

Don't let Q/A tank your presentation.  
Be unphased by the unpredictable.  
Here's how.

## AVOID

- ✗ Addressing every questioner with "That's a good question." When it sounds rote, it loses sincerity. Change up how you respond. ("Yes, that is complicated." "Very insightful question." etc)
- ✗ Only speaking to the questioner. Instead, start connection with them, but then engage the room with your answer by making eye contact with others. When wrapping up, deliver the last few words back to questioner.
- ✗ Filler words, thinking spots, and fidgety hands. These are like poker tells that a speaker is nervous. Try to maintain control of your umm's or so's. Maintain your eye contact even if it hurts - don't drift to the ceiling or floor! And keep those hands loose and natural.
- ✗ Ending on Q/A. Instead, leave a minute (or less) for you to have the final word. Even if Q/A goes sideways, here's your chance to end with confident, prepared thoughts that zoom out to the bigger picture.

## PRACTICE

- ✓ Introducing Q/A with "Before I end with some final thoughts, we have time for a *few* questions." This sets expectations that the meeting isn't over yet (remember, have the final word!) and that it won't go long.
- ✓ Repeating the question for a large audience to hear.
- ✓ If virtual, asking specifically for questions from your virtual attendees. Identify someone to monitor the chat.
- ✓ If co-presenting, deciding who will address which topical questions.
- ✓ Scripting one-liners for sticky Q/A moments to be assertive.

Long-winded questioner with no question in sight:

"I'm sorry to interrupt but I do want to answer your question. Can you rephrase it?"

Questioner wants deep-dive answer on something irrelevant to most of attendees or main topic:

"That deserves a thorough 10-minute answer but for the sake of this setting today, and not going long, I'll provide my 1-minute version and then we should follow up after today's meeting..."

- ✓ Answering the question concisely, *then* unpacking your answer.  
"Yes, the market is unpredictable and we're needing to change strategy. First, the market is showing signs of..."
- ✓ Answering with "Here are my *first thoughts* on that..." if you don't want your answer to be permanent.