



Taking Your
BUSINESS to the
NEXT LEVEL

Questions for Business Growth: The Clarity Process™



MORE PROFIT | MORE FREEDOM

Questions For Business Growth

YOUR PROFIT

What is your current financial state?

1. a) Is your company structured for profit? b) On a scale of 1 - 10 (10 is high) how would you rate your satisfaction level with your current profits?

2. Currently, what are your most significant financial challenges?

3. What are you current profit centers? Which of them are most profitable to you?

4. What are your monthly fixed costs?

5. What is your break-even level?

6. How much do your sales vary month-to-month?

7. How consistent were this year's profits with the norm over the past few years?

8. How long does it take (on average) from the start of an engagement to its completion? To what extent does this vary?

9. Do you have a system in place for monitoring your finances on a daily and weekly basis to provide you with meaningful information. If so, are there ways that this system might be improved? How, specifically?

10. To what extent have you analyzed your current profitability a) by customer, b) by product or service, c) by department, d) by geographic location/region, e) other?

11. What are your best lead sources for your most profitable customers?

12. Are you clear about what causes changes to your profits? What, specifically, causes these changes?

13. What are the three most significant threats or concerns you face with regard to your profits?

14. Which strategies do you use to overcome these concerns and meet your goals?

15. Are you able to identify specifically where your future profitability lies? If so, where?

16. How might your fixed costs change in future periods of growth?

17. Please identify your top potential opportunities for profit this year.

18. How will you assess, protect, and maximize your profit as you grow?

19. To what extent do you have a plan in place to grow your revenues and to effectively manage costs?

20. What are your top three priorities for managing or improving profits as you grow?

Notes/Insights:

Questions for Business Growth

CUSTOMER VALUE

1. What is your value proposition?

2. How effectively do you communicate customer value in marketing and sales materials?
Explain.

3. How is your value proposition different from your competitors'?

4. What gives your company a competitive advantage?

6. What are your current strategies for assessing the actual customer experience of value for
a) your best customers and b) all of your customers? (For example, do you use customer
satisfaction surveys?)

7. How often do you check in with your customers about the value they're getting?

8. a) What questions do you ask to get useful customer feedback? b) What do you do with all of the information once you have it?

9. What are your current strategies for improving customer satisfaction?

10. How do you go above and beyond for your most profitable customers?

11. Is your customer base growing or shrinking or staying stable? (Provide details: number and dollar volume of customer last year, customer the year before, new customers, lost customers).

12. What is your desired customer experience (defined in terms of customer results and their experience along the way)?

13. What are your top three priorities for maintaining or enhancing customer value as you grow?

14. How actively do you focus on developing or enhancing your products and/or services?

Notes/Insights:

Questions for Business Growth

FUNDAMENTAL STRUCTURES

How is your business currently organized and how will it evolve?

I. How is your company organized today? Draw a current organizational chart:

2. How is this organizational structure likely to change as you grow?

3. Do you have any concerns about adapting to these changes? If so, what are your top concerns?

4. Do you regularly assess your organizational structure to ensure that it will help you to achieve your business vision? If so, how do you do this?

5. Does your current organization chart have well-defined functions/roles? Please comment.

6. What is your current geographical/industrial/sector reach?

7. Have you built an organizational chart for the future that shows you what your company will look like when you are three or four times larger than you are today? If so, how does it differ from your existing organizational chart?

8. What new positions and skill-sets will be required to maintain customer value and maximize your profits as you grow?

9. How will your facilities be affected by growth (i.e. technologies, infrastructure, etc.)?

10. What technologies will be required to support your growth? What is your purchasing timeline for such tools?

11. How must your geographical/industrial/sector reach evolve to address changing conditions and growth in the future?

12. Do you have a transition plan in place so that you will effectively respond to such change? If so, please describe it here:

13. What are your top three priorities for adapting the organizational structures of your company to manage growth?

Notes/Insights:

Questions for Business Growth

EXPANDING DELIVERY CAPACITY

What is your current flow of operations?

1. Have you created an operational model that ensures quality and high standards for product and/or service delivery as you grow your company? What does it look like?

2. At what percentage of your present capacity are you currently operating? To what extent does this vary in different parts of the business?

3. What percentage of what you do is based on written systems vs. on peoples' skills and experience? Please comment.

4. To what extent do you have written training manuals or formal training procedures for new employees? If so, how would you rate their effectiveness?

5. How well defined are succession plans for key individuals in your organization who might move on?

6. What strategies do you use to ensure that your company is built to run seamlessly without you overseeing it every minute of the day?

7. Have you taken all of the experience and intuitive knowledge that is unique to you and operationalized it across your organization? What specific measures have you taken to do this?

8. If you answered “no” to the question above, do you have a way to get all of that information down on paper without completely disrupting the business? How much of a priority is this?

9. Where, if anywhere, are you vulnerable in product or service delivery? What are you most concerned about?

10. What, specifically, do you do to manage the quality of your deliverables?

11. Do you ask for employee input on ways to improve operations? How often? What is the feedback you gain?

12. What are your top three priorities for expanding your product or service delivery capacity as you grow?

Questions for Business Growth

PEOPLE

Who is on your team?

1. Please pull together the following details about each of your staff: a) name, b) date of birth, c) date of hire, d) position hired for, e) current position, f) initial pay, g) current pay, h) last increase, i) reason for last increase, j) a copy of their latest performance review, and k) a comment on their current effectiveness and upward mobility.

2. Who are the key people in your organization?

3. Do you have a written job description for all of your people? To what extent do they have clear, measurable deliverables for each area of accountability?

4. What are your current strategies for attracting, screening, and recruiting your employees? Do you have a formal hiring process? If so, please describe it.

5. To what extent do you have a written career path for your employees?

6. For how long does the average employee remain with the company? Are you concerned about employee turnover?

7. How many of your people are “A-Players”? (i.e. in the top 10% of anyone for their role at their current pay.) Who are they and what strategies do you have in place to retain them?

8. Are any of your employees under-employed (i.e. stuck in positions that don't fully tap their strengths)?

9. Do you have any questionable or problem employees? Please comment

10. What are your goals and objectives for increasing employee performance?

11. Who are the current stars in your company? Do any of your people stand out as being upcoming, future stars? If so, who are they?

12. How often do you conduct performance reviews and offer feedback about your employees' productivity? On what measurable criteria are performance reviews based?

13. Do you have all of the desired skill-sets on your team? Which, if any, are you missing?

14. What are your current strategies for professional development for a) your key employees and b) other staff? How is this likely to change as you grow?

15. What structures or incentives do you have in place to help motivate your employees?

16. How would you describe the corporate culture in your company at present?

17. What is the corporate culture that you would like to create in the workplace and how close is it to your employees' personal beliefs and goals? (*Think of areas such as communication, working environment, health and safety, benefits, employee engagement, opportunities for growth, team building, employee job satisfaction, etc.*)

18. Have the core values of the company been identified and communicated to employees? Please comment.

19. To what extent have your core values been adopted by employees?

20. What are your top three priorities as they relate to your people?

Questions for Business Growth

NEW SALES

What are your sales strategies and how might they be further enhanced?

1. What is your current method of customer acquisition? List the process.

2. How well will your current sales system support you as you grow? Will this need to change?

3. What do you anticipate your selling structure will look like when your company is: a) double its current volume, b) triple its current volume, c) quadruple its current volume, d) ten times its current volume?

4. What are the most pressing concerns you have in terms of gaining new sales and hitting your sales targets?

5. Outside of your sales department, who would you consider to be effective sales representatives for your company (ex. tech people, installers, referrals sources, etc.)

6. Do you actively encourage people outside of the sales department to increase your sales? Please comment.

5. What is your strategy for hiring and retaining A-level sales reps?

6. Do you have a consistent process for training new sales reps? If yes, is it in writing? Please comment.

7. On a separate piece of paper, please provide a list of sales team members and their monthly sales activity for the past two years.

8. What are the top strengths and weaknesses of each person in your sales department?

9. Who are the strongest members of your sales team?

10. Who are the weakest members of your sales team?

11. How are your salespeople compensated?

12. How well do the members of your sales team gain (or protect) margin for your business?

13. To what extent are their sales based on price?

14. Are you successfully managing your sales team to profitably deliver on your goals for revenue and profit? How might you improve in this area?

15. How do you ensure that your marketing efforts are focused on your most profitable customer segments?

16. Have you pursued e-business or used e-channels for sales? If not, is it time to start pursuing this?

Sales (please check all that apply)

Do your potential customers need / want your products and services?

- need it / want it
- need it / don't want it
- don't need it / want it
- don't need it / don't want it

What is your sell cycle?

- a one-call close
- two to three calls
- three to six months
- more than six months

On whom do your salespeople call?

- Presidents or owners
- VPs or other top administrators
- technical end users

What is the average size of an order?

- less than \$1,000
- \$1,000 - \$5,000
- \$5,000 - \$20,000
- over \$20,000

What percentage of time do you spend selling new vs. current accounts?

- 75% new and 25% current
- 25% new and 75% current
- 50% new and 50% current
- 60% new and 40% current

What is your customer development like?

- sell them once and move on
- sell them on a regular basis
- sell them on a renew yearly
- sell and service them

Who does the closing?

- a salesperson
- the salesperson only plants seeds
- inside people do the closing
- someone else does it

How often are presentations made?

- once to a single decision-maker
- once to a group
- multiple times to individuals
- multiple times to a group

How much performance pressure is placed on salespeople?

- high
- medium
- low
- no pressure

Questions for Business Growth

REPEAT AND REFERRAL BUSINESS

1. What percentage of your business comes from repeat customers? Is your answer based on an empirical tally or a guess?

2. Are you aware of the current rate of obtaining and converting referrals from customers?

3. Have you identified your top referral sources? If so, please them here.

4. What percentage of your customers have referred business to you?

5. Have you calculated the lifetime value of each of your customers including: a) actual sales, b) potential sales, c) the number and value of their past referrals, and d) their potential for future referrals? If not, do you have enough information to do so?

6. Do you have any concerns about attracting repeat customers as you move into a period of growth?

7. What are your current strategies for rewarding clients who refer the most?

8. How do you prevent clients from engaging you once and never coming back? If so, how?

9. What are your top three priorities for tapping into more repeat and referral business?

10. What resources can you devote to meeting your objectives for repeat and referral business?

11. To what extent do you use a database to support existing customers?

12. How effectively does your database track trends in repeat and referral business?

Questions for Business Growth

CASH FLOW

1. How solid is your company's cash flow at the moment? If so, how is it updated?

2. Do you have a current cash flow forecast?

3. What are your current strategies for developing and reviewing cash flow forecasts?

4. To what extent have you analyzed your cash flow needs for the next 12 months?

5. Where are some possible places where cash flow might be improved?

6. What are some of the most pressing issues or concerns you face with regards to cash flow? How might these concerns be magnified as you grow?

7. Are your banking and borrowing strategies consistent with your size? Please explain.

8. Have you considered what funding you will require for future growth?

9. Have you anticipated your cash flow needs at different stages of growth? How would the company's cash flow change if you were to: a) double your sales, b) triple your sales, c) quadruple your sales, d) have a 10-fold increase in sales?

10. How much borrowing capacity do you currently have?

11. To what extent have you built financial reserves to support your cash flow strategies? What are your priorities for doing so?

Questions for Business Growth

GROWING AS A LEADER

Individual Accountability

1. To what extent do your employees take personal, individual accountability for their actions?

2. To what extent are there performance standards, or standards of conduct in place to support this?

3. What are the company's most significant challenges in this area?

Time Off

1. How much time off did you intend to take in each of the past two years?

2. How much time did you actually take off in each of the past two years?

3. In the past two years, how much of your time off was spent without being in contact with the office?

4. How much time would you *like* to be taking off (without contacting the office)?

Leadership

1. How do you define leadership?

2. Who are the current and the aspiring or up-and-coming leaders in the company?

3. How does the company actively support and nurture leadership development?

4. To what extent does the company actively support and nurture leadership development in the community? Is such development a priority?

Management

1. How would you assess each of the managers in your company?

2. How are individuals promoted to management within the company?

3. Are there any up-and-coming individuals at your company with management potential?

Questions for Business Growth

DEVELOPING AS A LEADER - OTHER

1. What percentage of your daily activities energizes you? What percentage of your daily activities drains your energy?

2. How well do you delegate responsibility? Do you have any concerns in this area?

3. Do you have skilled individuals at your company to whom you feel comfortable delegating? What percentage of your staff?

4. Who makes decisions in the company? What is the decision-making process?

5. Do you put off making changes or difficult decisions in your company (such as hiring and firing)? Please comment.

6. As you move toward a new stage of growth, which responsibilities will you take on and which will you delegate?

7. To what extent do you use the skills of individuals within your company to increase your leverage?

5. To what extent are the owners and other key individuals bogged down by the day-to-day activities of the company?

6. How much strategic time is scheduled? At what frequency do you strategize?

7. How much of this scheduled strategic time is actually held?

8. To what extent have you set clear, measurable goals for: a) the next three years; b) the coming year, c) the next quarter, and d) each month?

9. How are these goals set and who monitors the results?

10. What is one change that you might make in this company that would make the single biggest difference to its future?

11. What are your top five priorities for moving forward?

ONE:

TWO:

THREE:

FOUR:

FIVE:

12. What will be your first three actions for moving forward?

ONE:

TWO:

THREE:

1. What was your original purpose in building your business?

2. For how long has your business been in operation?

3. How has your business grown since it began?

4. What are the main products and/or services that you offer?

5. Which industries does your business serve?

6. What is your geographic span?

7. Who owns the business? Do you have any partners? Please provide some brief information on each.

8. How many people do you currently employ?

9. What is the legal structure of your company?

10. What is your company's current financial situation?

Company Overview (please check all that apply)

What is the size of your target customers?

- small business
- medium-sized business
- large business
- major corporation
- consumers

What do you consider your primary market to be?

- institutional
- corporate / industrial
- small business / professional office
- consumers

How many competitors do you have?

- 5 +
- 3 - 5
- not enough competitors
- we don't have any competitors

How much do you charge compared to your competitors?

- we charge more than our competitors
- we charge the same as our competitors
- we charge less than our competitors

What does your company sell?

- we sell commodities
- we sell products I could demonstrate
- we sell conceptual services
- we sell custom engineered solutions

How would you rate your products / services?

- best on the market
- average
- behind
- unique

How is sales supervision managed?

- it is micro-managed
- it is closely managed
- seldom at best
- it is not managed

How do you compensate your employees?

- all salary
- straight commission
- mostly salary with some commission
- mostly commission with some salary

What is your company's environment like?

- unstable
- moments of instability
- stable

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Notes:

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