



## Broker conversation guide

Understanding your client's business and their goals helps you to design the right finance solutions for them. These questions can be used with new clients, as well as for reconnecting with existing clients. Some questions may not be relevant, so tailor them to best suit your client's needs.

### **POTENTIAL CLIENTS ARE EVERYWHERE, MAKING IT EASY AND NATURAL TO START UP A CONVERSATION WHEN YOU:**

- **Conduct lending reviews** with your mortgage clients.
- **Interact with other businesses** – either your business suppliers or the businesses you use in your personal life.
- **Gather at networking and local Chamber of Commerce events** – occasions that often attract business owners.
- **Encounter business owners** who work out of the same office building or have children in the same school or sports team as you.

### **WHEN ORGANISING A MEETING OR A CALL**

- First, it helps to:
  - Research the business and how it's positioned in its market – check the business website and social media accounts.
  - Research the industry by reading the industry association website.
- When making the appointment, outline how much time you are proposing so your client understands how much time they need to put aside.
- Explain the reason and provide context. For example, "given where interest rates and inflation are at, I wanted to check in and see how your business is doing and if I can help support any growth plans you may have."
- This is an opportunity for a conversation, not a transaction. So, your conversation should be beneficial for both you and your client. Sometimes the discussion will provide insight into client plans and may not be just about lending opportunities.
- Type your notes into this document so that you can ask follow-up questions at your next meeting.

## GETTING TO KNOW YOUR CLIENT'S NEEDS

This part of the conversation is about fact finding, building rapport and gaining an understanding of your client's current position and future needs..

### Questions to prompt a conversation:

- How has business been going lately?
- Have you been affected by rising business costs?  
How are you dealing with that?
- Has your business been affected by slowing economic activity?
- Have rising interest rates changed what your customers are asking for?
- Have you seen a change in the way your customers prefer to interact with your business over the past few years?
- How have your customers' needs changed?
- How have your staff's workplace expectations changed?
- What made you start the business?
- What did you do before you started it?

## A DEEPER DIVE INTO YOUR CLIENT'S BUSINESS

- What's the structure of your business?
- Do you have any family involved in running it?
- Who are your customers?
- Where are they located?
- How do you find them?
- Who are your competitors?
- Do you have a point of difference versus your competitors? E.g. location?

## PROPERTY PURCHASE OPPORTUNITIES

- Do you rent the premises that you operate out of?
- Would there be advantages in owning your own premises?
  - How would this be funded?
  - Have you thought about speaking to an SMSF Professional about using your self-managed super fund (SMSF) to buy a property for your business, with the rent becoming an income stream into your SMSF fund?

## BUSINESS GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES

- Do you have any business opportunities in mind that you'd like to pursue in the future?
- What are the growth opportunities that you're seeing in your business?
- What are the focus areas for your business?
- Do you have a vision for your business over the next five years?
- What are your short-term goals? And goals for the next six to 12 months or 24 months?
- How do you plan to maximise these opportunities?
  - Do you have sufficient cash reserves to support this growth?
- What challenges do you think your business could face in the future?
- What steps can you take to prepare for them?

## BUSINESS INVESTMENT/CAPITAL EXPENDITURE OPPORTUNITIES

- What do you think your business will need to do to remain competitive into the future?
- What plans have you made?
- Would more/better equipment help your business achieve its goals faster?
  - How would this be financed?
- Given staff shortages, are there opportunities to automate more of your business processes to reduce dependence on staff?
- What might this look like and how would it be financed?
- Do you see opportunities to upgrade your vehicles or expand your fleet?
  - How would this be financed?
- Does your business have plans to transition to a smaller carbon footprint?
  - What might this cost? How would it be funded?
- Are you planning to increase your use of IT tools?
  - How would these technology tools be acquired and integrated into your business?
  - How would these tools and the change management process be funded?

## STAFFING AND SUCCESSION OPPORTUNITIES

- What has your experience been with attracting and retaining staff?
  - Are you experiencing rising salary costs? Staffing shortages?
- What do you think could make it easier to attract and retain staff?
  - Do you think offering small equity stakes could help you compete for new staff?
  - Would small equity stakes increase the commitment and contribution of existing staff?
  - How might those equity stakes be funded?
- Do you have any plans to dial back the amount of time that you spend in the business?
  - How might this be facilitated?
- What are your own plans for realising the value that you've built in the business?
  - What steps have you taken to prepare?
  - Do you have a formal succession plan?
  - How might your successor/s come up with the funds they'll need to pay you for your equity?

## ACQUISITION OPPORTUNITIES

- What are your plans to grow the business?
- Would increasing scale increase your business's efficiency or profitability?
- Would acquiring a customer book, another business or a business merger be options you'd be open to?
  - How would this be funded?

## CASH FLOW OPPORTUNITIES

- Do you feel you have sufficient cash reserves to operate your business effectively over the next three to six months?
- What impact is rising business costs having on your cash flow?
- How will you manage any short-term funding gaps?
- How are customers paying you and do they usually pay on time?
- What does your ideal debtor/creditor cycle look like?
- What terms do your suppliers offer?

## REFINANCING OPPORTUNITIES

- Does the business have any bank lending facilities?
  - How comfortable are you with the rate and terms of the facility?
  - How easy is it to service the facility, given higher interest rates?
  - When is it up for renewal?
  - Would you be interested in a competitive review of the facility?

## PERSONAL FINANCE OPPORTUNITIES

- Are you thinking of renovating or moving to a new home, or investing in property?

## UNDERSTANDING YOUR CLIENT'S BANKING PREFERENCES

- Where do you bank for your business and personal needs?
  - (If your client has a different bank for personal and business) Can I ask why you haven't kept your business and personal accounts together?
- What's important to you when dealing with a broker or a bank?

## CONVERSATION OUTCOMES AND RESOURCES

- Close-ended questions, such as "are you interested in hearing more about...?" can help move the conversation into the solutions phase.
- ANZ provides solutions such as [business lending](#), [vehicle and equipment finance](#), and [business credit cards](#), along with useful [tools and content to support businesses](#).

## NEXT STEPS

- Help your client decide the next actions they'd like to take.
- Send a post-conversation email summarising the agreed next steps and links to relevant information or application forms.
- Agree and book a time to continue the conversation or plan for a follow-up conversation.
- If the client is ready for lending, contact your local ANZ Business Banker to workshop the finance solution.