



**2023** Annual  
Conference  
November 13-15  
Nashville, TN

## Asking the Right Questions

“Successful people ask better questions, and as a result, they get better answers.”

- Tony Robbins

“No matter how many mistakes you make or how slow you progress, you are still way ahead of everyone who isn't trying.”

Hunter Consulting – Marilyn Hunter

# Introductions

Are you a 1<sup>st</sup> time attendee to the AgGateway Annual Conference?

Your Name, Company Name/College & Title/Year of College

Is there anything specific you hope to learn or get help with in this session?



# Purpose:

To provide you with an understanding of some of the different types of questions and how to use them to get better answers and apply the techniques in practice.

## Key takeaways:

- What are some of the various types of questions.
- How they are used.
- How to create questions for better responses.
- How to practice the techniques.





Process Re-engineering

# Slides & Handouts

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# Types of Questions

- **Starting**
- **Responding**
  - Clarifying/Confirming
  - Probing/indirect probe
  - Challenge
  - Leading
  - Re-direct
  - Prompt
- **Floating an idea**
- **Open vs. Closed**
- **Drill Down/funneling**
- Rhetorical
- Riddles
- Surveys
- Trick



# Using Verbs (could, should, must & will)



- **Could** – “What **could** be done to improve this standard?” implies no limitations or restrictions. Use “could” to generate the maximum number of ideas
- **Should** – “What **should** be done...” implies a moral obligation for action, without implying responsibility for the action.
- **Must** – “What **must** be done...” implies that the group should identify only essential items. The number of items will likely be smaller and a level of commitment is implied.
- **Will** – “What **will** be done...” implies that only action we are willing to commit to doing. A smaller number of committed actions will likely result.



# Starting Question (Type A & B Questions)



## What is a Type A Question vs a Type B Question?

- Type A is the question you really want to ask, but a Type B will get the brains thinking quicker and you'll get better answers.
- Type B – “Think about...”, “Imagine”, “If you were...”, “Consider what...”, “Do you remember...”. Then you want to extend that image. Then the type A question.
- When do you do a starting question?



# Starting Question (type B build)



**To build-** you need to start with a Type A question.

- **Step 1** – Start with an image building phrase.
- **Step 2** – Extend the image.
- **Step 3** – Ask the type A question.
- Any questions?
- When should you use a Type A vs Type B question?





# Starting Question (Type B Common Mistakes)

**Think about type A first...**

**Step 1** – Start with an image building phrase.

**Step 2** – Extend the image.

**Step 3** – Ask the type A question.

- Q1: I want to start by understanding what you would like to get out of this class. What are your objectives for the class?
- Q2: I want to start by understanding what you would like to get out of this class. Think about when you first saw the email about this class. What are your objectives for the class?
- Q3: I want to start by understanding what you would like to get out of this class. Think about when you first saw the email about this class. Think about the fonts that were used, how well the email was written, the tone of the email. What are your objectives for the class?
- Q4: I want to start by understanding what you would like to get out of this class. What are some of the things you would like to learn? What are the things that would make you better at asking questions? What would you find most helpful? What are your objectives for the class?



# Responding Questions

(Handout)



**Helps to acknowledge, clarify, challenge, probe, indirect probe, leading, redirect & prompt**

- Thank you for your thoughts, are there any questions regarding what was just suggested? (**acknowledge**)
- It sounds like, what you are saying is...is that right? (**Playback to clarify or confirm**)
- Help me understand specifically how that would work or what specifically what you do? (**challenge**)
- Why is that important to you or to the process? (**direct probe** that challenges)
- Is that important because...? (**Indirect probe**)
- Are there possibly other solutions in the area of ...? (**Leading question** to seek other solution)
- That sounds important to you, but it's not directly related to what we are currently discussing, can we put that on the issues list so that we won't forget it, and then get back to that? (**Redirection** to get back on track)
- We have covered (a), (b), (c)...What else might we do to improve ...? (**Prompt** - to keep the group moving)



# Floating an Idea

- Why would a facilitator want to float out an idea?
- Sometimes probing & challenging questions don't always work.
- To throw out an idea to get buy-in!
- Help the group discover an idea that they may be overlooking.
- “What about...” then “What do you see as the benefits?” then, “How do you want me to write it?”



# Open vs. Closed Questions

- **Closed question** – is simply one that a person can answer with either ‘yes’ or ‘no’.
- **Open Question** – requires far more detail and invites the person responding to provide information into how they feel and what they think about a subject.



# Drill Down/ Funneling Questions



- There's an issue, but not everyone understands the issue or disagrees.
- You need to ask questions about the “why” to drill down. Such as:
  - When someone thinks something won't work, you could respond with: “You may be right, but help us understand “why” you believe it's a bad idea (or won't work)?”
  - When they respond, find or look for a hurdle, to then ask something like: “Why do you believe it wasn't beneficial (or cost effective)?”
- You may need to ask a lot questions.



# Solving a Problem or Starting a Project (1 of 3)



## **Problem & Implications:**

- Why is this a problem or issue?
- What is/are the problem(s) you are trying to solve?
- How do you know there is a problem (What are the symptoms)?
- What are the implications of not solving this problem(s)?

## **Current Situation:**

- How does it work or not work today?
- How many people are involved?
- What are the current costs?



# Solving a Problem or Starting a Project (2 of 3)



## **Benefits:**

- What is it that you are hoping to achieve from this project?
- If you solved this problem, what would be the benefits to your organization and/or the industry?

## **Solution Process:**

- Have you already defined some components of the solution?
- What are likely steps in the solution?
- What challenges do you anticipate in solving the problem?
- Who will lead/coordinate the project?



# Solving a Problem or Starting a Project (3 of 3)



## **Decision Process:**

- How will the decisions be made?
- What are the decision steps?
- Who is involved in decision making?

## **Constraints & Barriers:**

- What is your time frame for solving the problem?
- Have adequate funds and resource been allocated for the project?
- Who will oversee the budget?





# Putting Into Practice



- You may already use a number of these techniques already, consciously or unconsciously.
- By giving them names, you can apply them more systematically when needed.
- In conversations, seek opportunities to employ the techniques.
- Build your comfort level – we will have some exercises to increase your comfort level.
- Try to use in daily conversations





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Any Questions about the  
Types of Questions &  
How to Use Them?



Process Re-engineering

# Practice Sessions

## Time Check

# Practice Session 1

(listen to instructions before doing anything)

**Think about type A first...**

**Step 1** – Start with an image building phrase.

**Step 2** – Extend the image.

**Step 3** – Ask the type A question.

1. Break into pairs at your table and if there's an odd number find another table with an odd #.
2. Type A question: "What is your favorite role in your life"
3. You'll all have about 3 minutes to create a Type B question to ask your partner. Write it down!
4. Each pair will decide who will question first.
5. You will then want to use some of the responding questions (see chart), so that you can ask at least 2-3 responding questions until I signal to change.
6. Then switch roles.

Total time of exercise is about 10-12 minutes



# Practice Session 2

## Think about type A first...

**Step 1** – Start with an image building phrase.

**Step 2** – Extend the image.

**Step 3** – Ask the type A question.

- Break into pairs at your table with a different partner.
- Type A question: “What was the best thing that happened to you this past summer?”
- I want each person to take about 2-3 minutes to create a Type B question to ask your partner.
- You will then want to use some of the responding questions (see chart), so that you can ask at least 2-3 responding questions until I signal to change.
- Then change roles.



# Practice Session 3 – Role Play



- Need 6 volunteers to do a short information gathering.
- Need someone to facilitate
- Someone to record information on the flipchart who can also provide input.
- The facilitator will gather information on a Christmas Luncheon planned for 12/8.
- **Goal of session:** To **gather input** on food, decorations & activities.
- You have 15 minutes for the information gathering.
- Those watching, think about what type of questions were used?



# Practice Session 3 – Role Play- Debrief



- What was done well by the leader?
- What type of questions were used?
- Was most of the group engaged?
- How was the energy level of the group & the leader?
- Did the group accomplish what needed to be done in the timeframe?
- Any other comments?
- We're going to start with the leader then the group.





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## Challenge:

Tonight & tomorrow night, try to use some of the questions you've learned about today in this session.

Ask an open ended question at the networking tonight, then ask at least 1-2 more responding questions.

I would love to know how that works for you!



# Purpose:

To provide you with an understanding of some of the different types of questions and how to use them to get better answers and apply the techniques in practice.

- **Were the purpose & key takeaways accomplished?**
- **Evaluation form**

# Key takeaways:

- What are some of the various types of questions.
- How they are used.
- How to create questions for better responses.
- How to practice the techniques.





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“You see in life, lots of people know what to do, but few people actually do what they know. Knowing is not enough! You must take action.”

-Tony Robbins



# Contact Info

If you have questions, please contact Marilyn Hunter:

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- Social Media:  
Follow Comfort Dog Micah on FB or  
LCCK9Micah on Instagram to find out what I'm  
doing in retirement!





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**Thank you!**