

Preparing for the Q&A

When working on any project, it is important to understand from the beginning what stakeholders expect of you. This reading will be all about preparing questions to ask before planning your data gathering and presentations.

There are many things to consider before you begin asking and answering possible questions – like the objective, stakeholder expectations, and if there are any limitations. Make sure you have everything covered before you begin. The checklist below identifies ten tasks that you should engage in to be well prepared for your Q&A:

Before the presentation

1. Assemble and prepare your questions.
2. Discuss your presentation with your manager, other analysts, or other friendly contacts in your organization.
3. Ask a manager or other analysts what sort of questions were normally asked by your specific audience in the past.
4. Seek comments, feedback, and questions on the deck or the document of your analysis.
5. At least 24 hours ahead of the presentation, try and brainstorm tricky questions or unclear parts you may come across- this helps avoid surprises.
6. It never hurts to practice what you will be presenting, to account for any missing information or simply to calm your nerves.

During the presentation

1. Be prepared to respond to the things that you find and effectively and accurately explain your findings.
2. Address potential questions that may come up.
3. Avoid having a single question derail a presentation and propose following-up offline.
4. Put supplementary visualizations and content in the appendix to help answer questions.



Practice makes perfect

Preparing for a presentation or a meeting doesn't have to be intimidating. If you invest time into knowing your audience, crafting your notes, doing necessary research and organizing your data, then there is very little reason why your audience will not be engaged, even impressed.