

Dennis Engelbrecht, The Family Business Institute, Digging Deeper. Thanks for tuning in today.

Questions are the answer. I'm going to repeat that again. Questions are the answer. Questions are the key to clear communication and understanding. To what do you use questions? How effective are you at asking questions? And that will tell you a lot about your skills in communication. So, when I say questions are the answer, questions are the answer to clear communication and understanding. Questions are the answer to effective relationships. Questions are the answer to having and showing empathy. Questions are the answer to creating the wow in your customer service and delivering what people really want. After all, how do you know what they really want if you don't ask them? And ask the right questions.

Two dangers about questions, the opposite, one is the word assume. And most of you have probably heard this saying about where assuming leads you to. But when you assume, you're really guessing. You're guessing what people want, what they're saying, what they want you to accomplish in many cases. And the reason for that is a lot of times the communication is not that clear. So, if you just assume and head off, there's a decent chance you're going to come back with an answer to the wrong question, all right? So, you've got to ask questions to dig deeper, to find out what people really mean, what they really want. Number two, a whole lot of especially young people tend to get them into is pretending, pretending you know. So they ask you to do something, you're not quite sure what that is, but you don't want to embarrass yourself by asking them what that is or what they mean or what the term means, so you go off and you pretend.

Well, first of all, it takes a whole lot of time, extra time to go off and pretend what you know because now you got to say, "Well, what did he mean," or maybe do some research or find out what they might've been talking about, ask some others. Wouldn't it have just been easy to say, "Oh, what do you mean by that? Okay, let me make sure I understand this well." Or the simplest and a very effective leadership tool, I don't know. Why is it we find it so hard to just say, "I don't know?" All right. When you pretend to know, you put yourself in a box. Now, let's just say, it's a construction technique, a means and methods technique and you don't really know, but the architect, client or superintendent or project manager, somebody asked you and all right, I think this is something I should know, but I don't know and then you go off and you do it.

What are the chances you're either going to do it wrong, or again, it's going to take you all day when it could take you 10 minutes, all right? Very high. And that's where pretending gets you. It gets you in a box, frankly, it gets you fired in a lot of cases. Learn to say, "I don't know," or learn to ask a question so you have a full understanding versus assuming or thinking you understand. So, keep this in mind, put it on your wall, questions are the answer. They're the answer to so much success in effective leadership, in being effective in any job, certainly being an effective follower. Make sure you're asking the questions, ask the right questions and like our slogan for our blog here, dig deeper. Questions are about digging deeper and finding out that true motivations, what people truly want. And when you do that, you'll accomplish more, and you'll be able to create a wow with your customers and your customer service.

Dennis Engelbrecht, digging deeper.