

Curiosity didn't kill the cat!

It was curiosity that sent us to the moon, provided us with some of our greatest inventions, explored the earth, and provided the motivation for some courageous citizens to investigate issues that helps keep society civil! Curiosity has ended up with some pretty valuable results.

Form time to time, we take the time to look back on what we've accomplished and, more importantly, what we plan to accomplish in the future. I believe that one of our most valuable activities is to get even more curious about our companies, our customers, and our industry! Don't just commit to being curious as a tool for the preparation of some big project, but also commit to make it a better tool for every day use or, if it's missing, to include it in your performance tool bag.

And what's the basis for acting curious? Asking questions! This gets you information. And combining information with your experience, experiences of your colleagues, other information, and brainstorming gets you knowledge! Knowledge? Well, knowledge is the catalyst for creating value and success.

Ask yourself "Do I understand what future plans my company has in store for me and my colleagues?" "Do I understand the future plans of my customers?" To help get out of the "That's just the way it is!" mode ask, "What could and should be different?" If you don't know, ask management and ask your customers, either directly or through your customer contact representatives.

Asking these questions, and getting answers, will help us start thinking how we can, through our activities, contribute to each "future." Better yet, maybe they will start us thinking about how our profession needs to evolve for these "futures" to become realities. There's nothing stopping us from being innovative, just the lack of knowledge.

Speaking of innovation: "Do we know what innovations our customers want, need, or more importantly, are inventing to provide to their customers?" Just think of the possibilities for your company just by getting an answer to that question! Are partnerships, introduction to new technologies, and new markets a possibility? Be curious! Find out. Add this question to your repertoire!

You will certainly think of lots of questions to put in your tool bag – questions about the here and now and questions about the future. But I think the following two questions are essential to add to your collection because they will always lead to other, more probing questions. Ask your customers:

"Aside from using my products and services, what else are you doing that's making you successful?" and "Where are you failing, i.e. what are you doing that's not performing up to expectations?" The added-value opportunities resulting from the answers to these and follow-up questions could just get you that trip to the moon.

Curiosity! Questions! Knowledge! A proven path to Competitive Value Opportunities!