

Examples of Asking Questions to Understand their Issues

Level 1 Questions

Tell me more about the problem

How long has it been a problem?

Who else knows about the problem?

How long have you been thinking about the problem?

What do you see as the reasons for the problem?

In relation to this problem or situation, how are you evaluated?

When you went to your existing suppliers and shared your frustrations about the problem, what did they say?

What do you think are the causes of the problem?

When you are saying it is a problem, what makes you think so?

When did you notice the problem?

Why is it important to solve this now?

Why do you think the problem has been going on for so long?

When does the problem need to be fixed by?

What could have been done to avoid the problem?

What are you looking for, in terms of change?

What is the evidence that this is a problem?

Is it important to get proof that it has changed?

What is that proof?

Why have you been waiting so long to take care of this?

What bothers you most about the problem?

What has prevented you from fixing this?

What have you done to compensate for the problem so far?

What have others told you about the problem?

Do you agree with their assessment?

How is the problem affecting you?

What has prevented you from fixing this in the past?

What is your timeframe for fixing this? Why?

Is this a company problem, or your problem? Why?

Is this problem causing other problems?

What kind of pressure are you experiencing because of the issue?

How are you measuring the issue?

Is this a problem that others in your industry are experiencing? Tell me about that.

Level 2 Questions

How did this problem start?

What issues need to be addressed first?

How has the culture of the organization affected this problem?

What is your greatest fear about addressing the problem?

What is the worst-case scenario with the problem?

If you are able to solve the problem, what happens?

How is the timing on this?

Does this problem need to be solved today? Why?

What else have you tried to fix the problem? And that worked? Why or why not?

Why now?

If you haven't been able to solve this before, why do you think it can be solved?

Why does this need to be fixed?

Have you made the decision yet that you need help from others?

Are you sure this is the time to fix this? Why?

How much do you think this has cost you to have the problem?

What else in your company could take priority over this problem?

Tell me about the sense of urgency of getting this done

If this doesn't change, walk me through the steps. What happens?

If we hadn't met, what were you prepared to do?

Level 3 Questions

What risks are there in moving forward to fix this problem?
How do you feel about the investment to fix this problem?
How do you feel about how much this is costing you to have the issue?
What is the next step for you?
Have you made the decision that this needs to be fixed? Why?
What happens if you do nothing?
Do you think I understand the issues?
Do you think my solution will fix the issue?
Do you want my help fixing this?
I'm still wondering why you haven't fixed this to this point. What has held you back?
Why is it so important that this gets fixed now?
It seems like you are invested in keeping things the way they are.
How will you know that a solution was successful?
What indicators will you use to determine that the problem was resolved?
How will you measure success?
What time frame does this need to be solved within?
So far, what conclusions have you made about fixing this problem?
Are the issues we have been discussing "front burner"?
How do you see me helping you?
What will it look like to have the problem solved?
How confident are you that this will work?
What is the date that you need this resolved? Why?
What has to be in place first before we start?
What concerns do you have going forward?
If you could design the perfect solution, what would it look like?
What sense of urgency do you have?
What else do I need to know?

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1. We're not looking at this until the fall
2. I'm not making any decisions for a while
3. We're probably going to move forward
4. All of the decisions are made out of our office/out of state
5. I'll call you in a couple months
6. If you want to submit a bid, you can send it in
7. We have two other companies we are waiting to get bids from
8. He's not in today. Do you want to leave a message?
9. I'm not allowed to give out names. If you'd like to leave your information, I'll be sure he gets it.
10. We're not looking right now
11. How long have you been in the business?
12. Do you have other companies that you work with our size?
13. Why should I buy from you?
14. Wow. That's expensive.