The term MAD is a sales and marketing term used to talk about a target population when attempting to qualify a prospect (sales) or devise a marketing strategy (marketing). I also have seen the term MADA used.

Generally in a sales and service environment, it means the person (internal or external customer) or collective group has the ability to pay for your product or service (MONEY), they have the power to make buying decisions (Authority), they have an interest in purchasing/using your product or service (Desire) and they have accessibility to your product or service (Access).

Marketers use MADA attributes to measure the potential for product sales in a particular market.

FKA uses the term MAD in our *Managing the Learning Organization* and *Performance Consulting* workshops to ensure that the training and performance improvement professionals are identifying and dealing with the right business client.

**Qualifying Internal L&D Clients**

Just as a sales person needs to qualify their customers, Learning & Development (L&D) professionals need to qualify their internal clients. The Business Client, with the support of the L&D professional, links the training initiative to the business needs, goals and objectives. The true Business Client has the money, authority and desire (MAD) to ‘buy’ the product (training project) and the support and services the L&D organization has to offer.

- **Having the money** to buy includes having budget for the project or a source of funding. If you are an external provider of training products and services, you would also want a purchase order number.

- **Having the authority** to buy might be signified by a job title such as Director, VP. Or AVP in the Business Unit or a signature on previous or similar training initiatives in the unit. But authority is rarely limitless. Your internal client might have the authority to “buy” or financially support the services up to a certain dollar level, above which they must seek approval from someone else.

- **Having the desire** to buy means that the Business Client has a problem that your product or services can solve or an opportunity that your product or service can realize. Interest in your services is not an explicit desire or need. When talking with the potential business client (potential only because they haven’t yet been qualified as MAD), you may discover that they only have some vague, future project in mind, or they might only be curious, i.e., they are only ‘window shopping’ or ‘kicking the tires’. This usually means that they have not fully realized the business problem or opportunity yet and may only be reacting to some symptoms.

**Three Suspects**

We often encounter potential customers who meet only one or two of the MAD criteria. Sales Organizations like Miller–Heiman (Strategic Selling) or Huthwaite Inc. (SPIN Selling) call them ‘suspects’. There are three types of suspects:

1. Those who have the money and the authority to buy your learning products and services but not the desire.
Money, Authority and Desire

2. Those who have the authority and desire to buy your learning products and services but not the money.
3. Those who have the money and the desire to buy your learning products and services but not the authority.

If one or two of the criteria are missing, you will have a challenge with this learning initiative.

Qualifying Questions

The following are some of the qualifying questions that you can ask your business client to determine if they are MAD or simply a suspect.

**Money**
- Whose budget is this training project coming out of?
- How much have you set aside for this project?
- How are you proposing to fund the training project?
- What is the process for funding this type of investment/project?
- When does the budget process begin?
- What are the steps in your budgeting process?

**Authority**
- What is the decision-making process for this training project?
- Who else do we need to consult before making a decision?
- Is there anyone else you think I need to talk to about this project? (other stakeholder)
- Whose ‘head will roll’ if this training project is not a success? (Remember the true MAD Client is the owner of the Business Need that is driving the request for assistance – this client has the most to gain or lose from this initiative)

**Desire**
- What are your top three goals for this year?
- How important are these goals to the business unit/department/organization?
- How do they support the business strategy?
- What happens if you do not achieve these goals?
- What are some of the solutions you have tried in the past or are currently using?
- What results did you get?
- Were those results acceptable?
- What kinds of solutions are you considering this time?
- What results do you expect?
- What thoughts do you have about measuring the results of this training initiative?

**Final Question**
- Is there anything else you think I should know?