



Ask a question that gets answered

ASK · 45 minutes · 7 timed blocks

WHAT PARTICIPANTS LEAVE WITH

Participants can turn a vague plea into a four-part question a busy professional will answer.

Participants notice how often writing the second part answers the question before anyone replies.

Participants send one well-formed question to a real person or a real community before they leave the room.

ROOM, MATERIALS, AND WHAT TO OPEN

Room: pairs, facing each other. This session runs on reading aloud, so keep the space quiet enough that a normal voice carries across one table.

Materials: a device or paper for each participant, and one real unanswered question each, brought from the past week.

Ask ahead: everyone brings a question they asked that nobody answered, or one they are afraid to ask.

Screenshots are welcome, because the exact wording is the material of this session.

Open on the projector: /method for the ASK card, and keep the UNSTICK card beside it for the close, since the two methods only work as a pair.



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MINUTES	STEP	FACILITATOR	PARTICIPANTS
5	1. Frame: why good people ignore your question hirefrom.ph/method	Read two questions aloud: 'hi po, pa help, di gumagana' and a four-part one. Ask which they would answer with four minutes left and a full inbox. Nobody needs convincing after that. Put the ASK card on the screen.	Say which one they would answer and why. Write the four parts down the page: goal, tried, happened, ask.
8	2. Put the unanswered question on the table	Have each person copy their unanswered question word for word. Word for word matters, because the tidied-up version hides the fault. Then have them tick which of the four parts is present and circle what is missing.	Write the original question exactly as it was sent. Tick what is there, circle what is not. Most pages end up with one tick and three circles.
7	3. Parts one and two: the goal and the attempts	Part one is the goal, not the symptom. Part two is what they already tried. Push on both: what are you trying to produce, and what did each attempt rule out? Refuse 'I tried everything', because it tells the reader nothing and costs them time.	Write the outcome they want in one sentence, then list what they tried and what each attempt ruled out.
7	4. Part three: what happened, exactly	Part three is the literal error, the literal reply, the literal number. Take one paraphrase from the room and ask for the exact words instead, in front of everyone, so the gap between the two is visible to all of them.	Replace every paraphrase with the exact text, message, or number. Where they cannot find it, write down where they will go to get it before they send.



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8	5. Part four: ask for the method, not the file	Part four is the doctrine in one line. 'Can you send me the file' ends the day that file goes out of date. 'How would you approach this' makes them a colleague and leaves them with something they keep. Have the room write both versions.	Write the ask twice, once for the file and once for the method, read both aloud, then keep the second and cross out the first.
7	6. Read it aloud, then send it	Pairs read the rewritten question aloud to each other. Ask the listener one thing: could you answer this? Then ask the writer whether they can now answer it themselves. Count the hands. That count is the lesson of the session.	Read the rewritten question aloud, answer their partner's, then send their own to a real person or a real community before leaving the room.
3	7. Close: the time-box	Name the rule that stops grinding: a hard limit, then ask. Point at the UNSTICK card so they know when asking is the right move and when it is an escape. Give the drill.	Set their own time limit and write it on the page. Take the drill: rewrite the last question they asked anyone into the four parts.



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DISCUSSION PROMPTS

How many of you answered your own question while writing part two?

What does 'I tried everything' tell the person reading it?

Why does showing your attempts get a better answer than showing your desperation?

When is it too early to ask, and when is it too late?

What is the difference between the answer you wanted and an answer you can reuse next month?

COMMON FACILITATOR MISTAKES

MISTAKE

FIX

Rewriting a participant's question for them.

Ask the four questions and let them write the words. A question you wrote is a question they cannot reproduce next week without you.

Letting the room drift into fixing grammar.

Move them back to structure. A question in imperfect English with all four parts gets answered. A polished vague one does not.

Running out of time before anyone sends anything.

Protect the last seven minutes. A rewritten question that stays in a notebook has changed nothing about the participant's week.

Teaching this as a session about politeness.

Say plainly that it is about respecting the reader's time. Politeness without structure still gets scrolled past.

HOW TO USE AND CITE THIS

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