

ASK HOW TO HELP CUSTOMERS

Ask Open-Ended, Indirect Questions

It was Rudy Kipling who wrote:

I keep six honest serving men
They taught me all I knew;
Their names are What and Why and When
And How and Where and Who.

Open ended questions are ones that contain one of the “six honest serving men.”

- Who
- What
- Where
- Why
- When
- How

Using these words calls for explanations from people. Questions that call for a “yes” or “no” response are often communication stoppers. Open-ended questions get you the information you need to know so you can better understand people’s needs.

The Purpose of Your Questions

Here are a few kinds of information you may want to get with your questions.

1. Problems they want to solve
2. Solutions they’re seeking
3. Goals they want to reach
4. Needs they want filled
5. Wants they desired satisfied
6. Help they need from you
7. Answers they want
8. End-result benefits they want to enjoy
9. Gratification they desire
10. Treatment they want from you

People are more apt to act upon ideas that they discover for themselves than ones we tell them. Said another way—People are motivated more by their own discoveries than they are by our thoughts or advice.

Excerpts from Integrity Service by Ron Willingham pp. 130-32.