

Title:

The 7 Keys To Asking Clients The Right Questions

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Summary:

The secret to successful communication in business and in everyday life is asking the right questions. Understanding the value of effective questioning is probably the single most dominant factor in achieving business success. The way to learn about what people need is to ask a question and then listen carefully to the answer.

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Article Body:

The secret to successful communication in business and in everyday life is asking the right questions. Understanding the value of effective questioning is probably the single most dominant factor in achieving business success. The way to learn about what people need is to ask a question and then listen carefully to the answer.

What do Oprah Winfrey, Larry King, and Barbara Walters all have in common? They are all great interviewers. They have the uncanny ability to make people feel comfortable and talk by asking the right questions. The bottom line is that customers and prospects will gladly volunteer information about what they think they want in pricing, products and services if you ask the right questions. The more questions you ask, the more the customer or prospect will talk, which allows you to uncover their "hot buttons". Remember, approximately 90 percent of customers and prospects think about themselves first.

To start, you should always remember the 7 keys to good questioning. It's a matter of being clever, and being direct. How better to accomplish this than to utilize these 7 keys:

1. Why? For example: Why would you choose software A over software B for your small business expenses?

- 2.Who? For example: Who would you recommend this product to and why?
- 3.Where? For example: Where did you first hear about my small business?
- 4.When? When were you hoping to have project A completed?
- 5.What? What troubleshooting issues have you discovered while using this program?
- 6.How? How do you feel about our new shipping policy?
- 7.Is it? Is it alright if I contact you in the future if I need more information?

You've probably already noticed that number 7, "is it" isn't one of the standard questions that you consider when you think of posing questions, but "is it" allows you to verify what you have learned by listening carefully to the answers to keys number 1-6. Confirming and verifying what customers are saying demonstrates to them that you are listening carefully to what is being said, and reassures them that their input matters. It also allows you to better absorb and synthesize what is being stated so that you can put it into its best application.

There is an art to asking the questions. While using the 7 keys to good questions does get you off to a good start, you have to remember to keep things well focused, so that the responses that you receive will be tailored to what you are seeking to discover. Most people have a natural tendency to pose very general questions. However, while conducting business, you need to aim to ask questions that are as detailed as possible, so that you will receive a better response, and so that the person with whom you are speaking will know you are a good listener.

Keep in mind, also, that just because a question is detailed, doesn't mean that it has to be verbose in any way. Rather, it must simply be worded in a way so that the right information is provided within the response.

For example, if someone were to ask you "how do you start a small business?" that would leave you in a bit of a lurch with regards to what to say and where to start. Additionally, it will necessarily lead to a number of other questions that negate the purpose of asking the original question in the first place: more detailed questions. Don't waste the time of the person to whom you are asking questions, don't waste your own time, and keep confusion to a minimum. A better question with which to begin may have been something more detailed such as: "How do you start a small mail order business in Richmond, Virginia, that deals in laptop computers?" Notice the difference?

The foundation to asking good questions and achieving a wealth of practical answers is to apply the 7 keys in a direct and detailed manner. They allow you

to get to the root of your question, so that you will gain the information and direction that you need to take specific action.