

The Repeating Question Technique

To see how the repeating question technique works, let's go back to the Finance system

Example:

1. Starting at the main root (your overall Finance System), ask the question:

What systems do I need to support my Finance System?

– Use the Generic Business Systems list, and you'll find you need

- Accounting,
- Financial Statements,
- Budgeting,
- Cash Management,
- Business Control systems.

There may be other systems as well depending on the needs of your business.

2. Now pick one of those subsystems, and ask again:

What systems do I need to support my Accounting Systems?

– For example, you may decide:

I need a

- Chart of Accounts,
- General Journal,
- General Ledger

3. Now ask again:

What systems do I need to support the

(Chart of Accounts/General Journal/General Ledger system)?

4. Repeat this process until you've exhausted each stream. When the repeating question results in answers that are unnecessary or trivial, you've reached an end system, which is the practical end to that particular root system.

For example, you may need a system for ordering office supplies, but you almost certainly won't need one for ordering blue pens.

5. Start back upstream at the next item on your list, and follow the process again for that root system.

• Review the 4 Core Functions/Systems framework within TouchStone

for this process to remind yourself of the types of activities involved in each major system.

- Even the most complicated systems in a given root system rarely exceed five downstream levels before they hit an end system.
- Don't try to do this in one sitting. When you've completed your diagram or outline, set it aside for a while and then look at it again with a fresh mind. This allows you to see systems you need that you missed the first time around or more effective ways to arrange your systems.