



# Sarah Cornally

*Evolving Leaders • Transforming Organisations*

## Ten questions for leaders who want to create real engagement

Author Sarah Cornally

You have been grappling with a challenging business issue. You feel the weight of responsibility for finding the solution. So many people depend upon you. You have put a lot of time and energy into working out what needs to be done. You have talked to people to make sure you have considered everyone's view. It is now clear in your mind, so you begin implementing the solution. Surely everyone will get on board and things will start to improve as the solution unfolds and everyone benefits.

As you progress it seems something is wrong. You are meeting resistance, people are finding fault, some people are downright obstructive and others are sabotaging your efforts. You go back over everything in your mind, you check your facts and the assumptions you have made. You remain convinced you have the right solution and have considered everyone's needs. You reach the conclusion it's the people- the politics and the power games people play. You have done the right thing and they are not playing fair. You wonder if it's worth all the effort.



You know it's essential for your business to achieve the result you are pursuing, and you begin to wonder how on earth you are going to get there. Well if all reasonable attempts have failed you might as well exercise your authority and demand co-operation! You do get an outcome, but it's been like pulling teeth and certainly falls short in terms of the potential, and there are ripple effects like shock waves all over the place.

**How do you get people engaged so they willingly get involved and do what needs to be done, even going the extra mile and producing results beyond your expectations?**

Much like a chess master, a leader needs to think about the people involved, what their worldview is and what the forces are at play. They need to think about how people are likely to respond to a range of moves and then have a range of response ready for each likely scenario. Leaders have the added advantage of being able to recruit other people as sources of intelligence and influence.

In any situation where you want to engage people there are a range of questions you need to be able to answer before you set about enrolling them.

1. What is the outcome you want to achieve?
2. Who are the players?
3. What is going on for them contextually?
4. What is their relationship with the outcome and the process of achieving it?
5. What are potential barriers for them? How significant are they?
6. What is required to remove or neutralize them?
7. How will they benefit? How could it compromise them?
8. How can you eliminate or minimize it compromising them?
9. What's your existing relationship with them?
10. What can you do to influence them?



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Answering these questions frankly enables you to connect with their worldview. Try it. This understanding informs you how to ask and what you need to attend to in the asking. Mostly we just ask from our point of view and expect that to be enough. It rarely is.

Leading people to achieve is as important as conceiving what needs to be achieved. If you fail to achieve the results you intended, you have not been an effective leader. The challenge for leaders is to own the responsibility for the outcome, rather than blaming people for not being co-operative.

Most people want to do a good job. They come to work to express their ability and get recognition for it. Real leaders know this and enable them to do so.

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To learn more about how Sarah works with clients to enable leaders to engage well with their staff, please email [ea@sarahcornally.com](mailto:ea@sarahcornally.com)

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