



Preparing and managing a question and answer session

By Julie Matthews Division G Governor 2005-2006

Why prepare for a question and answer session.

Audiences tend to remember the last few minutes of your presentation more than any other part. Hence a fantastic conclusion and a good Q&A session will leave the audience with a good impression whilst answering any queries they may have.

Prepare for the question and answer session.

- Decide if you will have a Q&A or allow interruptions.
- Plan when you will have the Q&A and how long it will be.
- Plan how to receive questions based on audience; shout out, microphone pass, paper only etc.
- Plan how you will tell the audience that there will be a Q&A or prefer to be stopped. In the invite or you introduction or during your speech.
- Prepare the speech conclusion, your Q&A session opening and your wrap up with some conclusion after the Q&A.
- Anticipate questions and prepare answers with extra overheads if necessary.
- Prepare questions to ask the audience to get Q&A going, i.e. John what do you think about X.
- Plan to stay after the presentation and/or have a contact address for further discussions.

Opening the question and answer session.

- Invite questions. For example “Before I conclude we have time for a few questions.” This invites the questions and lets people know that you have time for just a few questions.
- Use open body language when inviting questions.
- Look around the whole audience for questions.

Managing the question and answer session.

- Re-phase the question and repeat it so the whole audience hears it whilst looking at the questioner.
- Be polite even if the question/questioner is rude. If you answer their rude question, re-phase it by taking away the emotional language so that everyone hears the real question.
- Keep your answers short and to the point and address the whole audience.
- As you conclude your answer look at the questioner – their body language will indicate if you have answered the question.
- If you do not know the answer, offer to come back to them with that info or ask a more appropriate person in to room to respond.
- Take questions from all parts of the room.

Closing the question and answer session.

Summarize any new points that have been made, or use some points from your conclusion to wrap up the Q&A. Let the audience know where/how to contact you if they have any additional comments or questions.