

# ASKING CLEVER QUESTIONS

Asking Clever Questions is probably one of the best ways to focus 100% on someone you want to build a relationship with. Lets go right back to the start here, we've shaken hands, we've identified what we do, our job, career, or role at this function. The next step is to begin asking Clever Questions.

Clever Questions are usually those that elicit a longer explanation, they usually come from open-ended questions rather than closed questions. A closed question is one that gets a yes/no response. They work for certain situations, however if you are trying to establish a relationship they tend to shut down conversations, so aim to ask questions that are more open ended.

Not sure what to ask? Here are some ideas. I've broken the questions into six categories, you can't possibly ask all these questions in one sitting and of course the whole idea is to ask a few well placed questions to get the other person talking so you can discover what you have in common. Remember focus on the other person and their business and listen.

## The Five Clever Question Categories

- 1.You
- 2.Your Business
- 3.Marketing
- 4.Social Media
- 5.Leadership

### You

1. How did you happen to come to this event?
2. What made you decide to attend?
3. How did you find out about this function, how long have you been attending?
4. What market are you in, who is your ideal client base?
5. Have you ever had one of those days, or a client that just stands out?
6. What would you do differently if you started all over again?
7. Do you have children? How many? How old?
8. Do you have any hobbies, interests, or a sport you are passionate about?
9. What sporting team do you follow?
10. Are you a member of a professional association?

### Your Business

1. Tell me about your business?
2. What is the favourite part of your business?
3. Who are your typical clients?
4. How did you get into this line of work?
5. What is the most common misunderstanding about your business?
6. What makes your business different from others like yours?
7. Tell me about some of the unique aspects to your business?
8. What are some of the changes you've seen in your industry recently?
9. What are some business magazines you would recommend?
10. What are some of the biggest financial challenges?
  - a. Leadership challenges?
  - b. People challenges?
  - c. Business planning challenges? Etc. you've had

## Marketing

1. What business books have you read recently that you've found valuable?
2. What are some of the marketing tactics that you've employed that have helped your business?
3. What are some of the biggest marketing challenges you've had?
4. How do you maintain contact with your clients or customers?
5. What are some of the ways you entertain your clients or customers?
6. What business events or groups have you found effective? Why? How?
7. What business events or groups have you found ineffective? Why? How?
8. What's the biggest block to selling/marketing in your business?
9. What are some of the ways you've overcome them?
10. What do you think motivates your prospects or customers to buy from you?

## Social Media

1. Which social media sites do you have a company profile on?
2. What are some business blogs or newsletters that pertain to your field?
3. What are some business blogs or newsletters you've read that you would recommend?
4. Have you ever used blogging or commenting on blogs as a business tool?
5. What do you think about blogging?
6. What are some websites you've seen that you've liked? Why?
7. Has your business marketed on-line? How is this done?
8. What challenges have you had developing the online part of your business?
9. What new businesses areas or industries have you considered marketing to online?
10. What is your online business development strategy?

## Leadership

1. Do you have any employees? Tell me about your employees?
2. What do you think motivates your employees these days?
3. What business speakers have you heard lately?  
What key learning did you take from their presentation?
4. What seminars or conferences have you sent your employees to that you'd recommend?
5. What are some of the key leadership trends in your industry today?
6. How does your company address these trends?
7. Do you have a structured training process for your employees?
8. What training have you found valuable? Technical? Leadership? Other?
9. What's the most effective management technique you've used?
10. In your view, what is the most important talent or skill people a leader should have?  
Remember your goal is to get the other person talking about themselves as much as possible. As they answer the questions, be there, focus on them 100%, look at their face and nod your head, smile, whatever is appropriate for what is being said.

### THE BONUS SET!

How to ask for a referral using clever questions

#### Business Referral Clever Questions

- What are your preferred ways to develop new business opportunities?  
Who can I connect you to that would be beneficial for your business?  
How do you manage strategic alliances in your field?  
Have you explored creating strategic alliances? (If yes. What were the results?)  
What are some ways we might be able to work together?  
What would you like more of in your business? What would you like less of?  
What are some challenges you've experienced in this past year? ☒  
What would an ideal referral be for your business?  
What should I be listening for when I speak to others that would indicate a good referral for you?  
If I could introduce you to the perfect person to do business with, who would that be?  
What is their name?