

### Activity: Ask Yourself These Eight Questions before the Q&A

There are (at least) eight questions that you can and need to ask yourself that will help you enter the Q&A portion of your presentation with greater confidence. And if you're thinking strategically, you will build some of these answers into the presentation itself so that, if the question arises, you can say, "As I mentioned earlier..." (Wouldn't that feel great?)

1. **What is most important and relevant about my topic for this audience?** In other words, think about the WIIFM ("What's In It For Me?") for this audience, and make sure to address that throughout.
2. **How does what I am proposing fit into the bigger picture?** Your listeners have their own priorities and obligations, so let them know how what you're pitching plays well with their goals, projects, and plans.
3. **How easy can I make this for them?** You may think that the idea you're plugging is a no-brainer. Great—make sure you are very clear in demonstrating the feasibility of turning your idea into action.
4. **What's this going to cost?** Show them the money, but also remember that costs extend beyond dollars and cents. Be clear and up front about costs of personnel, energy, time and other valuable resources, and include your perspective on what makes this worth it, or not (if that's your angle).
5. **When will this all happen?** Timing is everything. Share as much as you can about when the proposed project will start and end, and milestones along the way.
6. **Who is in charge?** If you're making the presentation, there's often an assumption that you're the one carrying out the work. If that's so, make a case for why you have the competence and credibility to do so. If it's not you, let the listeners know who is doing what, and why that team is the A-Team.
7. **What's my stake in this?** Sure, we all have to make presentations from time to time where we're not really feeling it, but the more you can let your audience understand not just how much you know but how much you care, what your stake is, and your unique perspective on it, the greater credibility you bring to the presentation.
8. **How can I view the Q&A as something positive?** If you can force yourself to look forward to the audience's questions (because you believe that their inquiries will build trust with you, especially when you handle them well), the end result will be to focus their thinking and your own, guide a rich discussion, discover better answers than you might have come up with yourself, and contribute to shared ownership of the topic or project under discussion.

When it comes to mastering the Q&A in a presentation, get yourself in the right mindset before you get ready to navigate whatever the audience brings your way. For specific tips on answering questions, keep watching.