

Handling Questions

When the audience poses a question during, or after a presentation, you can deal with it in a number of ways. You can either:

- Deal with it there and then
- Take it away with you
- Throw it back at them
- Throw it to someone else.

It is best to deal with questions there and then if possible, but the other options can also work and can even add to your credibility if you know your audience well.

Follow these basic principles:

- Don't say "Um" or "Er" as they will think you don't know
- Never make up an answer (or lie).....you will get found out!
- If you really don't know the answer say: "I don't have that information with me at this moment, but I can get it to you immediately after the presentation"
- Keep eye contact. Remember which side of the brain is accessed for creative thinking (think of Bill Clinton in court!).

In order to give yourself some thinking time, these hints and tips can give you that extra second to think of your response. Remember: don't say "Um" or "Er".

- Take a sip of water
- Use a stalling phrase. They work best with a positive tone as if to thank the audience for their participation:
 - "thank you for that question name"
 - "I'm glad someone asked me that"
 - "someone asked me that very question the other day"
 - "you know, when I picked up this project, I asked myself that very same question"
 - "that's a very important point you've just raised, thank you"
 - "I was going to finish off on that point, thank you"
- Throw the question back to the individual. E.g. "thank you for your question, what's your view on that?"
- Throw it to another member of the audience. E.g. "thank you for your question, as it happens name is in the audience and (s)he is probably the best person to answer that for us".