

Category Review – Go/NoGo Questions

Go/NoGo is one of the seven categories of analytical questions that constitute the Precision Questioning Toolkit. Go/NoGo questions are useful to analyze your time and how you are using your resources. For instance, Go/NoGo questions help focus a meeting or decide whether a discussion is worth having prior to wasting a lot of time with the wrong people at the table. Of course, because Go/NoGo questions focus analytical attention on people's participation in meetings and conversations, they always prompt a few chuckles when a class is first learning the seven categories. Imagine asking before every meeting: "Do I have to be here?" Which inevitably prompts someone to add: "Do *you* have to be here?"

Using Go/NoGo questions in a serious way helps you and your team make better use of time, energy, and attention. This Skill Sharpener reviews the types of Go/NoGo questions and provides you with a chance to consciously and consistently bring them into your work.

Meeting Basics & Participation

Go/NoGo questions allow you to analyze meetings and include questions about the basics of good meetings. Is there an agenda? If not, ask what topics the meeting will cover. Are the meeting goals clear? If not, use questions to clarify. Are the necessary people at the meeting, given the goals and agenda? Using Go/NoGo questions to analyze participation can increase efficiency of meetings and also raise morale.

Motivation

Go/NoGo questions help you quickly analyze the motivation behind discussing a topic. Sometimes topics are worth time because they represent interesting ideas, but at other times a decision may be urgent. Are there severe consequences for not addressing the topic right now? Go/NoGo questions help you analyze opportunity costs: What are we *not* doing if we discuss this right now? What happens if we *don't* have this discussion right now?

Focus

Perhaps one of the most sophisticated uses of Go/NoGo questions is to analyze how you are focusing your time and attention. Questions like, "Are we focusing on the right things right now?" ensure that the current topic is aligned with the larger goals of the team or the organization. In meetings, if the discussion shifts to a topic that is not important to the whole team, you can ask "Should we take this discussion off-line?" These questions refine your capacity to control your focus and use your time as effectively as possible.

Planning Tool

Think about the meetings or conversations that you have coming up in the next week. Which Go/NoGo questions would improve your effectiveness? Which would improve the efficiency of your team? Write them down in the chart below. If you start the meeting with some precise questions in mind, you are more likely to use them once the action starts.

Meeting You Will Attend (one-on-one, team, customer, review)	Go/NoGo Questions You Want to Ask (meeting basics and participation, motivation, focus)