

I want to  
collect input from others  
by getting to  
the heart of what  
motivates people



## QUESTION LADDER

LEVEL OF INVOLVEMENT

INSPIRED BY  
Project Innovation (2012) Question. In: Social Innovation Toolkit.



FAIRLY SIMPLE, SELF ADMINISTERED TOOL  
needs relatively less time

# What is it & why should I do it?

How do you know the right question to ask? Sometimes reaching the right answer means thinking more about the kind of questions you're asking. It might sound simple, but focusing on what you're asking someone is essential for reaching a deeper understanding. The **Question Ladder** is an interview technique that helps you to hone in on a certain topic by asking a series of questions about different aspects related to that topic.

This tool is a quick and easy way to start asking your questions in a few different ways, and to start combining questions in order to reach more complex answers. It provides a structured overview of what goes in to a question; it shows how to combine a range of who, what, where, when, why and how questions coupled with the words like is, did, can, will, would and might. This makes it much easier to think about the best way to get to the heart of the issue at hand, and to build chains of questions that will allow you to gradually reach the heart of more complex issues.

## ? HOW TO USE IT

While making a questionnaire or before going for an interview, this worksheet can be used as a series of possible questions from which a final set can be chosen. Use this to practice approaching and exploring an issue through various directions.

Once you have gained some experience with using this technique, you might find yourself automatically using it in conversations or interviews you conduct with people.

		simple questions ←			→ complex questions		
		Is	Did	Can	Will	Would	Might
Who	Who is	Who did	Who can	Who will	Who would	Who might	
What	What is	What did	What can	What will	What would	What might	
Where	Where is	Where did	Where can	Where will	Where would	Where might	
When	When is	When did	When can	When will	When would	When might	
Why	Why is	Why did	Why can	Why will	Why would	Why might	
How	How is	How did	How can	How will	How would	How might	

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	SIMPLE QUESTIONS ←					→ COMPLEX QUESTIONS
	Is	Did	Can	Will	Would	Might
Who	Who is	Who did	Who can	Who will	Who would	Who might
What	What is	What did	What can	What will	What would	What might
Where	Where is	Where did	Where can	Where will	Where would	Where might
When	When is	When did	When can	When will	When would	When might
Why	Why is	Why did	Why can	Why will	Why would	Why might
How	How is	How did	How can	How will	How would	How might