

THE PRESENTATION

Preparing's the answer for questions

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How often do you hear this comment about someone's presentation? "His presentation was OK, but he was really strong during the Q&A."

A smart speaker prepares for tough questions.

If you give a thought-provoking presentation, you can bet your audience will have questions when you are finished.

In fact, you hope for questions because that means they want to know more.

People will remember your ability to field tough questions with confidence and authority. Here are some tips:

- Don't spend all your preparation time on your formal presentation and "wing" the Q&A portion.

As part of your preparation, write down likely questions the speech will generate and the answers to those questions using your key messages.

- Write down the question you dread most and your answer.

Knowing you are prepared for the worst question will boost your confidence.

- Listen closely and patiently to the question, maintain good eye contact and don't interrupt.

Look directly at that person when you start answering. This shows confidence and a sincere interest.

Do not nod your head to a negative question because it looks like you agree.

- Use your key messages as often as possible in your answers.

This will tie the Q&A to your speech and help people remember your messages.

- Remain calm and non-defensive. You will look and act like a leader.

Good leaders welcome tough questions because questions provide an opportunity to engage people, solve problems and produce some of the best ideas.

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