customer is a contractor
* Customer is an employee of a contractor
* Customer wants you to "fix" something during the appointment
* Customer asks very specific questions on how to do something on their job
* Customer doesn't want any plans for the job
* Customer doesn't want to get permits for the job
* Customer wants you to meet him in his office to review your final quote
* Customer asks you to donate work or materials to their organization
* Customer is vague about preference
* Customer has unrealistic expectations about cost or timeline
* Customer wants you to "baby-sit" pets or children during the remodel
* Customer wants you to finish the job another contractor started
* Customer wants to talk to you about their religious affiliation
* Customer wants you to look at other company's quotes, paperwork or plans
* Customer tells you they want to combine the best ideas from all companies
* Customer wants to put their "side job" on your permit
* Customer wants to put their "side job" on the financing for your job that has lender inspections before payments
* Customer says they want to help supervise the crews
* Customer asks if you use subcontractors on their job

**IRRITATIONS**

* Customer is a smoker
* Customer is argumentative
* Customer is confrontational
* Customer keeps asking "why" when you ask specific questions
* Customer keeps interrupting while you are answering a previous question
* Customer tells you how they mistreated another contractor
* Customer tells you how another contractor mistreated them
* Customer badmouths another company or individual from another company
* Customer has pets or other "critters" that could cause a problem
* Customer or spouse is drunk when you arrive on sales call
* Other family member is drunk when you arrive
* You are offered alcohol on a sales call
* You are offered drugs on a sales call
* You find large quantities of drugs on sales call
* Customer handling firearms or other weapon on a sales call
* Customer won't make good eye contact with you during the conversation
* Unusual amount of physical contact on sales call
* Dealing with amorous advances
* Dealing with lack of or appropriate attire
* Neighbors or acquaintances of the customer warn you about them
* Customer tells you they are getting several bids
* Customer asks you when you can start the job

*Misrepresentations*

* Customer has used deception to gain appointment
* Customer "springs" something on you after quote
* Customer agrees to your proposal, asks for time to review the contract, then changes the scope of work and talks to other contractors

*Pricing*

* Customer wants their CPA to audit your books to ensure fair pricing
* Customer wants their CPA to audit your books to be sure bills are paid on time
* Customer wants their CPA to audit your books to be sure you are only charging the industry standard 10-and-10 for overhead and profit
* Customer wants a Cost Plus or T&M contract
* Customer wants both a fixed price and T&M (with guaranteed maximum) quote
* Customer wants to do a Cost Plus management job with a "not to exceed" clause or a fixed fee
* Customer wants an itemization of all costs before a contract is signed
* Customer asks what your markup is
* Customer promises more work if you give them good price for this job
* Customer wants a price "today" for the job
* Customer wants a "ballpark" price
* Customer keeps asking for prices on individual projects
* Customer keeps asking "What's the price" or "When do we get to the price?"
* Customer wants to see your estimate sheet
* Customer tells you they want the job done as cheaply as possible
* Customer wants you to cut every corner you can to lower the price
* Customer wants to do some of the work to keep the cost down
* Customer wants several price options on a job
* Customer can do the job "much cheaper" using subcontractors
* Customer says your price is much lower than other bid
* Customer wants or tries to compare your quote to other quotes
* Customer says another company will start the job with no down payment, or won't ask for any money until the work is done
* Customer tries to negotiate a better deal using another company's quote or design
* Customer tells you what they think your price should be
* Get your price down if you want this job
* Customer tells you that they will only pay 8% overhead and profit
* Customer says your price is way higher than the "industry standard" of 10% overhead and 10% profit
* Customer "knows" what the job should cost
* Customer wants to pay cash for the job to get a better deal
* Customer suggests you pay the taxes for the job
* Customer says they want to furnish their own materials

*Dodges*

* Customer says they are too busy to set a callback, so mail your proposal
* I want to talk to my business partner
* Working with a managing partner
* Customer wants a written proposal without making a commitment
* Customer won't make a decision after you make your final quote for the job as agreed
* Your price is too high
* That is more money than we want to spend
* We have to sleep on this proposal
* We need to talk to our banker or lender
* We need to hash this over
* We want to think about it
* We want to talk to spouse's father who was a contractor
* We want to talk to our minister / priest / rabbi
* We want to talk with our son or daughter before we commit to this
* Your company's reputation is bad
* Our neighbor said one of your people stole something while you were working on their job
* You people charge too much
* We want our attorney to read this contract before we sign it
* We won't sign a contract unless you agree to work on the job

*Competitors*

* Another salesman shows up on your call
* Other company tries to get customer to cancel your sale
* Other company wants to see your bid
* Other company badmouths your company

**BUILDING ISSUES**

* Building has fleas
* Home is filthy and hazardous to your health
* Home or building smells extremely bad
* Customer makes claims about the building that you know are not true

**DEALING WITH OTHER PROFESSIONALS**

*Architects*

* Customer is an architect
* Architect says they will draw the plans for their own job
* Architect wants to "use" your company to get "their" job built
* Architect wants to "supervise" your employees and subcontractors
* Architect wants to hire your employees and subcontractors through your company
* Architect or owner asks for the names, addresses and phone numbers of the specialty contractors and suppliers you will use on the job
* Architect wants you to furnish a quote for labor only
* Architect wants you to deduct his fees for "architectural work" off your final quote
* Architect or owner tries to nickel and dime you
* Architect says he or she will write the contract for the residential job using AIA documents
* Customer's architect constantly steps in between you and the customer
* Architect tells customer you don't know what you are doing
* Architect has incomplete plans for the job, or wants you to start job before the plans are complete or approved for permit
* Architect has plans with several obvious measurement errors
* Architect has plans with no schedules or missing details
* Architect's plans require engineering but lack an engineer's stamp or documentation
* Architect has plans that won't work

*Attorneys*

* Attorney insists that you use an AIA document to write the contract for the job
* Attorney wants to write the contract for the job
* Customer's spouse, son or daughter is an attorney
* Attorney disregards language in the contract

*Engineers*

* Customer is an engineer and thinks that houses are built like airplanes, to a tolerance to 1/1,000ths of an inch
* Engineer has to check with architect or designer to modify plans

*Realtors*

* Realtor wants quote for "their" customer
* Realtor wants a square foot price for an addition, kitchen or bath for an out-of-town customer or a customer who's "just considering" a purchase
* Realtor wants a walk through with their out-of-town customer
* Realtor needs a price today for some repair work
* Realtor wants to set up a meeting with their customer, you and your competitors to discuss bid for repair work
* Realtor wants you to provide a bid to replace a roof or do other repairs

**INSURANCE WORK**

* You were not told that it was an insurance job when you set the lead
* Insurance adjuster asks for written quote
* After you have scoped the damage, the customer asks if you would fix something
* Customer says: "I need to get approval from my spouse"
* Customer says: "You fix the first six items on the scope of repairs; I'll fix the rest"
* Customer says: "The adjuster said you could include this in your scope and they would pay for it"
* Customer says: "Take my carport and turn it into a garage and charge the insurance company"
* Customer says: "Build my deductible or depreciated amounts into your quote"
* Customer says: "I've been paying insurance all of my life and this is the first claim that I have ever made"
* Insurance company tells you that certain portions of your work are exempt from overhead, profit or taxes
* Insurance company tells you they don't pay for job supervision
* Insurance company tells you they are not going to pay your overhead and profit on sub-contractor's work on the job, and claim the practice is an "industry standard"
* Customer wants an independent inspector for job

**FINANCING**

* Lender gives the customer an estimate sheet for you to fill out
* Lender only wants to give draws on the job every 30 to 45 days
* Lender wants to inspect the job before releasing each draw
* Lender has told the customer that retainage is normal for 30, 60 or 90 days
* Customer is a lender
* Lender tells you they want a performance bond after you sign the contract
* Lender tells customer to get three bids before they will lend the customer money
* Lender tells customer not to give you a down payment
* Lender pushes owner to use a different contractor
* Lender offers customer a lower interest rate to use another contractor
* If requested, customer refuses to put money in escrow for the job (normally applies only to larger jobs)
* Lender asks for contact information for specialty contractors and suppliers you will use on the job

**CONTRACTS**

* Customer wants penalties in contract for failure to meet completion dates
* Customer wants retainage in contract
* Customer wants the finance charge clause for final payment (if not made on time) removed from contract
* Customer says they won't give you a down payment
* Customer wants to cut the down payment amount in half
* Customer wants to change your payment schedule on your contract
* Customer promises a "bonus" if you come in under bid or if you give them a good price for the job
* Customer objects to your 2% final payment
* Customer tells you that they are going to insist on a release of lien document signed by all subcontractors and you before final payment

**AFTER CONTRACT**

* Customer wants to cancel the job after the right of rescission period, but before the job has started
* Customer wants to cancel the job after the job has started
* Customer doesn't want to attend the pre-job conference
* Customer going on trip and won't be there for part or all of the job
* Customer presents themselves as one personality type and turns out to be something completely different
* Disagreement develops because several versions of the plan are being used on the job
* Architect or designer tells you to make a change on the job, and later denies it
* Architect or designer tells you to make a change then refuses to submit the change to the owner
* Customer tells the job superintendent, "The salesman told us we were going to get. . . "
* Customer says you agreed to a different pay schedule than is on the contract
* Customer says the time schedule is different than what is on the contract
* Customer wants to "borrow" your tools to do their side project
* Customer takes job materials to use on their project
* Customer keeps getting in the work crew's way
* Customer's children keep getting into the work crew's way
* Customer's pets keep getting in work crew's way
* Customer's teenage children in the home with no parental or family member supervision
* Customer tries to get the workmen to change things on the job
* Customer, architect or designer tell a subcontractor or workmen to leave the job
* Customer lied about how payments will be made or where the money will be coming from
* Customer becomes angry with you
* Customer gets mad and starts yelling at you whenever you ask for a payment
* Customer won't make the final payment claiming you charged them too much
* Customer tells you they are going to deduct $XXXX because of something that happened during the course of the job
* Customer calls around for material prices, questions your pricing and refuses to pay
* Customer wants credit for material left over
* Customer exceeds the installed allowance amounts on the contract, then refuses to pay the final bill
* Customer asks you why you are charging more for a subcontractor's services than the sub would charge
* Customer comes to you with a punch list
* Asbestos, PCB, lead-based paint is found on the job and the customer won't pay to have the hazardous materials removed
* Customer wants to use your subcontractors for work in another part of the home or building while you are doing your job