



50 Innovation Questions to Transform your Business

We live in an era of opportunity. Some ***Growth Transformers*** like Jeff Bezos and Marc Benioff are seizing these opportunities, whilst others don't seem to be up to the challenge. Thousands of smaller companies led by lesser-known ***Growth Transformers*** are also transforming themselves but are not quite grabbing the spotlight.

At the other end of the spectrum are companies who fail to reinvent themselves. Many are too busy on the treadmill – trying to keep the lights on with their leadership teams working harder every year. Others are blinkered in a business tunnel, frustrated by dead-ends and detours. They improve things incrementally, a nip here and a tuck there; but these tweaks are all too little too late.

Whilst innovation gets dressed up in multiple processes and jargon, innovation that transforms often begins with a simple, yet profound question. Whether that question is a Bezos – *“How do we put thousands of books online?”* Or Benioff, *“How do we deliver enterprise class software over the Internet?”* The difference is the quality of the question and the questioner's persistence in finding an answer.

Innovation can begin with a simple question like the ones below that we use to prompt clients to craft their own questions to kick-start innovation in their companies.

1. What do we want our company to be famous for?
2. How do we dramatically increase the level of ambition in our business?
3. How do we bring urgency into our innovation efforts?
4. How can we create more space and time for reflection and ideation?
5. How can we bring diverse and novel thinking into our business?

6. Who are our sweet spot customers?
7. What do customers think we are great at?
8. What do customers think we are poor at?
9. What business are we in?
10. What business *should* we be in?
11. What business should we *not* be in?
12. If we could start again, what would we be?
13. Why is what we do important? Why do we care?
14. What do we believe?
15. What truly makes us different?
16. What cannot be imitated?
17. What existing capabilities could we use in different ways?
18. Why do customers choose us?
19. What customer needs do we actually meet?
20. What would customers value more?
21. How could we reinvent our customer experience?
22. How could we serve a different economic buyer in our sweet spot?
23. What other markets could we serve in the future?
24. What else do customers do before, during and after they buy our product?
25. What customer latent needs remain unmet?
26. What job can customers *not* get done today?
27. How could we achieve 10x our business?
28. What will our industry look like in 5 years?
29. Which of the things we do today are (or will be) obsolete?
30. How else could we create value?
31. How can we make or do this better?
32. How has someone outside our industry solved the same problem?
33. What assumptions in our industry or business should we challenge and perhaps free ourselves from?
34. Who could we partner with to enter new markets?
35. Which leaders in our industry could we learn from?
36. Who could we partner with to provide new products in existing markets?
37. What trends are most likely to shape our future?
38. What is likely to disrupt us?
39. How could we break the pricing approach in our industry?
40. What would it look like if we were to become the disruptor?
41. How is technology changing our industry?
42. How can we use technology to change our industry?
43. How will new competitors be different or better?
44. What would Elon Musk, Jeff Bezos, Marc Benioff or Richard Branson do to disrupt our industry?
45. How can we make the process of buying and using our product easier?
46. What new distribution channels, points of presence or ways to purchase should we explore?
47. Who could we partner with so that we could offer greater value to our customers?
48. What new capabilities do we need to hire?

49. What company would we buy if we had funds?
50. What performance metrics should we introduce to drive innovation?

Get out of your business for a day. Smell the roses. Visit customers. Talk to competitors. Then pick a small number of questions from the list above. Craft them in a tough concrete and time-bound way. Bring your team together and have new conversations that could kick-start some new growth initiatives.

Do you need advice and/or facilitation? If so, [contact us by clicking here.](#)

Insight in Brief

- *Growth Transformers* think outside the box
- *Growth Transformers* envisage a different future
- *Growth Transformers* innovate by asking questions others don't
- *Growth Transformers* transform their business and often their industry with new initiatives that become the norm

Insight in Action

- Take time out of your business
- Assess where you are and where you want to get too
- Consider the critical few questions you would like answered
- Bring your team together
- Encourage healthy debate and innovative thinking
- Kick-start new growth initiatives