



# 38 Questions That Break the Pattern

Discovering new insights is about questioning the status quo  
and exploring fresh ideas

**Bill Stainton**



# Table Of Contents

Think Differently: 38+ Questions That Break the Pattern	2
Reframing the Problem	4
Pattern-Breaking Perspectives	6
Customer-Centered Insight	8
Leadership Reframing	10
Innovation & Possibility	12
Team & Culture Catalysts	14

01

**Think Differently: 38+  
Questions That Break  
the Pattern**

Great innovation starts with better questions. These aren't generic icebreakers—they're designed to jolt your thinking, reframe assumptions, and open up new possibilities. Use them to break stale patterns, spark insight, and see around corners.



02

# Reframing the Problem

- What problem are we *actually* trying to solve?
- What if we've been solving the wrong problem all along?
- If we could only fix one part of this—what would move the needle most?
- What would we do if we had to launch a solution by next Friday?
- What if the solution is already in front of us, but we're looking past it?
- What are we assuming to be true—but haven't actually validated?



03

# **Pattern-Breaking Perspectives**

- What would our fiercest competitor do in this situation?
- What would we try if we knew it *wouldn't* go on our permanent record?
- If this challenge were a game, what would the win condition be?
- What's the most *ridiculous* idea we can think of—and is there a seed of brilliance in it?
- What if we had to solve this with zero budget?
- What would happen if we did the exact opposite of what we normally do?



04

# **Customer- Centered Insight**

- What part of our experience causes customers the *most* friction?
- What are our customers doing *before* and *after* they interact with us?
- If our customers could wave a magic wand and change one thing—what would it be?
- What do our *non*-customers believe about us—and are they right?
- What are our customers hiring us to do (even if they don't say it out loud)?
- What would delight our customer so much they'd *\*have\** to tell someone?



05

# **Leadership Reframing**



- What if I weren't in charge—how would I see this problem differently?
- If a top-tier performer took over my job today, what's the first thing they'd do differently
- What decision am I avoiding because it's uncomfortable?
- If we weren't already doing it this way, is this how we'd start?
- What's one outdated rule or belief we're still following—and why?
- If I suddenly worked for the competition, and they asked me, "What are the weaknesses?" in my current company, what would I say?
- If our future success depended on changing something today, what would we change first?

06

# **Innovation & Possibility**

- What could this become?
- What would this look like if it were easy?
- What's a problem our industry has just learned to live with?
- What's one thing from another industry that we could adapt here?
- If we had to win an award for innovation this year, what would we submit?
- What would make us impossible to ignore?



07

# **Team & Culture Catalysts**

- Who's not being heard in this conversation—and what might they see that we don't?
- If someone on our team has a game-changing idea—what might stop them from sharing it?
- What behavior are we rewarding that might be killing innovation?
- What does our team complain about most often—and is there opportunity hidden there?
- If we were building this team from scratch today, what would we do differently?
- Where do our values show up in the way we actually work—not just in posters or slide decks?





## 38 Questions That Break the Pattern

Unlock your creative potential with "38 Questions That Break the Pattern." This thought-provoking guide challenges conventional thinking through targeted questions designed to spark insight, reframe assumptions, and reveal overlooked possibilities. Embrace a new perspective on problem-solving, innovation, and customer experience to ignite transformative change in your personal and professional life.