

# Navigating Challenges

## A Guide to Asking the Right Questions

As leaders, in today's world of "Never Normal", you are constantly navigating a spectrum of challenges – ranging from simple issues with clear solutions to complex, interconnected problems that require nuanced thinking.



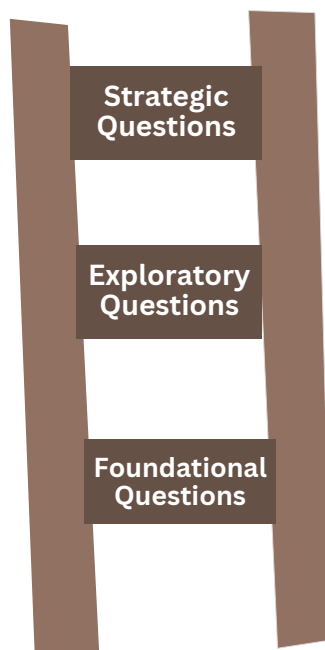
"If I had an hour to solve a problem, I would spend the first 55 minutes determining the proper questions to ask, for once I know the proper question, I could solve the problem in less than 5 minutes."

~Albert Einstein



To effectively address these challenges, the **depth and type of questions** you ask must evolve to uncover the real causes and opportunities.

This is where the **Question Ladder** comes in, guiding you through **three levels of discovery questions** to help you move from surface-level understanding to strategic insight.



### The Flow of Questioning

- 1 Start with clarity:** Foundational questions provide a shared understanding of the issue.
- 2 Dive deeper:** Exploratory questions reveal underlying causes and connections.
- 3 Think Big:** Strategic questions frame solutions in terms of future impact and alignment with goals.

### Broaden Your View



#### Expand Your Perspective

Look at things with a new lens. Avoid assumptions and ask questions.



#### Gather data and insights

Be aware of trends and signals.



#### Seek Additional Perspectives

Gather input and insights from employees and external advisors.



## Foundational Questions – Addressing the What

These questions establish the facts and immediate context. Asking foundational questions helps you establish a clear understanding of the problem.

### Example Questions to Ask:

- What is the specific problem we are addressing?
  - When did this first appear?
  - What feedback have we received related to this?
  - Who is impacted by this, and how are they affected?
  - What are the immediate consequences of not addressing this?
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## Exploratory Questions – Addressing the How and Why

These questions move beyond the surface to identify underlying systems, inefficiencies, or behaviors driving or contributing to the problem.

### Example Questions to Ask:

- Why does this problem exist, and what are the contributing factors?
  - Are there recurring situations tied to this issue?
  - What historical decisions or actions have led us to this point?
  - What underlying assumptions are we making about this situation?
  - Who are the key stakeholders, and what are their perspectives?
  - What processes or systems seem to be failing?
  - Why are we unable to solve this issue with our current approach?
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## Strategic Insights - Addressing the What If

These questions look at the big picture, focusing on strategic and long-term impacts. They help frame solutions, looking at risks, opportunities, and alignment with broader goals and priorities.

### Example Questions to Ask:

- What long-term risks does this pose to business?
- Are there cultural or leadership factors influencing this?
- If this problem remains unresolved, what future issues/risks might we face?
- What would solving this problem mean for the business in the long term? What opportunities could emerge?
- What trade-offs or sacrifices are we willing to make to focus on this?
- How can we create systems, processes, or structures to sustain improvement?

# Unlocking Potential

Navigating the challenges and opportunities in your business can feel overwhelming - but you don't have to do it alone.

An external perspective brings fresh insights, helps identify blind spots, challenges assumptions, and uncovers opportunities that might otherwise go unnoticed.

It's not just about challenges - it's about unlocking the full potential of your business and setting the stage for long-term success.

**Together, we can find the way forward - let's start the conversation.**



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