

Assessing Your Questioning Style

Whether you are new to using Precision Questioning or have used PQ in your work for years, you may find that you tend to use some categories in the PQ Toolkit more than others. These tendencies may come from the nature of your work, or they may result from other training you've received. While there is nothing wrong with playing to your strengths, part of the value of PQ is that it provides multiple angles from which to approach a problem or decision. Multiple points of attack give you a greater understanding of your work, and the greater your understanding the less likely you are to make a mistake in your analysis.

This PQ & PA Skill Sharpener is a questioning assessment, a chance to consider your current use of questions and how you might broaden it. So grab your PQ Toolkit, consider these questions, and develop a plan for broadening your use of questions.

Question	Your Plan and Your Results
<p>Which of the seven categories of questions do you think are your categories of strength? List them here:</p>	<p>For each category of strength, think of a place where you might ask those questions in the next week. What is a different category of question that might also be of value in that place? <i>List these alternative categories here, and ask a question from one of them instead of, or in addition to, the one you ask from your area of strength.</i></p> <p><i>Did the new questions help your work? Why or why not?</i></p>

Question	Your Plan and Your Results
<p>Which of the seven categories are your weaknesses? List them here:</p>	<p>For each category of weakness, think of a place where you might ask those questions in the next week. <i>When the opportunity arises, make sure you ask a question from that category.</i></p> <p><i>Did the new questions help your work? Why or why not?</i></p>
<p>When you ask a colleague a question, is your style concise, or conversational? Does your style change if you are asking your manager? A direct report?</p>	<p>Regardless of whom we are asking the question, the goal remains the same: get their best thinking in their answer.</p> <p>If your style tends to the concise, make sure you are not making the answerer feel defensive. In at least one situation in the next week, use a few more words that give attention to the relationship if it might improve their thinking.</p> <p><i>Possible situations that would benefit from more conversational style:</i></p>

Question	Your Plan and Your Results
<p>When you are attacking a problem, do you start on the surface and get the Big Picture before diving in, or do you tend to attack quickly?</p>	<p>Next time you are working on a problem, notice whether you tend to be quick to drill down, or more likely to stay on the surface. Then try the opposite approach, and see if it yields new insight to the work.</p> <p><i>If you tend to be quick to dive in, what were the results of staying on the surface longer?</i></p> <p><i>If you tend to stay on the surface, what were the results of diving in quickly?</i></p>
<p>When you are asking questions in your field of expertise, which categories do you tend to use the most? List them here:</p>	<p><i>When you are asking questions in your field, what other categories can you also use? List them here:</i></p> <p><i>What happened when you tried using questions from these new categories?</i></p>

