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The Surprising Power Of Questions

Asking the right questions can get you the answers and information that you need. However, it's often forgotten how big of a role questioning plays in our everyday interactions. Whether it's a conversation with your parents or with a potential client, questioning helps build the foundation of our personal and business relationships.

Get The Information You Are Looking For

The best way to get the information you are looking for is to ask for the information you seek. Questioning can help build an ongoing rapport that makes people more comfortable sharing information and ideas. This creates an environment where the exchange of ideas and information becomes regular.

The more comfortable we are with someone, the more likely we are to share information. Asking the right questions at the right time can help establish the trust necessary for information to be exchanged.

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Do you foster an environment that encourages questions?

8 Traits Of The Most Successful Business Leaders

As an entrepreneur, you might find yourself wondering about those highly successful companies. Just how do they do it? How do they take their company from bottom feeders to positioning themselves as global leaders in just a few short years?

To answer that, we must take a look at their leaders. If you study the behaviors of the top performing companies, then you will see they all have one thing in common: others-centric and unpretentious leaders. In fact, if you study the CEO's and other persons in upper leadership roles of all the top performing companies, you will see they all have the same skill set.

Here are the top 8 things that exceptional leaders do to drive their companies to the top.

They do not impose – They will sit back and allow their employees to work. They have extended trust to their team and will allow them the freedom to work without the boss coming in and taking over.

They let others talk – They are able listeners who allow others to take the credit. They are confident enough in their own abilities to take a back seat and let their employees step up and get the glory.

They admit when they are wrong – In a true sign of humility, good leaders will openly admit to being wrong and let their employee know that they were right.

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That's why important to know the information you're looking for before opening up a dialogue.

Ask Open-Ended Questions

Sometimes the answers you're looking for go beyond a simple yes or no. Knowing when to keep questions open-ended is a critical skill when it comes to questioning. The right open-ended question can help find hidden, unexpected answers that weren't thought of before.

However, it's also important to know when an open-ended question is less optimal. Sometimes the answers you need are either yes or no and in a negotiation, an open-ended question could lead to the other party keeping their cards close to their chest. It's important to try and map out your conversation before you have it to try and decide what questions should be open-ended.

Know What to Ask and When to Ask it

Sequencing is one of the most important aspects of question asking. The optimal order of your questions greatly depends on the type of conversation you're having. Studies have shown that during tense encounters, your conversational partner is more willing to open up if asked the tough questions first.

If you are trying to build a trusting relationship, your sequencing should have the opposite approach. Asking easy questions first can help build trust, making your partner more likely to open up to more difficult questions later on. It's important to know the type of conversation you're having so you can gauge when to ask the right questions.

Question Everything

Questions are one of the most important pieces in conversations. An environment that encourages questioning also encourages an active flow of ideas and information. Know when and how to ask the right questions and you could hold the power in conversation. ♦

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“Before you become a leader, success is all about growing yourself. After you become a leader, success is about growing others.”
~ Jack Welch, former CEO of General Electric

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They are not the type that always has to be right and they are open to other perspectives. In fact, they embrace other's ideas.

They give their team all the glory – Humble leaders take the skill of encouragement to a new level and allow their team to bask in the glory and receive all the credit.



They seek out input from others – They squash every bit of pride and not only seek out from others how they are doing but they take their critiques to heart. They have a genuine care for self-reflection and continually want to know how they are doing in their leadership role.

They are straightforward – They aren't people pleasers and you find them sugar coating things to make themselves look better. They make decisions solely based off their values, not to lift themselves up or make others happy.

They are teachable – Humble leaders value the views of others and welcome new ideas. They ask questions and are genuinely interested in the answers. They thrive on learning from those around them.

They create a safe environment – Successful leaders are able to cultivate an environment of trust with their team. They create an atmosphere in which their employees feel safe to take risks, to fail, to come to them with concerns, and to feel confident enough to be part of major decisions.

What kind of leader are you? These types of leaders don't just wake up one day and find success. One common denominator is that integrity is just a part of who they are, humility comes naturally to them. If you are a self-centered and arrogant leader, you can try to fake your way to humility but eventually those around you will find you out.

In this self-focused society, you can see how embracing humility and a genuine care for others will bring you to the top. In this ever changing corporate world, sometimes the nice guys actually finish first. ♦

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Forget Hiring Great People Until You Fire Your Lousy Managers

We've all been there, working for a company that you love, but you just can't stay. Why? Because of how ineffective your manager's skills are or how undermining they can be. Here's a shocking statistic: more than one in two Americans have left a job to get away from a toxic boss to find happiness elsewhere, according to a Gallup poll.

Instead of allowing fear and resentment to build in your employees, acting quickly to change the situation is a must. There's no need to worry if the entire team will fall once the manager is dealt with. In most circumstances, employees will work harder and be happier once the manager that has brought them down for so long is gone.

Qualities of an Ineffective Manager –

Sometimes recognizing a lousy manager can be easy, while other times it will take employees speaking up for you to see the problems. Below are a few examples of how managers can change the dynamic of their team and effectively put a damper on your company.

Micromanaging: Most newer or recently promoted managers don't realize they are micromanaging their teams until it is too late. Instead of providing guidance and allowing their team to produce, they will pick apart every ounce of work or take over and finish the work themselves.

Closed-Minded: An effective leader will listen to the opinion of their team and, where possible, implement useful ideas for the better of the company. When a manager believes only their opinion matters, the views of others will be of little interest to them. It can cause disagreements throughout the team dynamic and potentially lead to a hostile environment.

Doesn't Set Clear Goals: A team without clear expectations from their manager will not be able to work cohesively towards a goal. They will either be working in whatever direction they think is best or barely working at all without any direction.

What To Do Next –

Now, the only two options you have are to either work with the manager to try to improve the situation or release them. If you choose the first option, have an in person meeting with the manager to discuss what you see that isn't working and train them to become a more effective leader. Be sure to periodically check with their team to see if there has been any improvement by utilizing employee engagement surveys or asking them directly.

If no improvements have been made, the time will come to either demote or fire them. Not only is it bad for business to keep them in a power position, but your reputation can decline too. The best businesses only have the best leaders. ♦

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One Minute Ideas

Important Things Life Teaches You

During my second month of nursing school, our professor gave us a pop quiz. I was a conscientious student and had breezed through the questions, until I read the last one:

"What is the first name of the woman who cleans the school?"

Surely this was some kind of joke. I had seen the cleaning woman several times. She was tall, dark-haired and in her 50s, but how would I know her name? I handed in my paper, leaving the last question blank. Before class ended, one student asked if the last question would count toward our quiz grade. "Absolutely!" said the professor. "In your careers you will meet many people. All are significant. They deserve your attention and care, even if all you do is smile and say 'hello'." I've never forgotten that lesson. I also learned her name was Dorothy. ♦

"When one door closes, another opens, but often we look so long at the closed door that we do not see the one that opened for us."

~ Helen Keller

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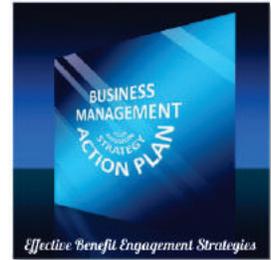
Effective Benefit Engagement Strategies

Do your employees ‘get’ and appreciate the benefits package that your company offers? Statistics show that most employees don’t fully understand the value of what they have.

Companies should educate their staff about their benefits. How quickly they forget orientation day! They were most likely too nervous to comprehend what you told them anyway. One thing is for sure, you want to continuously market your benefits package to your team. The goal is for them to feel the value that they have received. You want their continued buy in.

Steps to increase benefit engagement include:

1. **Orientation...What comes Next?** After day 1, your new employee will be in ‘all-out’ training mode. Be sure to follow up on the benefits package. How? Create an attractively laid out marketing piece that will allow for a clean, concise summation. Plan to email it and also hand deliver it to their desk / department.
2. **Involve the Family!** Your employee may not process the info as well as perhaps their spouse. Consider a meeting, dinner, meet and greet or some other type of session where questions can be answered. The bottom line is you want the family to see the value that you are offering too. You don’t want your new hire to jump ship because the grass *seems* greener on the other side.
3. **Q & A.** Offer a question and answer session where new hires can meet with management to find out more info about the company, benefits or any other lingering curiosities that may have crept in their minds since day one.
4. **Email/Newsletter.** Utilize your company email or a newsletter to mention and explain the company’s benefit package. Include tips on how they can maximize their benefits.



Take the opportunity to occasionally reiterate the many great features of your outstanding benefits package. Keep the info in the forefront of their minds so they are reminded of the value. The key to benefit engagement strategies is to continue to market your outstanding package to your employees. Be sure to continue to tell them what you’ve “done for them lately.” ♦

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BancSearch, Inc. has served the financial industry at the middle and upper management levels since the 1980's. We are a national firm and we have completed searches in thirty-nine states and Puerto Rico.

Our primary responsibility is to find the best executive talent available. Clients depend on our professional expertise and specialization to recruit executives who have the creativity, skill, and savvy to contribute to the growth and profitability of their company.

We believe our team approach is essential to finding top performing candidates. BancSearch consultants provide an independent objective viewpoint which helps clients define and achieve their goals for recruitment. By developing an understanding of the clients' culture, key issues of the position, as well as immediate and long term expectations, BancSearch is able to select for review the most qualified candidates.

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