



These are 5 perspectives that you need to consider when you are planning strategies and tactics to change or improve something important.

- Bottom Line Perspective
- Big Picture/Context Perspective
- Challenge Perspective
- Creative/Innovative Perspective
- Customer/Client Perspective

And to develop the thinking of your people.

Focus means anything that you need to change/improve/implement. You don't need to ask or answer all questions - only the ones which resonate and relate to your focus.



Bottom Line Perspective

1. What are we really trying to achieve here? What must we deliver? What is our real business purpose here? The desired end result? What is the footprint that we want to leave?
2. What is acceptable? What is unacceptable? When we eliminate all the things that don't really matter, what are we compelled to achieve? If we could accomplish only one thing in this situation, what should it be?
3. What is the bottom line here in relation to economic, human capital, environmental and social sustainability?
4. Do we all know and agree why we are doing what we are doing? *Why* are we doing what we are doing?
5. In relation to our focus, who is our customer here and what does the customer consider to be value? What is of paramount importance to the customer in this situation?
6. Do we need to change our bottom line because other external and/or internal factors have changed? *Why?* *How?*
7. In relation to our focus, how well are different areas aligned with our bottom line? What are the prevailing attitudes of key stakeholders to our bottom line?
8. Are we deviating from the bottom line in this discussion? Have we lost sight of the bottom line? Are we staying focused on the bottom line here?
9. How well are we aligned in our perceptions of the bottom line? How well are we aligned with our strategy for achieving the bottom line
10. Is all of our decision-making made easier because we all have the same interpretation of the bottom line? How well are all our decisions, plans and strategies connected to the same bottom line?
11. Is bottom line thinking built into our culture? How frequently do we refer to the bottom line?
12. How might our current ways of thinking about the bottom line be limiting our effectiveness or future success in this situation?
13. What other ways of thinking about the bottom line might serve us better?



Big-picture/Context Perspective

Ask/answer questions which relate to your focus.

1. Related to this situation, what is the bigger picture and what is the connection?
2. How could we optimise return to investors and return on capital expenditure? How could we incorporate shareholder, customer, employee, environment and community needs?
3. Does our focus require a new definition of our business, a new strategic orientation or re-alignment, a new structure, a significant change in the workforce skill mix or profile or a substantive change in culture? How?
4. What are the longer-term implications in this situation? How could we incorporate the longer-term implications in our focus?
5. What is the rationale or research behind our focus? Why is it important to do things differently? What are the underlying forces that are driving this situation or change?
6. What are the wider ramifications on all stakeholders if we do or don't do this? What resources will be needed to achieve our desired outcome here? What are the important decisions that we will need to make?
7. What needs and/or wants could we meet if we achieve our focus?
8. How are our major customers or end-users changing? How are our main markets, outlets or distribution channels changing? What impact does this have on our focus?
9. How has our business changed from what it was five or ten years ago? How has the environment in which we operate changed or how is it likely to change in the near future? What should be different about our business five years into the future? What impact does any of this have on our focus?
10. What are our main economic concerns? Where does our main income and capital come from? Where is it likely to come from in the future? What impact does this have on our focus?
11. What are the threats and opportunities facing our operation/industry/our market segment/cash flow? What impact does this have on our focus? What actions can we take to mitigate the impact of identifiable factors that are beyond our control?
12. What things are important to our organisation in relation to our sustainable development, image, leadership in industry, the community, the environment, marketing, equal opportunity, innovation, risk-taking, quality, management style, culture, values, etc.



13. What special considerations do we have in relation to owners or shareholders, parent organisation, employees, customers, suppliers, the general public, unions, legislation, government?
14. How are we separating fact from opinion? How are we drilling down to get the facts? For example?
15. What are the ways that we think that could be detrimental to the way we are conducting this discussion?
16. What could be better ways to think to drive the way we conduct this discussion?



Challenge Perspective

Ask/answer questions which relate to your focus.

1. How well are we encouraging respectful challenge to old ways of thinking and old ways of doing things related to our focus? What old ways of thinking and doing things could we challenge?
2. What could we challenge and change about the fundamental manner in which we provide products, processes and services in this situation?
3. How are we making progress here as opposed to just maintaining the 'status quo'? How could we challenge the flow of popular thinking? How could we think about what's best, not what's popular? What might we be avoiding because it might create discomfort or go against the flow of popular thinking?
4. In relation to our focus, what could be the likely outcome if nothing radical changes?
5. How could we try new, different and better solutions or ways of thinking and doing? How could we challenge the constraints of common thinking to achieve uncommon results?
6. How well are we checking out our assumptions and challenging the basis of those assumptions? What assumptions are we making here? How could they be challenged?
7. How could we challenge the established ways we do things? In what ways?
8. How could we respectfully challenge perspectives based on rank, status and experience? In what ways?
9. Is respectfully challenging the established way of doing things part of our culture/process or 'banned' from our culture/process? How could we benefit if we allowed ourselves to challenge traditional or historical perspectives in this situation? For example?
10. What things might we be overlooking because we haven't challenged our beliefs and perspectives?
11. What actions can we take to mitigate the impact of identifiable factors that are beyond our control?
12. What are the facts that cannot be ignored? What are the things that we definitely cannot do? What are the things that we definitely must do?
13. What are the limitations, boundaries and constraints that must apply? What limitations, boundaries and constraints could be challenged and changed to benefit this situation?



14. While we cannot do some of the creative and innovative things, realistically could we....?
15. How are we separating fact from opinion? How are we drilling down to get the facts? For example?
16. How might our current ways of thinking about challenge be limiting our effectiveness or future success?
17. What ways of thinking about respectful challenge might serve us better?



Creative/Innovative Perspective

Ask/answer questions which relate to your focus.

1. How could we be in danger of only applying routine or traditional solutions here? What are possible innovations that we could explore?
2. How could we use our intellectual and human capital to develop strategic advantage through innovation in products and services? How could we do this better?
3. How have circumstances changed such that routine or traditional solutions won't succeed?
4. How could we be creative or innovative in our approach to this situation? How could we explore different ideas and options? How could we use different ways of thinking about this situation?
5. What are the possibilities beyond the routine, the traditional, and the obvious?
6. In this situation, what would we ideally like to do? What would we ideally like to see happen?
7. How are we exploring hypothetical situations which don't currently exist? What could happen if....? How well do we use the question, "Why not?" instead of "Why?"
8. What could be new responses to new circumstances?
9. Why do you like what we are trying to do in our focus?
10. How well does our culture stimulate the ability to change rapidly and continuously in developing new products and services?
11. What could happen if we took a dozen or so randomly chosen and unconnected words from a dictionary and associated each word with the situation to see if that generates fresh ideas?
12. What could happen if we took a picture unrelated to this situation, recorded our impressions and then associated these words with this situation to see if this generates any fresh ideas?
13. How well are we brainstorming possibilities without initial evaluation, judgment or criticism? How well are we using 'possibility thinking' to find solutions to seemingly impossible situations? What are some of the possibilities we could explore?
14. Instead of looking at reasons why something won't work, are we using the question, "What's right about this?"



15. How well are we discussing things outside our comfort zones? How well are we questioning the status quo? For example, what else could we discuss?
16. What could be the 'dream' solution to this situation?
17. Are we dealing with rock solid, immovable constraints or apparent constraints which, with creative thought, might be eliminated or modified? For example?
18. While realistically we cannot do some of the creative and innovative things, what could happen if we....?
19. How are we separating fact from opinion? How are we drilling down to get the facts? For example?
20. How might our current ways of thinking about creativity and innovation be limiting our effectiveness or future success?
21. What ways of thinking about creativity and innovation might serve us better?



Customer/Client Perspective

Ask/answer questions which relate to your focus.

1. How could our focus affect customers? How could customers affect our focus?
2. How well have we clarified who the customer/client is in this situation?
3. What could be other opportunities to create new customers in this situation?
How could we incorporate customer satisfaction targets in this situation?
4. How could this situation affect our ability to attract new customers and to retain existing customers? What impact could our focus have on our people who are our key providers of customer service? What impact could these people have on our focus?
5. What are the needs of customers in this situation? In this situation, what do our customers want as well as need? How could we incorporate how our customers' needs have changed or are changing over time?
6. How could this situation add customer-perceived value to our products and services? How can we enhance customer value here? How could we offer our customers something that they themselves have never thought of?
7. How could we incorporate what customers see as value in this situation? How could we incorporate the expectations and perceptions of customers in this situation? How could this situation help us exceed customer expectations?
8. How could we differentiate our offerings to the customer in this situation?
9. In this situation, what are the likely positive reactions of customers? What are the likely negative reactions of customers?
10. What are the current and emerging customer requirements and expectations in this situation? How could we incorporate future market, technology, economic and societal trends as they might affect customers in this situation?
11. What could we do to generate positive customer reactions and to minimise negative customer reactions? How could we incorporate customer feedback in this situation?
12. How might our key systems and procedures need to change to meet the expectations and needs of our customers in this situation? What customer service training could be required in relation to our focus? With respect to customer service, what collaboration and cooperation is required from other areas?
13. How could we act to maintain and build long-term customer relationships in this situation?
14. How could we provide a better proposition for our customers than our competitors or other service providers?



15. How are we separating fact from opinion? How well are we drilling down to get the facts?
16. How might our current ways of thinking about customers be limiting our effectiveness or future success?
17. What ways of thinking about customers might serve us better?