

American Association of Professional Landmen Advisory Landman Connection Program

8 Killer Questions to Ask Your Participant

1. **What does success look like to you?** Asking what success looks like can refer to long-term goals and planning. However, when applied to a specific situation, it can help determine what the immediate priorities are for a project or situation.
2. **What is the outcome you want?** Similar to the previous question about what success looks like, this question is effective for situations where there is more than one equally viable solution or course of action, says Jennifer Labin, principal at mentoring consulting firm Terp Associates, and author of *Mentoring Programs That Work*. When you start with the specific outcome you want, the best action to take becomes clearer. For example, if you're having a conflict with a team member, the best solution will be different if you want to try to repair the relationship versus if you think it's hopeless and just want to get away from that person.
3. **What do you want to be different in three to five years?** This question focuses on a long-term outcome while focusing in on areas that may require growth or change. Since the business world changes at such a fast pace today, focusing on a shorter window—perhaps three years—still allows enough time for creative, aspirational thinking without the distraction of how different the workplace might be at that time. The answers may reveal how the participant wants to grow, or fundamental changes they need to make in order to achieve their goals.
4. **What are the obstacles you're facing?** Advisors can be invaluable in providing insight to overcome obstacles, and participants may be reluctant to share the challenges they are facing, or may not have really thought them through. Asking about them outright allows the advisor to explore the challenges with which the participant is struggling, and also discuss the individual's strengths and weaknesses in addressing them.
5. **What can you control?** This question shifts the focus from ruminating about factors that are beyond the participant's control and onto what they can actually do about the situation. They might not be able to change an unfair corporate policy immediately, but they may be able to find short-term answers to help them deal with it while they work on longer-term solutions.
6. **What are the options you've come up with?** When faced with obstacles or challenges, the advisor expects the participant to have some idea of how they will address them. Even if the participant is struggling with what the right answers are, having at least a few ideas ensures that the individual has given the matter some thought and isn't just relying on him/her for answers.
7. **Tell me more.** While technically not a question, this statement prompts the participant for more detail about what led them to form their opinions or helped them reach a conclusion. That can help reveal biases or blind spots that are affecting their judgment. With the benefit of some objectivity and another degree of separation from the situation, the advisor can help them expand their thinking and possibly find new ways of looking at a situation.
8. **What are you reading?** Asking about interests, hobbies, reading habits and other similar questions helps to get to know your participant on a more personal level. Doing so helps give the advisor a more holistic understanding of who the participant is as an individual. That can be important in helping to guide them to the right answers and insight.

ⁱ Gwen Moran, 03.16.18/Career Evolution, The Best Mentors Ask These 8 Questions