



Keyword: Dozen

# Truly Understand Customer Expectations Through Great Questions

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by Kevin Eikenberry

We all recognize that Customers are important. When you really stop and think about it, without Customers you wouldn't be around very long. And it doesn't matter what you call them: Customers or Clients or Patients or Students or insert-your-name-here. These people write your paycheck.

And so, since I'm assuming you'd like to continue to get paid, it makes sense to deliver to your Customers something that they value; something they value enough to continue to pay for it.

Customer satisfaction should be our basic goal – if Customers are satisfied they will continue to buy and you will continue to get paid. And if you want to be paid more, then you need to find ways to provide greater value to the Customers – either by attracting more of them or by building greater loyalty among the existing ones so they will pay for more services or pay you more often.

In order to get to Customer satisfaction, and hopefully beyond to what I like to call Customer delight, we must first know what our Customers want, need, expect and more. And in order to find that out, *we must ask them.*

The rest of this article lists more than a dozen great questions that you can use by themselves, as a group, or as a spur for additional ideas. You might use them exactly as written or you might need to adjust them based on your situation.

Note: Before we get to the questions themselves, please recognize that *we all* have Customers. You might not directly deal with those people who write checks to your organization. However, you do provide services to others in your organization. These people who you provide work product to (all in support of serving the paying Customer) are your Customers. These questions will absolutely work for you too.

## The Questions

- What have we done well for you, and why do you say so?
- What could we have done better?
- What are the biggest challenges you are facing in your business?
- What are your concerns with our products/services?
- What do you love about our products/services?
- How do you use our products/services?



## Truly Understand Customer Expectations Through Great Questions (continued)

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- What else can we do to help you?
- What additional service would you value?
- How can we help you be more successful?
- How can we help you expand your business?
- What is your fondest wish for our relationship?
- How would you describe the perfect supplier?
- How can we improve our communication?
- What needs of yours *aren't* we currently meeting?

After using these questions always be ready to follow-up and probe for even more information and understanding, using questions like . . .

- Can you explain that further?
- How do you mean?
- Why is that?

### Beyond the Questions

Having a list of questions is all well and good, but you must ask them.

Always ask them with open ears, an open mind and a closed mouth. Once you ask, you must truly listen and hear what they are telling you. Treat their insights and feelings as gold. Now is not the time for rebuttal, explanation or defensiveness.

You build the relationship by asking the question, but you cement the relationship by how you listen and by how you take action on what you have been told.



Kevin Eikenberry is a bestselling author, consultant, trainer, speaker, coach, leader, learner, husband and father. He is the Chief Potential Officer of the Kevin Eikenberry Group ([www.KevinEikenberry.com](http://www.KevinEikenberry.com)) and the Creator of the Remarkable Leadership Learning System ([www.Remarkable-Leadership.com](http://www.Remarkable-Leadership.com)), both of which are dedicated to life-long learning and helping Clients unleash their remarkable potential. Interested in becoming the remarkable leader you were born to be? Go to [www.Remarkable-Leadership.com](http://www.Remarkable-Leadership.com) today!

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