

# Appreciative Inquiry

## Engaging People in Positive Thought

One of the age-old ways of determining how a person views a situation is asking them if the glass is half full or half empty. Many pessimists will reply that the glass is half empty while opportunists will see the glass as half full. Even one pessimist in the group can hinder everyone else's positive attitude, so it is important to engage every employee in positive thinking. When everyone avoids criticism and implements the 'can do attitude', it not only creates a pleasant work environment for everyone, but employees begin to feel better about themselves and take pride to finish any job with ease.

- Encourage group discussions
- Invite others to share their ideas and opinions
- Make them focus on the positive side of things and avoid negative phrasings

## Framing Positive Questions

When we ask questions to the interviewee, what kind of response are we expecting? If we ask questions that can come across as negative or critical, we can expect that kind of answer. But by using positive language to form more positive questions, we can not only put the other person at ease, but they will feel more confident about their abilities and be able to have a better interview. Use positive experiences to help the person realize their own skills and ambitions, while at the same time determining how they would work with the team and the company.

Example questions:

- "What was the best job you've had?"
- "What do you value most in a job?"
- "What do you like best about yourself?"

## Shifting from "What's Wrong?" to "What's Right?"

One of the first things that can ruin a positive attitude is looking at a situation and only noticing the negative aspects, or the "What's Wrong" side. Since the main focus of appreciative inquiry is being positive and aiming towards goals, a pessimistic attitude won't get anyone very far. When presented with a problem, take a few minutes and look at both sides of the problem. Make a mental list of everything that is positive about the situation before touching on the negative aspects. You'll find that any situation won't appear as bad as we think when we notice the positive first.

Keys to shifting our thoughts:

- Avoid the "all or nothing" thinking – deciding a situation only has two sides.
- Realize the difference between being right and being happy.
- Avoid over-generalizing a situation – focus on details.