

? How to use questions

Sometimes it's about knowing the right questions to ask to get the best out of individuals. Here are some questions that might help you when you are planning different activities with your team:

Areas of activity



Goals

When you're focusing on goals and objectives, activity that requires technical accuracy, already considered ideas, data, facts and precise info, try these questions:

- What is the problem we are solving?
- What is the decision we are making?
- What do we already know?
- What information do we need to gather?
- Is there more than one correct answer to this?



Creative environment

Having a creative environment where everyone feels comfortable sharing their views and being their authentic selves is important when you want your teams to think more creatively. When you want the team to consider all possibilities, work with minimal detail, have the freedom to explore, think big picture or work in a new, fun, imaginative way, try these questions:

- What perspective are we overseeing/not seeing/hearing?
- How else could we approach this?
- If there were no constraints (budget/time), what would your ideal solution/outcome look like?
- What is the worst possible project outcome from your perspective, and why?
- Imagine nothing changes. What would happen, and where would the organisation be in 12 months' time?
- Imagine if we fast-forward to 2 years after the implementation of this project, what will the organisation look like?



Step-by-step approach

Sometimes you need to get the team to focus on detailed action plans, maybe it's about rules and procedures or something that requires a step-by-step approach. If this is your challenge, these questions might help:

- How do we structure our processes to ensure all perspectives are heard?
- What steps can we take to solicit and consider information in a fair and equal way?
- What would enable you/us to achieve that?
- How might you achieve your desired outcome?



Informal discussion

There may be times when you need to create an environment conducive to open and informal discussion, you want to hear from everyone with no or little hidden agendas.

Try this approach:

- Who can we engage to ensure we are getting all perspectives?
- What are your thoughts on this idea?
- How did you come to that conclusion?
- How does your idea challenge or support...
- What remains unresolved?
- Based on our discussions today what do we need to talk about next time if we are to understand this issue better?



Problem solving

Lateral thinking is solving problems through an indirect and creative approach, using reasoning that is not immediately obvious and involving ideas that may not be obtainable by using only traditional step-by-step logic. Questions to encourage lateral thinking include:

- How can we find a solution?
- How do you learn when you get stuck?
- What did I miss?
- Who agrees with what I just said? Let's postpone further discussions and go away and give ourselves time to develop disagreement...
- What would happen if...

Q: How does this tool help me achieve diverse thinking in my organisation?

A: It can be easy to assume that other people are thinking the same as we are. Asking more, and more open questions can help challenge that assumption, develop collaboration and help everyone feel it's okay to have and share a view.