MODULE OVERVIEW

Better customer experience: Start with what already works

Adaptive module | ~20 min

Most improvement projects start with a list of what isn't working, and the team comes away discouraged, driven by an energy of worry that fades once the pressure drops. This module teaches how Appreciative Inquiry, created by David Cooperrider, reverses this approach: start with what already works to build tomorrow's customer experience. The five-step method is illustrated from start to finish by a single case study, and a simple two-hour workshop is enough to launch it.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

01 Understand why change driven by worry loses momentum, and what difference an appreciative starting point makes.

02 Work through the five steps of the method (Define, Discovery, Dream, Design, Destiny) on a team topic.

03 Phrase appreciative questions that steer the team toward its successes, because teams think in the direction of the question.

04 Launch the approach in your own role, as a manager or team member, with a simple two-hour workshop.

WHO IT'S FOR

Managers and teams serving customers, users, or beneficiaries, who want to improve the experience they provide.

- **Prerequisite:** none

HOW THE MODULE WORKS

Self-paced, with practice tailored to each learner.

1. **Self-assessment**: on 9 dimensions, to gauge current habits and guide the practice.
2. **Expert video**: 10 minutes, with 3 pauses for reflection.
3. **Practice scenarios**: the first 2 chosen from the self-assessment, then 16 optional ones. Every answer gets feedback: what it leads to, and one way to improve.
4. **Dated commitment**: one action to try, written by the learner or picked from the suggestions.
5. **Memo to download**: key takeaways, questions, commitment, personal notes and checklists.

ASSESSMENT AND COMPLETION

Pass mark: 80%

The score takes into account your answers to the practice scenarios, your commitment and, where relevant, any additional learning activities. Passing requires a commitment and a score of at least 80%.

METHODS & MODELS

- Appreciative Inquiry (David Cooperrider, with Suresh Srivastva, Case Western Reserve University, 1987)
- 5-D cycle: Define, Discovery, Dream, Design, Destiny (adapted from Cooperrider & Whitney's 4-D/5-D cycle)
- Appreciative interviews in pairs – a standard Appreciative Inquiry practice, Discovery phase
- Sample Discovery and Dream questions, plus a "2-hour workshop to get started" format – Afthonios method

SOURCES & REFERENCES

- Cooperrider & Srivastva, "Appreciative Inquiry in Organizational Life," 1987, Case Western Reserve University – origin of the approach
- British Airways: the lost-baggage case reframed as an "exceptional arrival experience" (Whitney & Trosten-Bloom, The Power of Appreciative Inquiry, Berrett-Koehler, 2003)
- Social constructionism, inspired by Kenneth Gergen
- Stouten, Rousseau & De Cremer (2018) – review of success factors in organizational change

- Module created by Afthonios.com.
- Content reviewed on 13 October 2026