

Question and Answer

Key Principles

Question and Answer sessions should be viewed as an opportunity not as a reaction.

A good presentation will stimulate discussion and Q&A. It is essential that the quality of your presentation in terms of content and delivery should remain consistent in Q&A.

Be prepared

- Make a note of key points you want to make, any facts and figures you might need
- What are the 5 questions you dread most? Practise them.
- Remember to propose Q&A after you have made your presentation. (Include it in your notes after your conclusion).
- Prepare an upbeat closing line to follow the last question and finish the session.

Delivery

- Pause before answering each question.
 - Gives you the opportunity to marshal thoughts for crisp responses
 - Gives audience perception you are controlled, thoughtful, not shooting from the hip
 - Provides a consistent pause after each question so that the audience will not be able to tell the difference between tough and easy questions
- Answer your questioner directly. Or begin with the questioner and then include others in the room, finish answer with questioner.
- Listen carefully to each question. Jot down notes if you need to.
- Avoid starting with 'That's a good question' – it can come across as patronising and you can't use it for every question you are asked. Use the Thinking Pause instead.
- If you don't know the answer, say so. Tell questioner you'll be happy to find the answer and get back to them. Take email/mobile no.
- Never say 'no comment'. Explain that due to company policy/lawyers/competitive restrictions you aren't allowed to answer that question.
- Use "Bridging" technique to move from a negative to a positive line. Use it to move a short distance from a question you dislike, rather than to evade it.
- Do not over-answer. Be as brief as you can.
- Tone down business jargon.