

Insights into the emotional
processes of organizations

The O'Malley Group
ADVISORS TO EMOTIONAL SYSTEMS

Questions
you need
answered.

>> You need to know.

To gain a different perspective you need a different set of answers. Here are some of the questions you need answered.

① **About your position as an investor, owner, or partner in their business.**

- "Who are the people that are pushing for this deal?"
"What drives them?" What do they *fear*?"
- "Who is working against it?"
"What *drives* them?"
- "Who are the people capable of sabotaging our involvement?"
"How might they do it?"
"What's in it for them to see us fail?"
- "Where will the walls be built between them, the 'insiders' and us the 'outsiders'?"

② **About making this deal work.**

- "What steps must we take to gain the **trust**, confidence and support of leadership, management and employees?"
"What must we do to create **allies** rather than **enemies**?"
- "To **prevent problems** down the line, what type of assumptions must we clarify in writing?"
- "What's the **worst mistake** we will make without knowing it?"
- "Can management hear what we need to say?"
"Are they inclined to just tell us what we want to hear or will we get the facts?"

③ About their Culture.

- "What's the way they do things around there?"
- "What are the **secrets, gossip and rumors** that are flying around?"
- "What makes it a rewarding and satisfying place for people to work?"
"What makes it a **nightmare**?"
- "What are the **core values** that drive decision making and behavior?"
"Are these values lived or just espoused?"
- "What do they do to make **life miserable** for each other?"
- "How do people react to accusations of **self-dealing** and **self enrichment**?"
- "What type of reception does out of the box thinking receive?"
"What type of thinking is not tolerated?"

④ About their Emotional System.

- "Where is the **friction** in the business? Who is rubbing whom the wrong way?"
"How did it begin? How does it get maintained?"
"Where have the **sides** been drawn? Who is siding with whom?"
"Who is in charge of keeping the peace?"
- "What's the **emotional climate** in the business?"
"Do people feel totally stressed out"
"Do people feel relaxed, collegial and safe?"
- "How do people respond to the (pressure) when things aren't going well?"
"In what ways does the **pressure** take a toll on people?"
- "What are **people complaining** about?"
"What happens when people disagree with the majority, when they go against group think?"

⑤ **About their leadership and management.**

- "Who has **the power?**"
- "Can we trust leadership to give us the straight scoop?"
- "What's the ability of leadership to be compassionate, courageous, clear and consistent?"
- "How capable are the leaders of standing up for what they believe in?"
"How effective are they in communicating their beliefs to others?"
- "How does management perform under pressure?"
"Do they **blame** others? Lock the door and **hide**? Start **arguments?**"
- "What are the **relationship dynamics** among members of the management team?"
"How do they solve problems?"
"Who are the leaders, the **nay-sayers** and the **doomsayers?**"

⑥ **About the stressors on the business system (the stuff that makes people anxious).**

- "How clear is the **strategy** of the business?"
"Does everyone know where they're going and how they're going to get there?"
- "What are the fundamental problems around the way they do business, deal with customers, and treat employees?"
- "Where are the **real** and **perceived threats** to the business?"
- "What are the **promises** that get made, but are rarely kept?"
- "What events **shake people's faith** in the business?"

⑦ **About their employees.**

- "Who are the people that we must keep at all costs?"
"Whom can we live without (even though we were told we can't live with out them)?"
- "What kind of person is attracted to working here?"
"What types of people have a **hard time fitting in**?"
- "Who are the people that make this place go?"
"Who are the people who grind it to a halt?"
- "Who are the **whistle-blowers**? What do they want us to look at?"
- "Who are the people who really know what's going on?"
"What's the best way to find out what they know?"

⑧ **About getting the job done.**

- "What's the **attitude** around there about getting the job done?"
For example, is it...
"Keep your head low, play it safe, and don't rock the boat."
"Push it to the limit."
"**Manipulate** the rules, **disguise** the truth and don't get caught."
- "What do people need so they can function at their best in the business?"
"If they don't have what they need, who stands in their way of getting it?"
- "Do people do the job they're expected to do or do they do something else."
"How are they allowed to get away with not doing their job?"
- "What is the process for **appraising performance**?"
"How is success rewarded and **failure punished**?"
"Is the reward system based on how you perform or on **who you know**?"

⑨ **About their relationships with 'outsiders':**

- "How do they treat the input from people outside of their system?"
- "Are outsiders treated as an asset or liability? A friend or foe?
A necessary evil?"
- "Are there any existing or potential **conflicts of interest** with the board, vendors, or other investors?"
- "Are leadership's **priorities** in line with shareholder's expectations?"

⑩ **About their communication style with one another.**

- "How do people communicate with one another?"
"What's the tone?"
- "How do people find out what's going on around there?"
"Who's in the loop, who's not?"
- "How do problems get solved around there: problems with employees, vendors, and customers?"
- "What are the hidden agendas that hinder open, honest and direct communication?"

⑪ **About their history and future.**

- "Where has the company been short-sighted?"
What opportunities have they let slip by?"
- "Who are the key people that have left the business in the last few years?"
"What are the stories behind their departures? What were the triggers?"
"What are some of the costs associated with their departure?"
- "What's the back-up plan, the safety net, for each of the key employees?"
- "What does the business need in terms of talent to take it to the next level?"
- "What are the major obstacles – in the way they do business – that could stop them from reaching their strategic objectives?"