

PRESENTATION SKILLS

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QUESTION & ANSWER SESSION



QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION

- ▶ This is the most important part of the presentation
- ▶ You should not feel threatened because this is your opportunity to have a direct dialogue with your audience
- ▶ Take advantage of the session by using the time as opportunity to explain more about the subject

BE PREPARED-ANTICIPATE QUESTION

- ▶ Think about questions that might come up and how you will answer them
- ▶ Generate a list of every possible question. Prepare an answer for each one
- ▶ Give your outlines or notes to your friends and colleagues and have them ask you questions
- ▶ Practice until you really master answering each question

WHAT IS A QUESTION???

- ▶ The only real question is a request for further information
- ▶ Other question are :
 - request for the spotlight
 - attacks or traps

'REAL' QUESTIONS

- ▶ Paraphrase for audience
- ▶ If real question, answer it briefly
- ▶ Answer audience, not just questioner
- ▶ If you don't know the answer, say no

OTHER 'QUESTIONS'

- ▶ Paraphrase
- ▶ Get questioner to be more specific
- ▶ Get rid of 'question' to :
 - audience
 - one of participants
 - the questioner!

TYPES OF QUESTIONER

- ▶ **Asking real questions** because they do not know or they are very interested in the topic of your presentation.
- ▶ **Asking for clarification** because they miss the point or they are afraid to misunderstand.
- ▶ **Asking for confirmation** (maybe because they have prior knowledge on the topic)
- ▶ **Showing off**/Looking for spotlight/Stealing your thunder

TYPE OF QUESTIONERS

- ▶ **Know it all**

- Let them share their experience but not too much

- ▶ **Monopolizer**

- Break off eye contact and ask : *“Does anyone else have a comment or question?”* or *“Let’s hear someone else opinion.”*

- ▶ **Nitpickers**

- Deflect the question back to the audience or the questioner : *“How do other handle that situation?”*

- ▶ **Attackers**

- Don’t take it personally or be defensive; humor often work here.

STEP 1-LISTEN

- ▶ Listen to all parts of a question before drawing premature conclusions about your 'best' response
- ▶ Both hear the content of the question and try to decipher the questioner's intention

STEP 2-UNDERSTAND

- ▶ Clarify the area of enquiry before going any further if you're not sure you understand the question
- ▶ Paraphrasing the question back to the questioner

STEP 3-COMMUNICATIVE AND INVOLVE

- ▶ Do not just focus on the questioner
- ▶ You are still responsible for the interest and engagement of the other audience members.
- ▶ To involve the rest of the audience, make sure the whole audience has heard and understood the question by **repeating the question**.

STEP 4-RESPOND

- ▶ When you reply to a question, direct your answer to both the questioner and other members of the audience.
- ▶ Try to keep your responses as focused as possible.
- ▶ To avoid going into too much detail, stop and check back with the questioner to see if you have answered his/her query: *“Does that explain why we chose to ...?”*
- ▶ Don't let the same people ask all questions or dominate the sessions, unless they are the only ones with questions

STEP 5-ALLOW FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS

- ▶ Encourage your audience to ask questions after the event has finished through email discussion, skype, etc

When the audience do not ask any questions...

- ▶ Ask yourself a question

“When I talk about this topic, the one thing everyone usually want to know is...” or “I would imagine some of you may want to know...”

- ▶ Ask a question you were asked privately by an audience member

“When I arrived this morning, someone asked...”

- ▶ Ask the audience a question

“How many of you think that...”

THINGS TO AVOID

1. Passing the blame

“That wasn’t my idea, my supervisor did the preliminary work, I’ve simply attempted to ...”

- ▶ Passing the blame to others = weak and evasive.
- ▶ If an idea from the audience is a good one, acknowledge its value.
- ▶ If it isn’t, make a polite rebuttal and move on.

THINGS TO AVOID

2. Defensive answers

- ▶ Remain calm and in control!
- ▶ An aggressive or defensive reply = weakness on your part = failed presentation

HANDLING DIFFICULT QUESTIONS

- ▶ **Do not** to start **responding** to a difficult question **right away**.
- ▶ **Repeating the question** and asking for clarification will help create some space for your thoughts and buy you some time.
- ▶ **Pause** for a moment or two to think.
- ▶ For even more time, **suggest that you'll come back** to the topic **later** but don't forget to do this.

HANDLING DIFFICULT QUESTIONS

- ▶ Sometimes questions are too difficult to answer. Admit that you don't know the answer.
"That's an interesting idea, I'd not thought of that"
- ▶ *"I don't know"* is a very **acceptable answer** to some difficult questions.
- ▶ Relax. Never feel like you do have to know everything.

HANDLING DIFFICULT QUESTIONS

- ▶ You can ask the audience whether they know the answer.
- ▶ You can ask back the questioner on what they think about the question they just ask.

HANDLING PERSISTENT QUESTIONERS

- ▶ Remember that you are still responsible for the whole audience
- ▶ You cannot allocate all of your question time to one individual (no matter how passionate her/his views).
- ▶ Announce that you will move on and suggest that you might continue discussion after the presentation.

HANDLING PERSISTENT QUESTIONER

- ▶ If the questioner persists, use an assertiveness technique called 'broken record' to assert your position calmly:

"I'm afraid I need to move on ..."

"I do need to move on ..."

I would like to move on now."

- ▶ Take another question from another person.

HANDLING OFF TOPIC QUESTIONS

1. **Respond positively** to the question and suggest that you offer time for a quick chat after the event.

2. **Ask for Relevance**

-This must be done tactfully to avoid offending or embarrassing the questioner.

-The sooner you can relate the question to the current topic, the sooner you can tell the audience member that the answer can be found in another part of your presentation.

USEFUL PHRASES AND SENTENCES

► Polite question

- *"Do/Would you mind if I ask you/telling me if/whether/what/where..."*
- *"Could/Can you tell me..."*
- *"I'm interested to know..."*
- *"I'd like to know..."*

► Polite answer

- *"Go ahead/Please do/Certainly"*
- *"That's a good question"*
- *"That's interesting"*

USEFUL PHRASES AND SENTENCES

► Statement questions and answers

Questions

“All students should participate in the exhibition...?”

“It makes me worry that we don’t have any pamphlets ready. Doesn’t it worry you too?”

“Our colleagues have done their job. Is that right?”

“We haven’t collected all opinions, have we?”

USEFUL PHRASES AND SENTENCES

Answer

"I'm afraid so."

"Yes, as far as I know."

"No, it doesn't look like it."

"I'm afraid not."

"Well, actually, I think we can make use of it."

USEFUL PHRASES AND SENTENCES

► Other expression to answer

→ Clarifying a question

"If I understand you correctly, you are saying/asking..."

"I didn't quite catch that."

"Could you go over that again?"

"I'm not sure what you are getting at."

USEFUL PHRASES AND SENTENCES

→ Avoiding giving an answer

"Perhaps we could deal with that later."

"Can we talk about that on another occasion?"

"I'm afraid that's not my field."

"I don't have that figures with me."

"I'm sure Mr. (...) could answer that question."

→ Checking the questioner is satisfied

"Does that answer your question?"

"Is that clear?"

"May we go on?"

USEFUL PHRASES AND SENTENCES

1. Inviting questions

- ▶ *“Would anyone like to ask any questions?”*
- ▶ *“I’m ready to take any questions now.”*
- ▶ *“If anyone has questions I’ll be happy to answer them.”*
- ▶ *“If there are any questions, I would be pleased to answer them.”*
- ▶ *“Hi! Do you have any questions for me?”*

USEFUL PHRASES AND SENTENCES

2. Answering questions

“Thanks for your question ...”

“Good question....”

“That’s an interesting question!”

“Yes, that’s an interesting point ...”

“That’s an interesting question. I’m glad you asked me that.”

USEFUL PHRASES AND SENTENCES

3. Understood but difficult to answer

“In my experience I would say.....”

*“I don’t think I’m the right person to answer that.
Perhaps Mr. _____ can help...”*

“I don’t have much experience in that field...”

USEFUL PHRASES AND SENTENCES

4. Understood but irrelevant or impossible to answer in the time available.

“I’m afraid that’s outside the scope of my talk/this session.”

“If I were you I’d discuss that with...”

“I’ll have to come to that later, perhaps during the break since we’re running out of time.”

“I’m afraid my research didn’t look into that.”

USEFUL PHRASES AND SENTENCES

5. Not Understood

“Sorry, I’m not sure I’ve understood. Could you repeat your question?”

“Are you asking if...?” = “Do you mean...?”

= “I didn’t catch (the last part of) your question. If I have understood you correctly, you mean... Is that right?”

USEFUL PHRASES AND SENTENCES

6. Clarifying the question if you are afraid to misunderstand the question

“Sorry, was your question about the method we used?”

“Sorry, are you asking about what method we used?”

USEFUL PHRASES AND SENTENCES

7. Checking that your answer is sufficient

“Does that answer your question? Is that okay? Are you satisfied?”

“I hope that answers your question.”

“Does that answer your question? Perhaps I should rephrase that.”

USEFUL PHRASES AND SENTENCES

8. Dealing with difficult questions

- ▶ *“Hmm, that’s a good question. I don’t have the information to answer that question right now, but I’d be happy to find out and get back to you later.”*
- ▶ *“I don’t think we have enough time to go into that right now, but I’ll be happy to speak to you one-to-one after the presentation if you would like.”*
- ▶ *“That’s an interesting point, but I do think I have shown that...”*
- ▶ *“Sorry, I’m not the best person to answer that.”*



THE END OF PERFORMING YOUR PRESENTATION 2

BODY LANGUAGE



WARM-UP

A lot of research has been done into the impact on an audience of three elements: **content**, **tone of voice**, and **body language**. Which do you think is the most important element?

ANSWER

THREE ELEMENTS

Content

Tone of Voice

Body Language

IMPACT

55%

7%

38%

OVERCOMING STAGE FRIGHT

- ▶ Come early
- ▶ Think positive. If fear can be caused by your mind, it can be cured by your mind
- ▶ Be well prepared by:
 - Writing notes for the delivery
 - Checking the length and tie for each section
 - Rehearsing the presentation
 - Anticipating problems and having solution ready
- ▶ Take a few deep breath before your performance
- ▶ Do not apologize for nervousness

BODY LANGUAGE

- ▶ The body's physical movements
- ▶ The way the body communicates without words, i.e., through various movements of its parts.
- ▶ E.g. Posture, gesture, facial expression, eye Contact, appearance

BODY LANGUAGE – THE DOS

- ▶ Stand up straight with your feet slightly apart and your arms ready to gesture
- ▶ Lean slightly toward the audience. It shows that you're actively engaged with them
- ▶ Gestures, such as use of hands, body movements, and facial expressions hold audiences' attention

BODY LANGUAGE – THE DOS

- ▶ Move hands and arms
- ▶ Move around the room
- ▶ Move towards audience
- ▶ Move your eyes around audience
- ▶ Moving is normal
- ▶ Hands : one palm holding the other hand is a relax, confident position

EYE CONTACT

- ▶ Choose a few key people to watch for immediate reactions
- ▶ Maintain eye contact with the audience
- ▶ Look at individuals
- ▶ Do not look out the windows
- ▶ Do not look at one spot
- ▶ Do not let reading your notes ruin your eye contact
- ▶ Do not look over the heads of the audience

BODY LANGUAGE – THE DON'TS

Don't :

- ▶ Point at anyone
- ▶ Rock backwards and forwards
- ▶ Stand rooted to the spot
- ▶ Leave your hands by your side
- ▶ Avoid eye contact
- ▶ Play with pens, pointers, or papers
- ▶ Jiggle money in the pockets
- ▶ Fiddle with your hair

VOICE

Your voice is your trademark; it is that part of yourself that adds human touch to your words.



WARM-UP

Look at this list of talking habits and rank them from *most distracting* (1) to *least distracting* (8). When you have finished compare your view with the results of a survey of managers in the United States.

Distracting talking habits

Foreign accent/regional dialect

Talking too softly

Poor grammar/mispronouncing words

High pitched voice

Talking too fast

Using *erms*, *errs*, *uhmms*, 'you knows'

Talking too loudly

Monotonous, boring voice

VOICE-MAKING IT INTERESTING

- ▶ Go faster to excite
- ▶ Go slower to show importance
- ▶ Rate is the number of words which you speak per minute. The normal rate is from 120 to 150 words per minute.
- ▶ Give emphasis with voice and body

VOICE-MAKING IT INTERESTING

- ▶ Avoid filler words. Poor speakers use distracting syllables such as “uh”, “um”, and “you know”
- ▶ Enunciate clearly. Enunciate is how clearly you pronounce your words.
- ▶ Pause often and look around audience.
- ▶ A pause in speaking lets the listener reflect on the message and digest it accordingly.



THANK YOU!