

Airlines have a strong safety record compared to most other industries. They achieve this high level of efficiency and safety by following a very methodical approach to asking the right questions at the right time.

By using a check list of questions, pilots ensure that every aspect of the critical elements of success are considered. Leaders can take a page from this success story by incorporating in their daily routine key questions that guide their judgment and essential analysis.

Create a check list of your own self-guiding questions to ensure you properly consider a proposed deal, project or investment.

Here are some questions I use:

how do we know or will know this is a good deal?

what are the metrics of success?

what are the assumptions they are using?

what conclusion have they reached?

what are they ignoring?

who will be negatively impacted?

what other options were considered?

where could those funds be better used?

how will the competition react?

is the timeframe reasonable?

what must happen first?

what is the target audience?

what additional resources are needed?

what is the contingency plan?

what is the sensitivity analysis of the variables?

why are we in this situation?

does the decision need to be made now?

what are the political implications?

who needs to know?

how have we tested our assumptions?

are we rushing?

what is the do nothing outcome?

what will the cost to benefit ratio be?

do we have to own this service?

is the market consolidating?

where are we at risk of failure?

how will new technology change the equation?

how does this fit our strategy?

what is the underlying question this is answering?

what other problems will this solution cause?

what is the likelihood of success?

what other data is needed?

what historical data or evidence do we have?

what is the financial impact of their behavior?

is there a strategy that would get us there faster?

have we accurately identified the issue?