

Plan for Q&A Success

Quick Tips that Can Make a Big Difference



Question Time at DIA

- ▶ Our attendees truly look forward to their time, within the session, to interact directly with the speakers.
- ▶ Plan for at least 15 minutes of Q&A time with the audience.



Tips for Success with the Panelists

► Hold a briefing session before the event

- Run through the event program and establish any time limits or rules
- Remind them, when answering questions, to stick to the main question/theme and share only relevant examples

► Have prepared questions AND answers!

- Prepare several questions for the Q&A portion in case there are no immediate questions from the audience. This is also an opportunity to punctuate key points from the session.
- Make sure you are all aware of how the questions will be answered.

► Practice, practice, practice

- When you practice your presentation, practice the Q & A as well: ask a few friends or colleagues to sit in your audience and to throw questions at you.

Tips for Q&A Success with the Audience

- ▶ **Your responsibility, as Session Chair, is to the entire audience.**
- ▶ **Give your audience instructions**
 - Announce the Q&A session timing at the beginning of the session and how they will be able to ask questions (i.e. raising hands, Catchbox)
- ▶ When your speakers have finished answering questions, **repeat the main theme or key messages of your session, or repeat the call to action if applicable.** This technique will bring closure to the process and reinforce your messages.
- ▶ **Don't end the Q&A session abruptly.** Let the audience know: "We have time for two or three more questions."

What if it doesn't go as planned?



Neutralize Trouble with Openness – Part I

What if you get an irrelevant question, a meandering one, or, even worse, a hostile one?

Turn this challenging situations can be turned to your advantage.

- ▶ **Thank the person asking the question regardless.** This is especially **effective for neutralizing hostile questions posed** because the asker is showing off. By thanking them for the new perspective they're providing, and **promising to investigate their perspective in the future, this shows your openness without giving up your authority.**

Neutralize Trouble with Openness – Part II

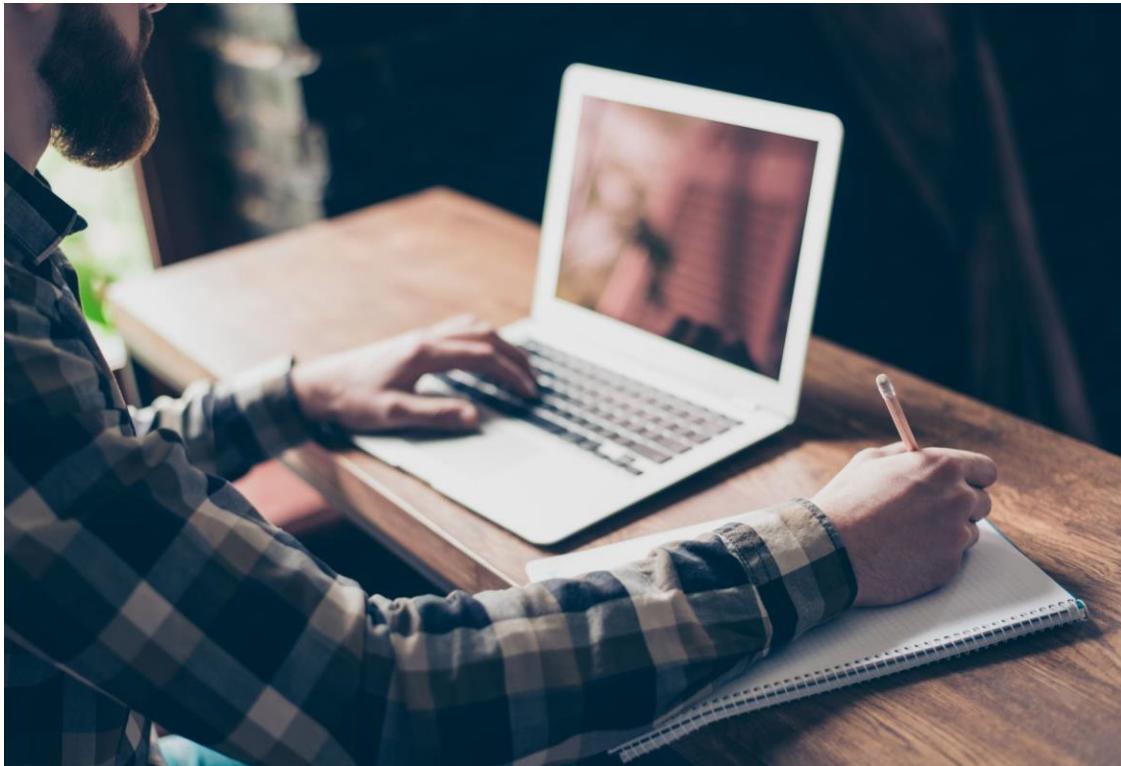
- ▶ If possible, **pivot irrelevant questions toward something else that you do want to address in your Q&A**, but have not had a chance to. One technique for doing that is to **rephrase the question: If I understand right, the question is... then pivot toward the question you want to answer.**
- ▶ Also, this works for situations when you can't quite hear the question, the asker has a strong accent, or you're just not sure what they're asking!

Neutralize Trouble with Openness – Part III

- ▶ Prep an answer for odd and inappropriate questions that allows both you and the asker to save face. For example, you might say, *“That’s a great question and although I don’t feel it’s appropriate to answer at this time, I’d be happy to address it one-on-one after the session.”*

In Summary...

Final Points



- ▶ Keep the all participants informed – when/how Q&A is taking place
- ▶ Prepare questions, and answers, to kick off this portion of the session
- ▶ **PRACTICE**
 - *Practice* your presentation and the Q&A portion
 - *Practice* how to negotiate questions
- ▶ Contact DIA if you have any questions or concerns, we are here to help your session be the best it can be!

Questions?

If you have any questions, please contact **Patti Shaughnessy** at
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