



Guidelines for Handling Audience Questions

Transitioning into the question period:

- **Invite audience input**
 - AVOID: "Are there any questions?"
 - BETTER: "I welcome your comments or questions."
 - Or "I'm sure you have some questions or observations. Feel free to share them."
- **Suggest potential topics.**
 - "One area we skimmed over was ..."
 - "I'd be happy to elaborate if you'd like."
- **Invite contributions.**
 - "I'm interested in hearing about experiences any of you have had with this program."



- **Use humor.**
 - "No questions? Let's see. This must mean either my presentation was so outstanding or I answered all your questions. ... or was it so confusing you don't know what to ask first?"

Some tips for fielding questions:

- Listen to the entire questions.
- Make sure you understand it
- Repeat the question.
- Resolve factual errors quickly.
- Clarify the question
- Give everyone a chance to ask questions.
- Answer to the whole audience - not just the questioner.
- Answer positively - without apology.
- Hold your temper.
- Be careful with humor, sarcasm and criticism.
- Expand as you answer, but don't get carried away.
- Don't be afraid to say, "I don't know."

REMEMBER: Ending the Q/A session with a final summary gives you back some control.

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