

Conducting a Q&A Session

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WHAT'S COVERED

In this lesson, you will learn additional techniques for conducting effective Q&A sessions. Specifically, this lesson will cover:

1. Q&A Can Occur in Person or Via Internet
 - a. Q&A with Small Audience Co-located with Speaker
 - b. Using the Internet for a Q&A

1. Q&A Can Occur in Person or Via Internet



Question and answer sessions (**Q&A**) can take different formats. You might answer questions after your speech or presentation if you have a live co-located audience. Members of the audience may stand to speak or walk to a microphone. If you are speaking to a large audience or a remote audience, you may use various digital methods to solicit questions to answer at the end of your presentation.

Let's look at approaches to conducting a Q&A with live audiences and with large or remote audiences using

Twitter, short message service (SMS) text messages, or email.



TERM TO KNOW

Q&A

A period of time in which questions are asked of a person.

1a. Q&A with Small Audience Co-Located with Speaker

Often after giving a presentation you will be called upon to answer questions from the audience. Q&A sessions can be quite intimidating, but if you have thoroughly researched your topic and have anticipated the types of questions you might receive, you will be better able to handle anything you are asked.



Here are some guidelines for handling Q&A sessions:

1. Stop to think about the question before answering.
2. Make sure you understand the question. To check for understanding, paraphrase the question and ask for confirmation. "For example: Are you asking why we propose a 2% annual increase or how we estimate that this increase will match increases in the cost of living?"
3. If you did not understand the question, ask for clarification. For example: "I don't understand what you mean by total compensation package."
4. Repeat the questions for those in the audience who may not have heard it. For example: "The question is, 'What raises do we expect to propose over the next 5 years?'"
5. Don't let the questions move you off topic. For example: "I appreciate your concern over profit-sharing with beneficiaries, but today's focus is on investor relations."
6. Answer directly and succinctly. Tell them what you know, why you believe it, or what you believe. If you

don't have answer, tell them so or volunteer to find out the information and provide the answer at a later time. For example: "I did not hear the President's comment about eliminating unions. My understanding is that she is committed to union participation. I will check the minutes from that meeting and send you an answer, if you provide your email address."

7. Look at the questioner as you answer the question, but still present the answer to the whole audience.

8. If the questioner starts to give a counter speech, politely interrupt and ask for his or her question. For example: "Thank you for your concern, but we only have time for one more question. Do you have a specific question I can answer?"

9. After answering, check with the questioner to determine whether you answered the question to his or her satisfaction. For example: "Did I address your concerns?"

1b. Using the Internet for a Q&A

If you have prepared for Twitter questions using your #hashtag, SMS contact, or email, you can create a direct interactive experience with all parts of your global audience.

1. In general, you want to collect the questions for a Q&A session at the end rather than displaying the questions as they occur.

2. You may have a cohort monitor the questions and select the ones to answer.

3. You may also want to display the questions with TweetDeck. TweetDeck's interface consists of a series of customizable columns, which can be set up to display tweets.

4. You may project the tweets using a projection system or a shared screen for the remote audience.

5. You may also arrange an "open" question period prior to the speech in order to solicit relevant questions.

6. If you are concerned about privacy, you may want to restrict the questions on Twitter to followers. Tweets are publicly visible by default; however, senders can restrict message delivery to just their followers. Users can tweet via the Twitter website, compatible external applications (such as for smartphones), or by SMS text messages.

7. Again, make sure to look at the audience or the webcam when answering the question. You may also make sure to display contact information for follow-up questions if you are willing to respond to questions for a period of time.

8. Finally, as the speaker you will be responsible for time management. How many questions will you answer and how much time will you devote to them? You may want to make arrangements for a follow-up exchange after the formal presentation in a forum, blog, or via email.



SUMMARY

In this lesson, you learned how to effectively conduct a **Q&A session in-person or via the Internet**. First, make sure you understand the question. To check for understanding, paraphrase the question and ask for confirmation. If you don't understand the question, ask for clarification. Repeat the questions for those in the audience who may not have heard it and answer it directly and succinctly while looking at the audience or web cam.

If you have prepared for Twitter questions, you can create a direct interactive experience with all parts of your global audience prior, during, or at the end of the speech. In general, you want to collect the questions for a Q&A session at the end or have a cohort monitor the questions as they are posted to select the ones for you to answer. You may project the tweets or texts using a projection system for a large audience and a shared screen for the remote audiences while you conduct the Q&A session.

Source: Boundless. "Conducting a Q&A Session." Boundless Communications Boundless, 17 Mar. 2017. Retrieved 1 Jun. 2017 from <https://www.boundless.com/communications/textbooks/boundless-communications-textbook/delivering-the-speech-12/managing-q-a-68/conducting-a-q-a-session-268-4213/>



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