

# 5 Questions To Ask

*To Unlock What Your Customers  
REALLY Want From You*

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# About *the 5 Questions to Ask*

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Hey – my name is Breanne, and I'm the founder of MNIB Consulting, a boutique consultancy that helps owners scale their online training companies.

The key to success for any business is in the alignment between your customers and your products.

When you know what your customers want and can clearly show how your products solve those problems, you make sales ... and your customers see results.

In this brief guide, I want to show you the five questions to ask, to unlock what your customers REALLY want from you.

When you focus on getting the answers to these questions – and then align your products, messaging and sales processes to what you hear – your business growth will skyrocket.

I hope you love it!



**Breanne Dyck**  
Founder, [MNIB Consulting Inc.](http://mnibconsulting.com)



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## QUESTION #1

# What's your biggest challenge with ... ?

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### WHY to ask this question

This question is the perfect opener.

It's broad, open-ended, and allows the person you're speaking free range on how to interpret the question.

That "free range interpretation" is key, because letting people riff is an incredibly fast way to find out if you've been working off some bad assumptions about what they perceive as their problems.

Asking this question also allows you to establish a common vocabulary — so you can make sure you're talking about the same thing.

It's also helpful in that, when you ask follow-up questions, you can tailor the wording you use to mirror their actual experience. This makes it feel much more natural; like a conversation, not an interrogation.

### WHAT to listen for

- The exact words: phrases, jargon, etc. that they use to describe their problem.
- Indicators of what success would look like — what does their challenge reveal about what they want that they're not currently getting?

### TIPS and tricks

- Make sure the answers you get include specific details; don't accept vague or broad challenges. Don't be afraid to dig deeper if all you get is vague or broad answers!
- Fight the temptation to talk about — or even mention — your product idea. The point of asking the question is **not to validate your idea**. It's to **challenge your assumptions**.

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## QUESTION #2

# Can you tell me about the last time that happened?

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### WHY to ask this question

Stories are incredibly powerful.

When you can get people telling a story about a time when their challenge (question # 1) happened, magic happens.

You start to be able to hear not just what they say, but you can discern how it made them feel, what they thought about the process, and so much more.

What was a simple statement of facts becomes a visceral, real experience that you can tap for deeper insights that becomes **great** when used in your sales copy.

Plus, this gives you an opportunity to clarify exactly what the challenge entailed *for them*. By asking clarifying questions, you not only get deeper, richer insights — but you show empathy and active listening, too.

### WHAT to listen for

- Specific emotional hooks, phrases or experiences.
- Phrases or jargon that you aren't 100% sure mean the same thing to you as to the person you're speaking to.
- Context. No challenge exists in a vacuum; what is the context that created this challenge, and how has that affected their experience?

### TIPS and tricks

- Use the language and phrases you noted in question # 1 to fine-tune this question and make it hyper-relevant to the conversation at hand.
- Tap into empathy. Show that you're actually listening and that you actually care about what they're saying.
- Pay attention to time frames: how long ago did this story happen? Is it recent? If not, then is this REALLY their biggest challenge?

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## QUESTION #3

# Why was this situation so hard for you?

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### WHY to ask this question

Question #2 opens the door.

This question opens the floodgates, and helps you discern the *real* problem they're trying to solve.

The truth is, the challenge you outlined in asking the first question is **probably not their real challenge**.

It's a symptom.

When you ask the question *why*, you are able to strip away what's at the surface and get to the root cause of whatever is bothering them.

The emotions described in answer to this question are copywriting gold; the more you can tap into the underlying reasons **why** someone wants to overcome a challenge, the stronger your ability to help them overcome it will be.

### WHAT to listen for

- The real, root-cause challenge they're facing.
- Emotional hooks that you can use in future copy.
- Underlying motivations and reasons why solving this problem is important to them.

### TIPS and tricks

- Reword this question based on the answers you received to the first few questions to make it seem more natural.
- Asking "why" a few times in succession is a great way to dig deeper and get below the surface to the real root cause. You'll be amazed by what people are willing to share, simply because you're asking them to share more of their story, and *why* it matters to them.

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## QUESTION #4

# What did you do about it?

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### WHY to ask this question

The best predictor of future behaviour is past behaviour.

Simply put, if they didn't try to solve the problem in the past, is it really that big a problem?

And what makes you think that they'll be willing to pay you to solve it now, if not?

More importantly, pay attention to why they believe that solution did or didn't work.

Things that didn't work are the root of the objections that you will have to help them overcome.

Things that did work may be things for you to consider integrating into your solution.

### WHAT to listen for

- Evidence that they have spent time or money trying to overcome this challenge in the past.
- Possible objections and/or reasons they believe that future solutions wouldn't work. These can be quantifiable, but also look out for emotional or mental biases.
- Why they chose to try that solution in the first place (what was appealing about it)?

### TIPS and tricks

- Again, you may need to ask some follow-up questions to tease out all the nuances.
- Pay attention to the urgency with which they tried to solve the problem. Lack of urgency indicates it's likely not that big a problem for them after all. Big time urgency indicates it's a problem they desperately want to solve.

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## QUESTION #5

# What is the ideal outcome you'd like to experience?

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### WHY to ask this question

This question as stated, is a bit of a red herring.

Consider the popular quote attributed to Henry Ford:

.....  
*“If I had asked people what they wanted, they would have told me a faster horse.”*  
.....

What you're really looking for here is the *counterpoint* to the situation described in question #2.

You've already determined what the problem looks like — how it makes them feel, how they think about it, etc.

Now, you want to tap into how they will feel, what they will be thinking, and what they believe their experience will be like **once that problem no longer exists.**

Get them to describe the transformation they are seeking, so you can help them achieve it.

### WHAT to listen for

- Emotional hooks, cues and examples of how life would be better with this problem solved.
- Specific details about how solving this problem will impact other areas of their life, business, family, career, etc.

### TIPS and tricks

- Invoke the power of imagination. Use phrases like “Imagine I had a magic wand and could solve this problem for you right now. What would your day tomorrow look like, if I were to do that?”
- Don't try to sell anything. If you feel as though what you are developing would be a good solution for them, ask them if you could follow-up later. And then do so!

# About *the Author*

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Breanne Dyck is a business strategist, consultant, learning designer, and the author of *Beyond Satisfaction*.

As the lead consultant and founder of MNIB Consulting, Breanne helps online training businesses scale their impact, their team and their revenue by blending operations management, learning and product strategy, and business model development.

She regularly consults on flagship products and programs, CreativeLive courses, live events, and workshops for thought-leaders and influencers such as bestselling authors Chris Guillebeau, Tara Gentile and Natalie Sisson.

Read more from Breanne, or connect with her and her team at:

<http://mnibconsulting.com>

