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Donald is respected by clients in over 40 industries throughout the world as a “thought leader” and passionate visionary in the key areas of management, marketing, and business innovation.

Drawing from his experience as a world-class manufacturer, award-winning retailer, business speaker and coach, he has helped 1000s of businesses to **sell more, manage smarter and grow their bottom line.**

To access 100s of Donald’s free articles on marketing and management, visit our website www.donaldcooper.com and click on the “Free Articles” button.

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An article by Donald Cooper, MBA...

12 simple questions to help make 2012 your best year ever:

Now’s the time to be planning, deciding and implementing to make 2012 your best year ever. To help get you started, sit down with a few of the best minds and hearts in your business, or department, and invest an hour or so to answer these 12 simple questions. If you’re a 1-person business, you’re “it”, so just sit with yourself and go to it.

Note: These questions are simple...but some of the answers will not be. Where necessary, allocate homework and research assignments to members of your team to gather more info and new innovative thoughts. Here are your 12 questions:

1. What bottom line profit do we commit to generate in 2012 that will keep us financially healthy and reward us adequately for our time, effort and investment in the business?
2. What are the 3 most important things we need to do to improve or grow our business next year so that we achieve our profit commitment?
3. What are 3 things that we do that tick off our customers...and what will we do to eliminate them?
4. What additional products or services would make us more helpful and more valuable to our customers? How can we profitably develop or implement those and add them to our offering?
5. What are 3 important things that any of our competitors do better than we do - and what will we do to fix that so that we’re clearly better than them?
6. What 3 extraordinary things could we do to make doing business with us *not* all about price? What functional or emotional value could we create or what extraordinary service could we add that would ‘grab’ our target customers and fundamentally change the game? What has never been done before in our industry that would blow our customers away?
7. We are what we communicate. So, what 3 gutsy things will we do in 2012 to more effectively promote our business and communicate our total value offering?
8. What are the 3 biggest expense items on which we can save money in 2012...and, specifically, how will we achieve those savings?
9. What are 3 things we can do to become “greener” in 2012...and beyond?



10. What are the 3 things we can do to improve internal communication and improve clarity about our commitments to customers, to each other and to the bottom line?
11. What's the most important new technology that we need to bring into our business in 2012?
12. We can't grow our business without growing our people. What training, development or mentoring does each person on our team need to help us grow the business, serve customers more wonderfully and operate more effectively?

So, there you have it...12 questions to get you thinking about next year and how to make it your best ever. For each idea you come up with and commit to, be clear about who will do what, by when and measured how, to make it happen. Failure to implement effectively is one of the biggest challenges in most businesses today. Remember, businesses do not die from a single shot to the head. They die, slowly but surely, from a thousand uncompleted tasks.

For additional help in creating a clear Vision for the future of your business, check out my transformational **Vision Critical Guide** that costs a mere \$20. For more info, [click here](#) or refer to our Order Form on the following page.