

## BBC Notes from 25 July 2014 – Business Tools Roundtable, Part II, "Asking Questions"

In our BBC meeting last week we discussed using questions in working with others and making sales. In looking at questions there are basically two types that can be used. *Closed questions* — with "yes" or "no" answers such as "Did you buy a car?" — or *open questions*, such as "How do you feel about this?" *Open questions* are the best in dealing with people because they have a conversational tone and eliminate the interrogation feeling of *closed questions*. Also, *open questions* cause a person to stop and think about what was asked and think about the issue or possible answer. When a person has to stop and think in this manner, they often may not even realize a question was asked.

Here are some typical open ended questions:

1. What is most important to you?
2. How would you handle the changes?
3. What is the most important thing to you at this time?
4. What are your priorities?
5. What is the most important message to get across to your customers?
6. Why is your website not attracting customers?
7. When can you be ready to review our proposal?
8. Could you do it any more efficient way?

*Closed questions* can be changed to open ended ones by using terms such as: What, How, Could, When, Why. Making your sales discussion conversational is important to establishing a relationship with a prospective client. It leads to understanding and describing the situation faced by the potential customer. Also, in studying "brain science," it has been found that when the brain hears a question it immediately addresses the question and considers a response.

There are times when questions should be used and when they should not be used. When you are presenting information to a large group of people, and ask a question, it can cause them to start thinking about things other than your presentation. And with presentations, you can ask questions afterwards in a one on one discussion.

There are a lot of things to consider in asking questions and the way they are phrased. Questions often get categorized as "Stupid Questions," because they lead to conflict or anger. So be careful. Examples of this type are:

1. You're not leaving before you are done, are you?
2. How you can say that?
3. Are you going to eat all of that?
4. May I be frank?
5. Don't you think you should change your clothes?
6. Is this all?

Give it try. Start asking questions in a variety of situations, and with various individuals, and see the difference in communication and results.