

A Birthday Gift

From Dan Kennedy



One of the things I've learned in consulting and coaching is that great answers come from great questions. Often I'm of more value posing questions than dispensing answers. Socrates' entire method of teaching was asking questions. Over the years, I've written, published and taught some exceptionally valuable questions. Some are reprised here, along with some you may not have seen before. Some with commentary, some not. As you review your past year and prepare for the next, I hope you find these helpful.

One way to get real value from smart and provocative questions is making lists, that evolve into 'to do lists'. I've suggested a number of such lists here, too.

The questions are divided by topic:

MARKETING.. MONEY.. ENTREPRENEURIAL LIFE..

There are 17 questions, by no means an exhaustive list. But plenty to keep you busy, if you take them seriously.

MARKETING QUESTIONS

#1: WHAT'S NEXT?

The single most important marketing question, profit enhancement question may be this one. One of the flaws in most businesses is the existence of Dead-Ends. A transaction occurs without naturally, logically, deliberately setting up or leading to the next transaction. That's a Dead-End. **Make a list of Dead-Ends in your business**, then fix them.

#2: WHAT DO THEY WANT?

#3: WHAT DO THEY WANT MOST?

#4: WHAT DO THEY WANT YOU'RE NOT GIVING THEM?

#2 has to do with needs vs. wants, and unmet desires – do you really understand what *motivates* your customers and prospects? What “E-FACTORS” that I’ve taught elsewhere, apply? **Make the list of the top ten things that motivate your customers to take action, and the top ten desires they have.** The answer to #3 is often used by info-marketers to choose the extra item(s) that go into the highest priced bundle of goods and services, to ‘force’ the top purchase or upgrade. That same strategy can be applied in many other businesses. #4 is: what else would they buy from you? Then either create it, find it, license rights to it, do joint ventures to provide it. Since the most difficult and expensive part of business is *acquiring* customers, you should always be searching for ways to earn more money *from* each customer.

#5: What Business Are You REALLY in?

Not the category you’re in, in the Yellow Pages. That might be ‘restaurant’, but you might be in the special celebrations business or romance business or businesspeoples’ lunch business.

#6: Why should your customers do business with you instead of ANY and EVERY other option available to them?

ENTREPRENEURIAL LIFE

#1: What If????

What If – you couldn’t continue doing business as you do now? (My decision to stop frequent travel led to the desire to replace speaking income, which led me to the coaching business.) *What If* – that person you keep thinking about firing but don’t, quit tomorrow? How would you function, re-arrange tasks? **Make a list of ten really provocative What If Questions to ponder.**

#2: What (Still) Really Bugs You, Day In, Day Out?

I do this: keep and keep refining the list of serious, reoccurring stressors and annoyances I want to eliminate from my life, then I work on doing so. A few years ago, there were over 20 on the list. Today, 3.

#3: What Are Your Top Ten Strengths?

Personally , as well as your business' strengths...then, what are you doing to leverage them and profit from them to the max? What interferes with doing so?

#4: What Are Your Top Ten Weaknesses?

What are you doing to fix them or compensate for them? How did they hurt you last year? What will be done differently this year?

#5: What Do You Want Your Business To Look Like In 12 Months? 36 Months?

A complete, detailed "picture". Then the list of obstacles, reasons that picture isn't already reality. Then five to ten possibilities for removing each obstacle, bridging each gap.

#6: What Insanity Are You Guilty Of?

The classic definition of 'insanity' is: doing the same things the same ways but hoping for different results. **#6A: What do you accept as "nature of your beast" that can't be changed or improved?** What do you believe to be absolute truths about your business, prices, customers, competitors – that you haven't tested in at least a year?

#7: What THREATS Exist to your business or prosperity - and what are you doing to protect yourself or insure against them?

MONEY

#1: What *Won't* You Do For Money?

It's useful to decide in advance the absolutes, so some decisions are easy.

#2: What *Is* Your Time Worth?

What does it need to be worth, to hit your income and wealth goals? This is discussed in great detail in my *NO B.S. TIME MANAGEMENT FOR ENTREPRENEURS* book.

#3: What Is Your Wealth Goal(s) For 05?

A lot of people focus on 'sales' or 'income', but you also need to set goals and measure progress in terms of (business) 'value' and (personal) 'wealth'.

#4: What Is Your Giving Goal(s) For 05?

If you've been through my WEALTH ATTRACTION SEMINAR (tapes), you've heard my explanation, from the late Foster Hibbard, of the importance of both "the wealth account" and "the giving account." I set out last year to do some very important things in this area and accomplished all three of the objectives. As I write this, I'm personally contemplating what I should put on this list for 2005. "Giving", one way or another is miraculously magnetic.

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