

### Court Leadership and Asking Questions



#### Why ask questions?

Questions allow access to more information and lead to details on the “why.” Questions promote communication, facilitate uncomfortable situations, may de-escalate disagreements, provide clarification and greater understanding, and often stimulate thinking. Questions aid in assessing the challenge, increase perspectives and understanding, support critical thinking, and stimulate creativity. Questions give leaders a tool for inquiry and learning.

In this issue, **questions are provided for use with employees or co-workers.** While immediate action may not always be feasible, responses may open a dialogue, capture a view of how the organization is perceived, and lead to organizational improvements.

With all questions noted, it is vital to be present, listen, and reflect on information obtained.

#### Sample Areas of Questions to Be Profiled

Employee

Smarter

Alignment

Success

Team

Power

Coaching

Court Leader

#### Question Categories

#### Tips on Use

##### Forced Choice/Ranked Questions for Structured Feedback

- The court is respected
- I understand how my job contributes to the overall mission
- Communication in my division is good
- I am proud to work at the court
- I enjoy coming to work
- I feel my job is important
- I feel valued based upon my skills and contributions
- I know what is expected
- I have the materials and equipment I need to do my work
- I can express opinions and they are considered
- Someone at work has talked to me about my progress
- I get the training I need to do my job well
- I have opportunities to learn and grow

- Provided via employee surveys
- Structured method employed
- Best with a process to tally and share results
- Used to understand employee views of the environment
- Useful for development of employee training and engagement practices

##### General Open-Ended Questions

- What should I (as the leader) do more of?
- What should I (as the leader) do less of?
- What should I (as the leader) do differently?
- What is the #1 thing I need to deal with or address?
- Which areas should I focus on?

- Provides leader development
- Useful for open comments
- Helps with problem solving
- Invites follow up discussions
- Curiosity and reflection vital

##### Specific Feedback Questions for Leaders

- Tell me about you – what do I need to know?
- What is your work style?
- What do I need to understand?
- What is your biggest frustration?
- What do you need to help you succeed?
- What would you change in the organization?
- Are there sensitive areas that I need to be aware of?

- Useful for new leaders
- New appointees may try these
- Listening to feedback critical

Evaluate: Could these questions be useful for organizational improvement? Would these questions help with leadership skill enhancement? Can these questions become part of your leadership style?

Resources: National Center for State Courts (NCSC) CourTools Measure 9; J. Cornell, “The Organizational Immigrant,” NACM Court Manager, Vol.17, No. 1, 2002; Workplace Satisfaction Survey adapted from CourTools Measure 9 (author’s own).