

REPLACING
- THE -
RAINMAKER

WORKSHOPS

HANDLING LIVE Q&A

This workbook accompanies the audio workshop. It includes speaker's notes, which summarize the content covered in the workshop. It also includes activities, which you'll complete during the workshop, and a continuing education assignment, which you'll complete after the workshop. The continuing education assignment gives you a chance to apply the theory you learned in a practical setting. At the end, there's a quiz to test what you've learned as well as space to make notes and information on where to go to learn more.

SPEAKER'S NOTES

Learning outcomes

- You'll learn why it's important to be comfortable navigating a Q&A session.
- You'll learn an eight-step process for what to do when you're leading a Q&A session.
- You'll learn what to do and what not to do to make the most of the situation.

Handling live Q&A

- Often handling live Q&A is the trickiest part of giving a presentation because your audience can surprise you.
- You can't control what they ask you, and it's easy to find yourself surprised by the questions.
- If you can't answer well, your credibility will suffer.

Out of control

- The same concepts apply when navigating a Q&A session as when giving a scripted presentation.
- You have to deliver content that is concise and to the point.
- You have to assert your presence and maintain eye contact.

Protect your credibility

- The danger with a Q&A session is that you risk damaging your credibility.
- Everything you accomplished during your scripted presentation could disappear in a flash if you flub the Q&A session.
- If you mess up the Q&A session, you risk losing any support you gained for your ideas.

Not to be skipped

- The Q&A session gives the audience a chance to participate.
- The Q&A session gives the audience a chance to clarify points they didn't understand.
- The Q&A session presents an opportunity for key decision-makers to cement their thoughts.

Give them what they want to hear

- The Q&A session gives the audience a chance to focus on what they want to hear.
- A lot of presenters have trouble letting go of the content they want to deliver.
- The Q&A session is valuable because it lets you respond to important points you may have missed.

Craft your presentation

- Delivering a great presentation is a three-step process.
- The first step is to write a tightly crafted presentation with a clear message.
- Present evidence for your claims and bring your content to life with stories and anecdotes.

Deliver your presentation

- The second step is to deliver your content effectively.
- Assert your presence and take control of the room.
- The final step is to learn how to handle live Q&A.

Raise your hand

- Handling live Q&A is an eight-step process.
- This process is designed for groups of at least five people.
- The first step is to raise your hand to signal to your audience that you're ready to take questions.

Listen to the question

- The second step is to select the questioner using an open palm, which is an inviting gesture.
- The third step is to listen to the entire question.
- Often presenters skip ahead in their mind and miss part of the question.

Break visually

- The fourth step is to break visually by making eye contact with another audience member.
- This will begin the process of including the rest of your audience in your answer.
- Eye contact is one of a presenter's most powerful tools.

Rephrase the question

- The fifth step is to rephrase the question in your own words.
- This ensures that everyone in the audience knows the question.
- You don't want to answer a question for just one person; you want the entire audience to benefit.

Buy time

- Rephrasing the question also buys you valuable thinking time.
- Rephrasing the question confirms you understood the question.
- Don't be afraid to clarify the question if you think you may have misunderstood.

Answer the question

- The sixth step is to answer the question while making eye contact with the questioner.
- Then shift your gaze away from the questioner and continue with your answer.
- As you give your answer, shift your gaze from person to person at an appropriate time.

End your answer

- The seventh step is to end your answer.
- It's usually best not to end your answer on the questioner unless you want to elicit another question from them.
- Don't get involved in a one-on-one dialogue that excludes the rest of the audience.

Raise your hand, again

- The eighth and final step is to raise your hand again.
- This signals to the audience that you've completed your answer and that you're ready for another question.
- Audience members should also raise their hands if they wish to ask a question.

Eight simple steps

- A lot of these concepts still apply in a smaller group.
- Listen carefully to questions and make sure you answer directly and succinctly.
- Eye contact is just as important with a small group as with a large one.

Beware the monopolizing questioners

- Don't allow one or two individuals to take over the Q&A session.
- You don't want to facilitate the type of Q&A where most of the audience can't get a word in.
- Keep an eye out for monopolizing questioners.

Keep control

- When you receive a question from a monopolizing questioner, don't end your answer on them.
- Call on someone else and hope the conversation moves along smoothly.
- They may raise their hand again, but don't call on them if other people have questions.

Stay on topic

- If you receive an irrelevant question, don't feel like you have to answer it.
- Simply state that you want to keep the discussion focused on the subject.
- Then move on to another questioner.

Prompt questions

- If no one in the audience has any questions, you may have to become the questioner.
- Ask the audience what they think about a specific point from your presentation.
- This will get people talking and may even encourage dialogue among the audience members.

All about the audience

- The key to a great presentation is to focus on what the audience needs to hear.
- If someone asks you a relevant question, answer it directly and honestly.
- Don't be a politician and answer the question you wish you'd been asked.

Cool and collected

- If you get a hostile question, don't take it personally.
- Remain calm, collect your thoughts if you need to and then deliver your answer.
- If you appear defensive, the rest of the audience will notice and it will reflect badly on you.

Be prepared

- Make a list of any questions you expect to receive and practice your answers to them.
- If you know part of your presentation was particularly controversial, be prepared to revisit it during the Q&A session.
- If you rehearse your answers, you'll find that you aren't caught off guard as much during the Q&A session.

It's in your eyes

- Do everything you can to assert your presence and keep control of the room.
- Maintain eye contact with the audience, shifting from person to person at the appropriate time.
- Don't act like a lighthouse or a tennis umpire.

Harness the power of your voice

- Harness the power of your voice by being aware of your volume, tone, speed and pitch.
- Speak firmly, enunciate each word and don't mumble or slur your words.
- Slow down when making important points to give the audience time to understand and absorb your message.

Assert your presence

- Use gestures when addressing an emotional subject or driving home a point.
- The bigger the audience, the bigger the gesture needs to be.
- If gesturing seems unnatural to you, start by adding gestures to words such as large, tall, small and all.

Don't fake it

- If you don't know the answer to a question, do not make it up.
- Be upfront and tell the questioner that you don't know.
- In a smaller setting, you can promise to research the answer and get back to them.

Be brief

- Keep your answers short.
- Going on for too long will make it seem like you're just continuing your presentation.
- Taking too long on one question will prevent other audience members from asking their own questions.

Aim for persuasion

- Incorporate stories, anecdotes and real-life examples into your answers.
- This will help bring your content to life and help your audience connect to it.
- Customize your analogies and stories to the audience in front of you.

Summary

- Listen carefully to questions, formulate your response before you begin speaking and make eye contact.
- Make sure everyone in the audience has the chance to get involved.
- Don't let individual questioners monopolize all the time.

ACTIVITIES

If you're completing these activities on your own, please write down your answers in your workbook. If you're completing these activities in a group, please write down your answers individually. Then share your responses with up to two other people. Look for commonalities among everyone's responses and discuss any differences.

Activity 1

List the top 10 most frequently asked questions that you encounter in your prospective client meetings. If you haven't conducted a client meeting before, what do you think the most commonly asked questions would be?

Activity 2

Practice the eight-step process for how to handle a live Q&A session.

CONTINUING EDUCATION

Practice live Q&A with colleagues in small groups. Then attend a prospective client meeting and put your Q&A skills into practice in a live business development setting.

QUIZ

1. Q&A gives the audience a chance to participate, which makes for a more enjoyable experience for them overall.
2. Q&A presents an important opportunity for key decision-makers to cement their thoughts.
3. Instead of thinking of an answer, you want to maintain eye contact with the questioner and listen to their entire question.
4. Once you have listened to the questioner and before you start to speak, you want to maintain eye contact with the questioner and rephrase the question to them.
5. Rephrasing the question buys you valuable thinking time.
6. It's generally OK to allow a single individual to dominate the question-and-answer section of your presentation.
7. One of the key tenets of delivering a good Q&A session is keeping it focused.
8. If an audience member asks you a relevant question, you want to answer it, directly and honestly. Don't be a politician and answer the question you wish you'd been asked. It's off-putting, ineffective and frustrating.
9. You should make a list of any questions you expect to receive and practice your answers to them. Just as you rehearse for scripted presentations, you want to rehearse for Q&A sessions.
10. It's OK to act like a lighthouse or a tennis umpire in answering questions to make sure you make eye contact with everyone in the room at some point during your response.

NOTES

FOR MORE INFORMATION

For more information about additional workshops, or other Replacing the Rainmaker products and services, please visit ReplacingTheRainmaker.com.