

Why

Teams, organizations and society evolve in whatever direction they collectively, passionately and persistently pursue and ask questions about.

Focusing on and asking questions about the positive aspects of an operation and organization might free up energy, increase motivation and give birth to new ideas.

What

Appreciation means to recognize and value the contributions or attributes of the things and people around us.

Inquiry means to explore and discover in the spirit of seeking to better understand, and being open to new possibilities.

When combined, this means that by appreciating what is good and valuable in the present situation we can discover and learn about ways to effect positive change for the future.

A method to shift the focus from problem to perspective based on the following assumptions:

- There are well-functioning elements in every organization.
- Successes from the past give support to moves in an uncertain future.
- By inquiring (exploring) we focus the attention of our people.
- Our behavior is largely determined by our perceptions of the future we expect.

How

Step 1: Define the problem in positive terms

So, rather than seeking “ways to fix recruitment problems,” you focus on “ways to accelerate recruitment.”

Step 2: Discovery phase

Here you need to look for the best of what has happened in the past, and what is currently working well. Involve as many people as sensibly possible and design your questions to get people talking and telling stories about what they find most valuable (or what they appreciate most) and what works very well.

The following may serve as good discovery questions:

- When you think back to when you decided to join the company, what attracted you most?
- Tell me a story about a time when you were very enthusiastic about your work.
- What do you think is most important to your success at the company?
- Tell me about the time you felt proudest of the company.

When you've gathered enough raw information, together you need to analyze the data and identify the factors that contributed most to the team's or organization's past successes. What is most valued? What did people find most motivating or fun? What instills the greatest pride? And so on.

Step 3: Dream phase

In this phase you and your team dream of “what might be.” Think about how you can take the positives you identified in the discovery phase and reinforce them to build real strengths. Use a brainstorm technique. You might choose, for example, to enhance and build on the elements of the organization that everyone likes and use this as a strong message to attract potential candidates during the recruitment process. You may also stop doing the things that aren't working and use the money saved to reinforce the things that are. Once you have agreed upon your dream or vision, you can take it to the design phase.

Step 4: Design phase

Building on the dream phase, this phase looks at the practicalities needed to support the “dream” vision. Here you start to look closely at the types of systems, processes and strategies that will enable the dream to be realized.

Step 5: Delivery phase

Sometimes called the destiny phase, the last of the Ds is the implementation phase and it requires a great deal of planning and preparation. The key to successful delivery is ensuring that the dream (vision) is the focal point. While the various parts of the team will typically have their own processes to complete, the overall result is a raft of changes that occur simultaneously throughout the organization and that all serve to support and sustain the dream.

TIP:

The real strength of this technique comes from steps 1 and 2 and 3. Steps 4 and 5 are just standard implementation steps. If you have your own preferred approach for implementation, use that one.

When

When you want the company to evolve in the direction of entrepreneurship, pro-activity and ownership on all levels.

Skills and necessary training

Some experience with the steps and a repertoire of questions per step.

Critical success factors

Good knowledge of the concept and approach.

Possible workshop exercise

Explain the method and practice steps 1 and 2.