

Templates for the book

SMART QUESTIONS

for Playing the Games of Business and Life

Book #1 in the Series: People Skills+Business Skills=Career Success

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If you already have the book or e-book version, you will find these are expanded (in size) versions of the templates used in the book. They are labeled according to the section or question to which they relate.



Don't have SMART QUESTIONS? You can order it [via Amazon for instant e-book delivery.](#)

Please bear in mind that these are not “forms” that must be filled out; rather, they are templates or mental models to help you structure and make more sense of information and ideas. If they help, fine; if not, no need to feel obliged. (Unless, of course, you might like to have a later record of your thinking now.)

Introduction as an example; also in 11.4

	Benefits / positive	Disadvantages / negative
If I confront now		
If I avoid confronting now		

1.4

	Elements that must exist	Nice but not essential	Elements I do not want or need
1			
2			

1.8

Factors to consider. Add others specific to your situation.	Goal A	Goal B	Goal C
Which offers the highest payoff if I am successful in accomplishing it?			
Which entails the greatest risk? Least risk?			
Which has the highest costs—both direct and indirect?			
Which, in present judgment, based on what I presently know, seems most likely to work out best over the longer term?			
Which offers the likelihood of the best and smoothest relations with other people and departments?			

2.2

Who else? Direct? Indirect?	Likely allies? Interests align with ours?	Likely opponents? Interests compete with ours?	How does each “win”?	Other considerations?

4.1 first template

<p><u>I want:</u></p> <p><i>To get two new-hires on my team to help with our increased workload.</i></p>	<p><u>Ray likely wants:</u></p> <p>Even though my team has a need for people that Ray's does not, he makes it clear that for us to add bodies would be "unfair." He will want to make the case for splitting them, one for each team</p>
<p><u>Why it matters to me:</u></p> <p><i>Our workload has escalated, and must get done on-time; otherwise we may lose clients.</i></p>	<p><u>Why it matters to Ray:</u></p> <p><i>Ray tends to see everything as a Zero-sum power game: that he loses face if he does not gain staff. He will likely feel personally diminished and his position threatened if he does not get something.</i></p>

4.1 second template

<p><u>I want:</u></p>	<p><u>Opponent A likely wants:</u></p>	<p><u>Opponent B likely wants:</u></p>
<p><u>Why it matters to me:</u></p>	<p><u>Why it matters to Opponent A:</u></p>	<p><u>Why it matters to Opponent B:</u></p>

5.4

<u>Typical key judges</u>	<u>What criteria matter most to them</u>	<u>Implications for you</u>
Manager / supervisor		
Co-workers		
Customers / clients		
Ultimate users		
Shareholders		
Others		

6.1 first template

The “articles of faith” proclaim:	While the reality is:
<p><i>Your role is clearly defined by the job description and position on the organization chart.</i></p>	<p><i>Your job description defines the minimum you must do. But if you want to get favorably noticed, it’s essential to push our and make your output more valuable and visible.</i></p> <p><i>You get ahead by being visible. Those who wait for recognition will likely wait forever.</i></p> <p><i>It’s important to be hard-working and competent, but it’s at least as important to be politically attuned.</i></p>

6.1 second template

The articles of faith in my organization:	The reality:

6.2

The change that occurred:	The cues or signals that passed the message:

7.4

Things I do at work in a typical day or week:	Value 1-10:	Likely worst case if I don't do this, or don't do it thoroughly:	What other more productive uses I could make of this time and effort:	Value 1-10:
1.				
2.				
3.				

8.1

People who are especially respected, and / or have been especially well-rewarded:	Sum up, in a word or short phrase, the key skills and abilities that have enabled each to stand out. That could be technical, interpersonal, “political,” or other.
1.	
2.	
3.	

8.4 first template

Role model’s technique / strength:	Specific ways I will demonstrate that in my actions this week:
<i>Carol’s ability to mediate conflicts.</i>	<p><i>At staff meeting on Wednesday, I will:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Listen well, taking active role in drawing out all parties. – Rephrase as appropriate to clarify differences. – Lead each side to give feed-back on how they perceive the others’ positions. – Gain clear commitments to narrow the field of differences.

8.4 second template

Role model's technique / strength:	Specific ways I will demonstrate that in my actions this week:

9.4

List any "problems" you face:	Rephrase each as a challenge:
1.	
2.	

10.3

Is there some area of your life or career—or in the immediate task at hand—in which you have been more focused on avoiding failure than on accomplishing some important end? If so, how to handle it next time?

11.3

	If I win, precisely what is it I win?	If I lose, what do I lose?
Re: my reputation?		
Re: relationships with other people, departments, etc.?		
Longer-term: e.g. additional work, risk, responsibilities?		
Gains: e.g. budget, staff. Maybe a promotion or better visibility?		

11.4

	Benefits/ positive effects?	Disadvantages / negative effects?
If I confront now:		
If I avoid confronting now:		

12.2

Reasons IN FAVOR OF acting now:	Reasons AGAINST acting now:	WORST thing likely to happen if I do nothing now:	BEST thing likely if I do nothing now:
1.			
2.			

13.2

Areas of vulnerability:	What happens if this does not work out as hoped? Risks? Costs? Other?	Action steps to take now to reduce the effect?
1.		
2.		

13.5

What do I want to accomplish here? What problem am I trying to solve? That is, how do I “win,” and how do I measure what winning means?	
Who has experience or authority I could tap?	How will I approach and enlist their help / advice? Why is it to their advantage to do so?
Who might be threatened by what I propose?	Their likely concerns, and how can I alleviate or defuse them?

14.2

Typical problem or opportunity within this pattern that I have faced?	Did I handle it well? Mis-handle it? How? Why?	How I will act if it comes again?
1.		
2.		

15.3

Options	Advantages	Dis-advantages	Costs	Indirect or later consequences	Personal preferences	Add other
Do nothing at all:						
Wait before acting:						
Your option #1:						
Your option #2:						
Your option #3:						

15.6

Criteria	Potential goal A	Potential goal B	Potential goal C
Highest payoff if successful			
Greatest risk? Least risk?			
Highest costs—direct or hidden?			
One you believe / feel is likely to work out best.			
Likely to result in best relations with others (fewest hard feeling, etc.)?			
Add your own criteria.			