[**Revealing Questions Successful Executives Must Ask Themselves**](http://leadingwithquestions.com/2013/09/16/12-revealing-questions-successful-executives-must-ask-themselves/)

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**What makes a successful executive?**  **12 revealing questions that any executive should ask if they are wondering about their effectiveness:**

* **Are You Still Relevant?** Is your company’s primary product riding a growth trend or is it declining? Has the market long ago moved on? Do you still matter? Where is the next big wave to catch if you aren’t on one?
* **What is Your Why**? Is your primary purpose for doing what you are doing still clear and compelling? Have you defined your Why? (Mission or purpose.) Is your What clear? (Vision) Do you have your When written out? (Goals) Are your Hows set and prioritized? (Values, strategies and tactics) Is it still the right Who? Target audience and your executive team.
* **Are You Leading or Managing?** You lead people, you manage things. You need both. Leadership is the greatest variable with the most leverage. Leadership decides the path to follow, how fast is the speed of the march, and how to deal with each bend in the trail. Management executes to the variables of the journey. A leader is a shepherd who walks in front with a clear voice, a manager is a sheep herder with a well-trained horse, while a poor manager needs a sheep dog.
* **Are You Great, or just Good?** Excellence is first a decision before it is an action. Do you have passion for what you do? Are the best in your world at it? Can you make enough money to keep the water over the rocks? Jim Collins in his awesome book Good to Great says you need passion, potential to be the best in the world, and a clear ability to make money to be great in our world of business. Be honest… are you great? Or just good.
* **Are You Taking Care of Your People?**They are first and foremost. When is the last time you listened to them? Have you added to their opportunities and their benefits with your success? They are your success. Have you also made the hard decisions? Your people are even more important than your customer.
* **Are You Growing Your People?** As you grow your people is how they grow your company.  Are you investing in training, mentoring, and coaching to help you and them avoid the Peter Principle, which is the inevitable rise to the level of your own incompetence.
* **Is Your Team Aligned?** Does the pay plan incent them in the right direction. Is the Mission, Vision, Values, and Goals clearly and specifically defined, printed and communicated? Are they buying in to the plans you are making in 2013? Have you asked them? Is everyone pulling with the sales teams? Are your managers aligned with the direction of the company? If not, fix it.
* **Have You Listened to your Customers Today?** Roku just released their version 3.0 and it is selling like crazy. Why? They decided to put a headphone jack on the remote control. So somebody watching streaming video on their TV could do it without interrupting everyone around them. (Apple TV, you better listen up!) My wife Crystal, says it’s perfect for older people who can’t hear. They turn the volume up so high it disrupts everyone around them. It’s great for kids whose Saturday cartoons drive parents nuts. Roku listened, thought, and innovated an idea that is reaping incredible rewards.
* **How Likely Are Your Customers to Refer Others?** Have you asked Fred Reichheld’s “Ultimate Question” lately? “ On a scale of 0 to 10, how likely are you to refer our company to your friends and industry colleagues?” This is the 1st key question to measure the loyalty of your customers. Research shows that someone who gives you a 9 or 10 will refer, and is loyal. A 7 or 8 is neutral, they will nothing either good or bad. A 6 or less will bad-mouth you and your business. They will detract. Why loyalty? Because satisfied customers will leave you as fast unsatisfied customers will. Loyal customers will buy from you again and again and they will recommend you to others. Loyal customers are clients. You want clients, not just customers. The second question after you ask The Ultimate Question is “Why did you give us that score?” You better listen to the answers you receive and fix the problems that arise…. quickly**.**[I had a great point from Chris Jorgensen who recommended a third question to follow the 2nd question after The Ultimate Question...] Regarding the Ultimate Question. Asking the Question and it’s follow-up, “Why?” are certainly important. Then Net Promotor Score and strategic direction earned by asking are valuable. Consider asking the third question, “What could I do to earn a higher score?” This closes the loop with clients in such a way as to strongly support ongoing loyalty.
* **Do you Have Enough Quality Leads?**This is the life blood of business. It isn’t sales, it’s leads. If you have leads, your salespeople will figure out how to close them. What is a quality lead? You will know. They have ANUM. A = Authority, N = Need, U = Urgency, and M = Money…. in that order.
* **Do you Have Enough Sales People?** This is the question you ask once you have quality leads. It is a teeter-totter that you need balanced. You increase capacity for quality leads, then you add more people to close them. If you don’t have enough leads, the sales people struggle and leave. If you don’t have enough salespeople, the leads languish and decay. Sales people are like having enough guns on the ship, leads are the ammunition**.**
* **Are You Learning from Mistakes?** Dave Elkington, our CEO here at [**InsideSales**](http://www.insidesales.com/), is very good at this. Of course, he first has to believe he is making a mistake, but if he recognizes that he mistaken, he admits it, and never seems to make it again. I wish I could claim that. The school of hard knocks beats it into my head with much repetition.

**• What Would You Say Is Your Greatest Challenge As A Manager?**

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