



Superb Peter Drucker Questions

These are excellent questions.

Employee Voice

Some great Challenge Questions

These are all just starting points, common business questions that have a wide variety of approaches. The key is to build Community and Involvement centred on these questions, guided by the principles of consultation and the values of transparency, equality, inclusion and workplace democracy.

What Questions Should We Be Asking?

Allow the crowd to set the agenda. After all, they're going to be the ones that want to talk and want to share their ideas - let them tell you where to begin.

What do our customers VALUE?

(This question is courtesy of the management consultant, Peter Drucker). This "may be the most important question," Drucker advised. "Yet it is the one least often asked."

This insight is especially relevant in an age where customers have more power and choice than ever before. Unless there is a relentless quest to figure out what they want and need—and the only way to do this is "to go out to look, to ask, to listen," Drucker said—it is easy to be left behind in relatively short order. Think BlackBerry, for example.

"What is value to the customer is always something quite different from what is value or quality to the supplier."

How can we make our Organisation more sustainable?

Sustainability drives innovation. One of the key requirements in organisations today is operating with a minimal carbon footprint. And avoiding waste - which can be defined as *any* activity that does not add value for the customer: a wrong delivery or invoice... something taking too long to deliver... in other words waste isn't just scrap!

How Can We Be Healthier?

In addition to being “green” many companies are looking to source new ways to create a healthier environment for their employees or end product for their consumers. Asking what to do in order to make things healthier is a great line of questioning to begin the discussion.

Who Is Willing to Work on Which Projects?

We are in the age of the micro-volunteer (made easier due to an always-on digital environment). Perhaps there are those in your network who would like to take part in the work that you have to do (the work that they are already discussing). Reaching out to the crowd and assigning ownership to specific tasks is a great way to keep the whole network working with you.

What New services should we offer? How do we develop our existing service offering?

Organisations that look to their consumers first to not just develop a service but let their network know what is happening during each stage of development, will also have a powerful marketing tool on their hands. But remember: communication is key.

What Online Content Do we have to share?

An organisation’s network usually has multiple pieces of collateral that they are going to share digitally anyways. They might as well share them with you so that you take their feedback or promote them if they help spread a valuable message. Sometimes it’s video, sometimes it’s information, sometimes it’s just the voice of your customer or employee - but it can lead to very important materials that become part of the life of your business.

What expertise or experience do you have?

Of What Are You the Expert? An organisation's network is often their most valuable knowledge base, building a responsive, collaborative audience will often create a living archive of knowledge not just for you, but for your whole community. It eliminates redundancies and helps to generate positive feelings among your subscribers.

What Do You Have In Common with Each Other?

Building a profile of the network of employees allows organisations to identify talent and better understand what they have to offer. Allowing a clustered network to form around particularly innovative ideas makes it possible to generate an environment of collaboration.

Here's some more great Questions ...

(All Courtesy of the Management Consultant Peter Drucker).

What is our business, and what should it be?

“Nothing may seem simpler or more obvious than to know what a company's business is,” Drucker pointed out in his 1973 yet “the right answer is usually anything but obvious.” Why? Asked seriously, “the question causes controversy, argument and disagreement,” Drucker noted. “It requires judgment and considerable courage. The answer rarely follows what ‘everybody knows.’ . . . It should never be made quickly; it can never be made painlessly.”

What is the task?

No one ever would have asked this question to a 1950s blue-collar laborer. That's because "in manual work," Drucker observed, "the task is always given": A car rolls down the assembly line, and someone bolts on the fender.

But today, when knowledge work is predominant, tasks can be far more difficult to define.

The key to improving knowledge-worker productivity, Drucker wrote, begins bottom-up ... with asking knowledge workers themselves:

What is your task? What should it be? What should you be expected to contribute? And what hampers you in doing your task and should be eliminated?"

What are your ideas for us to try to do new things, develop new products, design new ways of reaching the market?

More than ever, it's imperative that all employees make innovation a priority, not just the R&D staff or the "new products" team.

The Challenge is thus described: "We are here to listen. I want to hear from you what your aspirations are, but above all, where you see opportunities for this company and where you see threats."

Such gatherings, Drucker added, "are one of the most effective ways to instill entrepreneurial vision throughout the company."

Who in this organization depends on me for what information?

“Each person’s list will always include superiors and subordinates, but the most important names on it will be those of colleagues, people with whom one’s primary relationship is co-ordination.”

This notion rings even more true now, as traditional command-and-control structures slowly give way to more fluid and flexible arrangements at a growing number of enterprises. Asking this question—and making sure that the information you deliver to your peers comes in the right form and at the right time—is a central part of what Drucker termed taking “information responsibility.” *After determining who depends on you for information, the follow-up question is also crucial: And on whom, in turn, do I depend?*

What would happen if this were not done at all?

There’s never been a more apt moment to ask this question, what with every manager these days struggling to preserve his or her most precious resource—time.

In his 1967 classic *The Effective Executive*, Drucker recommended that everyone keep a detailed time log, tracking how minutes and hours are actually spent. Mark down events as they occur; don’t rely on your memory. After three or four weeks, analyze what you’ve recorded and ask what the result would be if a certain activity weren’t undertaken in the first place. “If the answer is nothing would happen,” Drucker wrote, “then obviously the conclusion is to stop doing it. It is amazing how many things busy people are doing that never will be missed.”

Dumb Ideas? Let's encourage them. Dumb things we do? Let's abolish them.

We've all had "dumb" ideas. But some are not so dumb in fact!

Take the publisher who came up with the *Dummies* books back in 1991. I bet lots of his colleagues thought that was a dumb idea. John Wiley, a serious scientific publisher of world renown, selling books aimed at *Dummies*? The very idea!

Now with 200 million Dummies books sold, I guess it wasn't such a bad idea after all.

Dumb Ideas Challenge

At Employee Voice we've come up with our own *dumb idea* and we'd like you to embrace it.

We'd like to suggest that you jump-start innovation by offering an *Amnesty for Dumb Ideas* that exist in your organisation.

And by *dumb* we mean things that no longer add value to colleagues or customers and need to be stopped. *The Dumb Ideas Challenge* is an invitation to seek them out; to hand them in, pile them up, to look afresh at what is done and how it's done and dump what's out of date and doesn't need to be done any more!

Is this a risky thing to do?

No.

That's because with a *Dumb Ideas Challenge*, the CEO introduces it. He or she endorses it, legitimizes it and invites *involvement*. The CEO's invitation throws office politics out of the window and when that happens creativity has free rein. The CEO invites - not demands - employee thoughts on saving time and money and offers an opportunity to talk about things that just should not be done any more or done in that traditional way.