THE FIVE QUESTIONS

Purpose

The Five Questions, when used internally and externally, can give an individual, group, department/division or entire organization a broad range of information that can be quickly distilled into the 'critical few'. Leaders will know what to leverage, what to correct, what the barriers are, how others are willing to engage or provide resources and where to start.

Process

Determine the focus – what or who are you asking about? It can be about yourself, it can be about another person, it can be about a team, it can be about a project, a department or a division, it can be about an organization as a whole.

1. What's working?	This question is designed to surface the benefits and positives of whatever you are examining. How can these be leveraged or expanded?
2. What needs to be done better or differently?	This question introduces the need for change in a non-threatening way that opens people to possibilities. It is future-focused. By looking across the suggestions, begin to think about what the changes have in common so that they can be grouped and then focused on the critical few.
3. What's preventing the improvements?	This question is designed to surface barriers to the changes. Again, look at what the barriers may have in common, focusing on the critical few. This is also a good time to ask about possible obstacles that might impede progress on the things that need to be done better or differently.

4. How could you help?	By asking people how they might help you can accomplish two things: 1) they may recognize that they themselves are barriers to the improvement (the Pogo cartoon looking in the mirror) and something about their behaviour or attitude needs to change; and 2) you can develop a resource inventory based on skills, talent, knowledge, experience, etc. in the group to staff projects.
5. If you could make one change, what would it be?	This question can bring a strong focus on the most important change that needs to be made. Is this the best place to start?