



Question Types

'What really moves the needle is the ability to ask great, constructive questions! The more familiar you are with questions, the easier it will be to approach people and teams with facilitation, leadership etc.' (Stania/Schnell)

Which question bring your company on the next level?

As process facilitators in various roles you need to be good with questions! You have to know the impact, the benefits and pitfalls of different question types.

In the following we will briefly present you the important question types that you can use and learn from for more constructive and effective conversations and meetings:

Open Questions	Closed Questions	Situative Questions
<p>Open questions open up the communication. Open questions help you to understand more, to dive deeper into topics and get more information about the topics. With open questions we broaden the discussion in general because all answers are possible.</p> <p>Examples: 'How do you feel today?', 'How do you like your new challenge?', 'What else is there to tell?'</p>	<p>Closed questions are binary; you can only answer with a 'yes' or 'no'. They work in either way which can be quite helpful for closing a conversation or making a decision. Often we ask closed questions even though we want more information. Here we should use open questions instead.</p> <p>Examples: 'Do you agree with me?', 'Can we come to a decision?', 'Is everything alright?'"</p>	<p>Situative Questions focus on the situation itself or on specific situations that already occurred. When you want to understand a certain behaviour better or when you want to help a person find out something about a specific situation in the past this question type can help you with that.</p> <p>Examples: 'Did I say something wrong?', 'In that moment, what helped you the most to stay constructive?'</p>
Hypothetical Questions	Systemic Questions	Scaling Questions
<p>Hypothetical questions give the opportunity to think outside of the box. Asking hypothetical questions opens up all possibilities. If someone is stuck on a task or problem, these questions help to get new viewpoints and ideas.</p>	<p>Systemic questions help when you want to ask questions regarding dependencies and connections between people and systems. They help to connect various viewpoints with your own thoughts to see things differently.</p>	<p>Scaling questions help people to get a more specific feeling/ understanding about a particular topic/problem. Something vague can become more actionable, useful and better understood. It can help to narrow down thoughts.</p>



<p>Examples: ‘If you could change the company, what would you do?’, ‘Imagine the perfect day. What would it look like?’.</p>	<p>Examples: ‘Which other factors need to be involved here?’, ‘Which options are there when you take your team into consideration?’.</p>	<p>Examples: ‘On a scale from 1-10, how do you feel today?’, ‘On a scale from 1-5, how much work brings this task for you?’.</p>
<p>Counter Questions</p>	<p>Circular questions</p>	<p>Reframing Questions</p>
<p>Counter questions are a chance to mirror back a question without answering it yourself. It can help to guide a meeting, encouraging the other person by empowering them to come up with answers themselves.</p> <p>Examples: ‘What do you think is most important now?’ (after you got the question what to do now). ‘How would you answer this question yourself?’.</p>	<p>Circular questions help to take various perspectives into consideration. You can ask what others would say or do in a specific situation or with a specific issue when they were the ones deciding what to do next. Create various viewpoints.</p> <p>Examples: ‘What would your colleague say?’, ‘How would your partner react in this situation?’ ‘What would your team do in this moment?’.</p>	<p>Reframing questions help to get new perspectives and viewpoints on topics and issues. With a good reframing question you can stimulate a positive viewpoint instead of only seeing the downside.</p> <p>Examples: ‘What is the positive aspect that you can describe as well?’, ‘Which options could arise after this situation?’, ‘What is a glass-half-full’ viewpoint?’.</p>

Possible literature to dive deeper into this topic:

SEIFERT, Josef W. (2012): Visualisieren, Präsentieren, Moderieren. Der Klassiker. 32. Auflage. Gabal Verlag GmbH. Offenbach.