

Partnership in the deal, *filter at the gate.*

How the SE org uses MIQL to be better deal partners through stages 1 and 2, and how the SE Director uses it as the POV approval filter at stage 3.

What this is

This guide has two halves and they connect.

Part One, Partnership. How SEs use MIQL during stages 1 and 2 of the cycle to be sharper deal partners to AEs. The framework is a coaching lens here, not a gate. Nobody is denying anyone resources. The SE is showing up to discovery, workshops, and exec briefings already thinking in MIQL terms, and that changes how the deal gets built.

Part Two, The POV gate. How the SE Director uses MIQL at the stage 2 to stage 3 review to decide whether SE hours get released for a POV. The scoring floors. The conversation scripts. The escalation path when an AE pushes back.

The two halves connect because the partnership work in Part One is what makes the gating in Part Two fair. A deal that gets denied at the gate is a deal where the partnership work did not happen, or did not produce evidence. The SE is not the no

department. The SE is the team that helped you build the deal correctly the first time so the gate is a formality, not a fight.

POV is Proof of Value, not Proof of Concept. The vocabulary matters. A POC sounds like a science experiment, where success is technical. A POV is a business outcome being proven, where success is buyer adoption. Use POV throughout.

Part One: SE as deal partner, stages 1 and 2

THE COACHING LENS, NOT THE GATE

When the SE walks into a discovery session, a technical workshop, an exec briefing, or a scoping conversation, MIQL is running in their head. They are listening for evidence on each of the five pillars. They are noting where the AE has the deal at a 2, a 1, or a 0. And they are using that map to decide what to do next.

The SE is not running an audit on the AE. The SE is running an audit on the deal so the SE/AE pair can build it right.

What the SE does in Mode 1

Listen for outcome. In every buyer conversation, the SE is listening for whether the buyer has named a measurable business outcome in their own words. If the buyer is talking features, the outcome is a 0. If the buyer is talking outcomes but the AE is the one articulating them, the outcome is a 1. If the buyer is owning the outcome in their words, it is a 2. Most deals enter stage 2 at O=1. Move it to a 2 before the POV conversation.

Inspect the map. The SE often has visibility the AE does not into who on the buyer side is actually engaging with the technical work. If the workshops are

happening but only one stakeholder shows up, M is at a 1 even if the AE thinks it is at a 2. Surface that gap. The SE is the most credible voice in that conversation.

Bring the insight. The I pillar is where the SE earns their seat. Industry data, comparable customer outcomes, reference architectures, public-signal observations about the buyer's environment, the SE has access to all of it. Deliver insight in the workshop that the buyer responds to. That moves I to a 2 and earns the team continued access.

Help quantify. The SE knows what the cost of inaction looks like in their architecture. Memory leaks, observability gaps, deployment risk, these have a number. Help the AE walk the buyer through the math. When the buyer validates the number themselves, Q moves to a 2.

Coach altitude. The SE often sees who the real economic buyer is before the AE does, because the SE talks to engineering leadership during scoping. Surface that for the AE. Coach them on whether L is at the right title-to-title altitude for the deal size.

None of this requires the SE to lead the relationship. It requires them to use MIQL as a listening lens and report what they hear back to the AE in MIQL terms. That single shift changes the partnership.

Part Two: the POV approval gate, stage 2 to stage 3

THE FILTER, WITH FLOORS AND SCRIPTS

In some regions today, the stage 2 to stage 3 review is already producing better win rates and better ARR. The discipline works where it gets enforced. But 80% of those transitions are also POV requests, and the existing deal sheet gets pencil-whipped

under deadline pressure. The boxes get ticked because they have to, not because the evidence is there.

MIQL is harder to pencil-whip. The questions are written in inspection voice.

Has the buyer validated cost of inaction with a specific dollar figure, in their words, against their data? A yes requires evidence the AE has to produce. A no is a no.

This is where the SE Director uses MIQL as the filter.

The structural floors

These are the minimum scores required to release SE hours for a POV. They are not soft.

O = 2 (hard floor). If the buyer has not named a measurable business outcome in their own words, no POV. Without an outcome, the POV becomes a science project for them and a resource drain for the SE org. There is no scenario where O=0 or O=1 justifies engineering investment.

Q = 2 (hard floor). If the cost of inaction has not been quantified by the buyer in their numbers, no POV. Without Q, the POV's success criteria will get redefined mid-flight, and there will be no commercial pressure on the buyer to act on the result. POVs without Q tend to end with the buyer saying 'this was useful, we will revisit next quarter.'

M ≥ 1 (soft floor). A 0 means there is no commitment from the buyer side beyond 'show us cool stuff.' A 1 is acceptable only if the POV itself becomes the M=2 milestone (the AE commits the POV to the MAP with buyer-side owners, before SE hours are released).

Total ≥ 6 . Below 6, the POV is reacting to deal heat, not buyer readiness. The SE Director defers the request and sends the AE back to do the structural work.

Three approval states

Approved

Score 8 or higher. O=2, Q=2, M \geq 1, total \geq 8. SE hours released with standard scope. The POV is the last technical proof needed before commit.

Approved with conditions

Score 6 or 7 with O=2 and Q=2. SE hours released with a written condition. Most common: 'POV approved contingent on M moving to 2 within seven days, with documented buyer-side owner on the success criteria milestone.' The AE has a week to do the work or the POV pauses.

Deferred

Any deal where O<2 or Q<2, or total <6. SE hours not released. The SE Director sends the AE back with specific guidance: 'Get O to 2 by getting the EB to articulate the outcome in their own words. Get Q to 2 by walking the value realization exercise with the customer. Come back when the deal is structurally ready.'

The deferred state is not a no. It is a 'not yet, here is what to do next.' That distinction matters in the conversation.

Three conversation scripts for the SE Director

When approving. 'The audit clears this for SE hours. O is solid, Q is documented, the MAP has buyer ownership. We are good to scope the POV. Let us schedule the kickoff and define success criteria with the customer in

writing.' Frame it as the engineering investment being earned, not granted.

When approving with conditions. 'The deal qualifies for the POV with one condition. M is at a 1. I need the customer to commit a buyer-side owner to the success criteria milestone before we burn SE hours. You have until next Friday to get that in writing. If you do, we go. If you do not, we pause. This protects you and protects my team.' Make the condition specific, time-bound, and reciprocal.

When deferring. 'I cannot release SE hours on this yet. The audit shows Q at a 1, the cost of inaction has not been quantified by the customer in their numbers. That means the POV will end with them saying "interesting, let us revisit next quarter." I have seen it happen. Pull in our value realization team this week, walk the math with the customer, get them to validate the number. When Q moves to 2, the POV moves forward. I will rescore the moment you tell me it is done.' Frame the defer as the SE Director protecting the AE from a bad outcome, because that is what it is.

When the AE pushes back

The pushback comes in three forms. Be ready for each.

'You don't understand the customer relationship.' The SE Director's response is structural, not interpersonal. 'I trust your relationship. I am asking whether the relationship has produced evidence. Walk me through what the EB said about the outcome. If they said it in their words, O is a 2 and we go.' The audit is about evidence, not trust.

'We will lose the deal if we delay.' The SE Director acknowledges the urgency and reframes. 'A POV without Q is a delay we control. A POV that ends

with the customer revisiting next quarter is a delay we do not control. I would rather take a week now to move Q to a 2 than burn three weeks of SE hours on a POV that will not close.' Time spent on structural readiness is time saved on stalled deals.

'Other regions don't make us do this.' The SE Director points to outcomes. 'Regions that run this discipline have higher win rates and higher ARR. The data is on the side of the filter. I am not making us do this. I am making sure we do not waste the engineering hours we have.' The discipline is the win condition, not the constraint.

Coordination with sales leadership and CS

MIQL works best when the sales side, the SE side, and CS use the same scoring system for their respective decisions. Sales runs deal reviews on MIQL. SE runs POV approvals on MIQL. CS runs renewal forecasts on MIQL. Same five pillars, same scoring, three different uses, three different team owners.

When the SE Director defers a POV, the message to the AE's manager should be: 'I scored this at a 5 today. O at 1, Q at 1. The audit is in writing. Coach the AE through the rework, and when they come back with O and Q at 2, the POV is approved.' The deferral is not adversarial. It is shared accountability, with the audit as the neutral artifact.

On renewals: when an SE supports a customer who is now in renewal, the same MIQL data informs the CS team's forecast. If Q was a 2 at original sale, but the customer never validated the value realization 18 months later, the CSM needs to know. Hand off the audit history.

Working alongside MEDDPICC and the deal sheet

MIQL does not replace MEDDPICC. It does not replace the deal sheet. It is the evidence layer that makes them executable.

MEDDPICC is the AE's qualification language. The deal sheet is the SE org's gate format. MIQL is the inspection test that asks whether the boxes already getting checked have anything behind them. Use them together. Where MEDDPICC says Economic Buyer, MIQL asks whether L is at a 2. Where the deal sheet says technical fit confirmed, MIQL asks whether the buyer has owned the outcome. The frameworks coexist. MIQL just stops the pencil-whipping.

Your Monday-ready action

Pick the next stage 2 to stage 3 review on your calendar this week. Run it normally. After the review, score the deal yourself in miql.com/audit using the AE/SE role. Compare what the audit returns to what the review concluded.

Do this for three reviews in a row. By the third one, you will have a clear read on whether MIQL adds signal your existing review is missing. Most SE Directors find that the audit catches the silent L=0 or pencil-whipped Q on at least one of the three.

When that happens, the conversation about adopting MIQL as the gate becomes easy.