

# ANSWER INTELLIGENCE

## PRAISE FOR AQ

“We know that communicating with impact is critical to the success of individuals and organizations, yet there have been little to no resources on the most effective ways to connect and influence thinking through answers. I know I would have been a better leader with Answer Intelligence (AQ).”

— *Mike Soenke, SVP and CFO at McDonald's USA*

“The ability to sell is a critical skill not only for the salesperson, but for anyone seeking to advance their ideas through political skill. The Sales AQ chapter of this book leverages a data-driven approach to successfully navigating the various stages of any sales conversation, giving the reader phenomenal insights on how to approach either side of the sales conversation for a successful outcome. I'll keep this one on the shelf for reference when planning my next big pitch.”

— *Cindy Goodwin-Sak, Vice President, Global Security Sales Engineering, Cisco Systems*

“Never before has brand authenticity and connection with stakeholders been so important. Answer Intelligence (AQ)<sup>™</sup>'s holistic and inquisitive approach to understanding a brand is pivotal to its effectiveness.”

— *Paul A. Quaranto, Jr., MBA, LLIF, Chairman, CEO and President, Boston Mutual Life Insurance Company*

“Most sales professionals have been taught which questions to use in order to sell more, but they're missing a huge aspect of highly effective sales conversations – how to answer questions masterfully. Answer intelligence reveals the hidden meanings behind questions

and answers, so sellers can better understand their buyers and communicate more meaningfully.”

— *Devin Reed, Head of Content Strategy, Gong*

“Practical to its core, this novel book provides a nuanced and compelling case for paying attention not to just what you say but how you say it.”

— *Grace Lemmon, (Ph.D), Associate Professor of Management, DePaul University*

“Intelligent, insightful and well-written, “Answer Intelligence: Raise your AQ” is a Master Class into the art of the answer. Brian Glibkowski elegantly defines structure to answers in a clear and thought-provoking manner and directly links it to real-world outcomes. In taking this approach Brian provides the reader the keys to success – application. This book is essential for anyone endeavoring to become a great conversationalist. Through story, metaphor, and a solid academic approach, Answer Intelligence deftly answers the question: “What is the best book about answers ever written?”

— *Bob Kulhan, Founder and CEO & Author of “Getting to Yes And”*

“This book is a must read for anyone in business. Brian Glibkowski and his chapter co-authors really have answered many of the questions that corporate leaders have been battling forever.”

— *Tom Gimbel, President & CEO, LaSalle Network*

“Interview AQ is important preparation for any student entering the job market.”

— *Sandy J. Wayne, Ph.D., Professor of Management,  
University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC)*

“Answer Intelligence: Raise Your AQ” is an insightful, and useful guide for how to more effectively communicate in a question and answer exchange.”

— *Joseph P. Gaspero, CEO & Co-Founder, Center for  
Healthcare Innovation*

“This book is so valuable for sales professionals it could be called “Sales Conversation Intelligence.” Dr. Glibkowski and his co-authors provide structured guidance on how to elevate every sales conversation through the entire sales funnel. From discovery, during which the quality of our questions dictate the quality of the answers we receive, to the C-Level close, at which time our ability to answer difficult questions effectively means the difference between win or lose. Simply put, Answer Intelligence will forever improve your sales results.”

— *Chris White, Author of “The Six Habits of Highly  
Effective Sales Engineers”*

“The Sales AQ chapter is incredibly powerful because the data amplifies the research. The AQ framework allows our sales teams to have more tailored conversation, resulting in a better customer-experience.”

— *James Kaikis, CoFounder, PreSales Collective*

“Answer Intelligence (AQ) is the solution to many of the long standing issues inherent in client relationships. Everyone in the wealth management industry needs to equip themselves with the tools to appropriately, effectively, and empathetically answer client questions. The industry needs this book and should be on the reading list of every new and seasoned professional.”

— *Ryan Decker, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Economics and Finance, North Central College, Director, Center for Financial Literacy*

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# ANSWER INTELLIGENCE

Raise Your AQ

BY

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India – Malaysia – China

Emerald Publishing Limited  
Howard House, Wagon Lane, Bingley BD16 1WA, UK

First edition 2021

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**British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data**

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN: 978-1-83982-873-7 (Print)

ISBN: 978-1-83982-870-6 (online)

ISBN: 978-1-83982-872-0 (Epub)



Certificate Number 1985  
ISO 14001

ISOQAR certified  
Management System,  
awarded to Emerald  
for adherence to  
Environmental  
standard  
ISO 14001:2004.



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE



*I dedicate this book to my wife Jennifer, and our two boys  
Holden and Henry – you are my source of inspiration  
and your support nourishes me daily.*

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## PREFACE: BINDER ON THE SHELF

As a second year management PhD student, I traveled across the country from Chicago, IL, to Austin, TX, for a feedback report to a research site, a growing software company. In my PhD seminars, I had been studying leadership, motivation, culture, teamwork, negotiations, and all the important topics of organizational behavior. Now, I was finally in the field. If you are a culinary student, you want to be in the five star restaurant cooking, a medical student wants to be in surgery saving lives, and a management PhD student wants to collect survey data that will be published in the top peer reviewed academic journals. This was exciting. I had a chance to ask research questions, and ultimately be part of a team that added to the body of knowledge that informed managers around the world.

Prior to collecting data, my job involved the academic grunt work of survey design – I identified survey measures to test our hypotheses and additional survey items that addressed an interest of the client, under the direction of senior faculty. Ideally, the research team and client have shared interests. Usually, this overlap is only partial at most. A research project more resembles two separate surveys, combined into one. Academic research projects are not like consulting projects. In a consulting project, a client pays, and the survey would focus entirely on the client's needs. In academic research, there is no client fee, but the catch is the research team gets to collect data on a topic of interest to their research, and in exchange the client chooses a topic to be examined in the survey. The software company in Austin was interested in improving leadership at their organization.

As a research assistant, it was my responsibility to identify the most important leadership variables and associated survey items

that were relevant to the client. As a rule of thumb, a survey can only be 10 minutes in length, inclusive of all questions, before survey fatigue and disinterest kick in. This meant approximately 5 minutes of survey space reserved for the client. Assuming a question took 3 seconds to respond to, that amounts to 100 questions ( $60 \text{ seconds} \times 5 \text{ minutes} = 300 \text{ seconds}$ ;  $300 \text{ seconds} / 3 \text{ seconds per question} = 100 \text{ questions}$ ) that could be pulled from the existing literature, adapted, or written for this survey. My job was to best use those precious 100 questions.

I did my job. I examined leadership literature reviews, the equivalent of guided tours by prominent professors of the leadership landscape. A literature review uses expert opinion to point out which leadership theories are most important. Situational leadership, leader-member exchange, path-goal theory, servant leadership, and all the important leadership theories were on display, like animals on a safari. Next, I examined leadership meta-analyses, each representing a statistical combination of individual studies, to increase the total sample size, and importantly power (the ability to accurately detect correlations). A meta-analysis is the equivalent to using GPS to find the tagged animals on the safari tour. Finally, I went out into the brush on my own, and reviewed individual studies. When my exploration was over, I had compiled a list of the most important variables and associated survey items.

The survey was finalized, data was collected, analyzed, and the results prepared. I was tapped with the responsibility of leading the executives through a feedback presentation. It was my chance to be the leadership safari tour guide. Impressive, exciting, and informative, my presentation was *not*. The executives were bored. It felt anticlimactic. I was crushed. After the presentation, I could only imagine the thick binder we prepared for each executive was destined to be a decorative fixture on their respective shelves, put there once, resigned to collect dust, not to be consulted. We had all the best leadership theories, prescriptions from the results were clear. What went wrong?

The binder on the shelf is the origin story of Answer Intelligence (AQ)<sup>TM</sup>. Starting with the plane ride home, continuing through my doctoral studies and graduation, my subsequent appointments as a professor at two colleges, and parallel consulting with clients, the

through line has always stretched back to Austin. I have tried to understand what went wrong.

In the aftermath of a traumatic experience, I did soul searching and examined my assumptions. Nothing is more important to the zeitgeist of academic scholarship than the “research question.” Surprisingly, PhD programs do not formally teach about research questions, for the most part an aspiring researcher learns how to ask questions during craft-like experiences that include observation and osmosis from senior faculty, and trial and error. Very quickly, it became clear the assumptions of questions, and by extension answers, were not tethered to a solid foundation that could be built upon. Questions and answers became my obsession, and I became convinced that the problems in Austin had to do with questions and answers.

I realized that academics and practitioners did not ask the same questions. In Austin, we had two separate surveys, welded into one. Fundamentally, scholarly questions were different than practical questions. As middle schoolers we learn the six WH-Questions (what, why, when, where, who, how). Academics are concerned primarily with the why-question, the subject of testable hypotheses. In contrast, practitioners are concerned primarily with the how-question, and associated practical recommendations. My examination of questions resulted in an academic paper on questions that was recognized by the Academy of Human Resource Development as one of 10 papers that will shape the twenty-first century (Glibkowski, McGinnis, Gillespie, & Schommer, n.d.).

After publishing this paper, I shifted my attention from questions to answers. I came to realize the gap in our understanding of answers was truly profound, much bigger than any gap in our understanding of questions. To substantiate the size of this gap in my mind, I came to fixate on one simple observation. We have a taxonomy of questions, the six WH-questions, but we don’t have a taxonomy of answers. I reflected upon my education as a middle schooler, I was taught about the six WH-questions, but there was no parallel lesson about a taxonomy of answers. I came to appreciate the binder on the shelf story in terms of answers. Not only did we not ask the same questions, we did not provide the answers to the questions the executives were most interested in. Fueled by this self-reflection, my

colleagues and I studied answers with the top golf instructors in the world as rated by Golf Digest and Golf Magazine (I know you are asking, “Why golf?” I will answer this question in Chapter 2). Based upon this research, we published an academic paper that identified a taxonomy of six answers (story, metaphor, theory, concept, procedure, action) (McGinnis, Glibowski, & Lemmon, 2016). In my subsequent research, consulting, and a TEDx presentation (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7eeXf5dfJRE>), this original research has been extended into a communication paradigm I refer to as Answer Intelligence (AQ)<sup>TM</sup>. This book is an introduction into a new communication paradigm, centered upon the science of answers. The need for AQ, its make-up, and its application is the focus of this book.

## ORGANIZATION OF THIS BOOK

This is a book about answers. We all know answers are important. But, until now, there has not been a critical examination of answers. Answer Intelligence (AQ)<sup>TM</sup>, the ability to provide elevated answers, is the product of this critical examination.

The book is organized into four parts. Part 1 is a grand tour overview of questions and answers, associated academic research I have published, six answer types (story, concept, metaphor, theory, procedure, action) at the heart of AQ, and an introduction to the five High AQ practices that give rise to elevated answers. Part 2 examines the five High AQ practices in detail, to provide prescriptions for you to raise your AQ. Part 3 is AQ Conversations – AQ applied to distinct AQ topics: Interview AQ, Sales AQ, Coaching AQ, Brand AQ, Wealth Management AQ, and Physician AQ. These chapters are co-authored by executives, subject matter experts, and academics to add realism and depth. Assuming curiosity in AQ is peaked, Part 3 of the book culminates with a discussion of how to learn AQ, and ultimately use it in your important conversations.

In Part 4, I revisit an implicit question, one that was not fully addressed prior – Do we need AQ? To answer this question, existing models of communication and intelligence are examined.

An argument is made that AQ is unique, adds value, and is a needed addition to the communication and intelligence landscapes, respectively.

Some readers may prefer to read Parts 1, 4, 2, 3 in that order. However, I suspect most will prefer the order as I have sequenced the book. This order emphasizes a quick start and a gradual unfolding and deepening of the material as the book progresses.

Finally, interested readers are directed to [www.rasieyouraq.com](http://www.rasieyouraq.com) to access an AQ digital assessment and additional resources.