
PROFESSIONAL Q + A SESSION



Questions
Answers

PREPARATION

Prepare the:

FAQs (frequently asked questions),

ADQs (absolute dreaded questions),

NAQs (no answer to that question).

Challenge yourself to find questions for each of the 3 categories.

Prepare additional facts, figures, statistics, stories etc.



PREPARATION

Show your presentation to your work colleagues and get them to ask difficult questions. You could also consider showing it to those outside your work sphere to see if they come up with questions that perhaps you might not have thought of.

Once you have your answers fully prepared, practice saying them out loud. Record yourself on your phone so you can hear how effective your answers sound. If you think your answers sound long-winded, they probably are!

Practice answering them again more concisely.



RUNNING THE SESSION

We have x minutes for questions.....

Who has the first question?

Who has the next question?

Who has the final question?

At the end **Repeat Your Close / Tweak your close**



TIPS FOR ANSWERING QUESTIONS

Zoom in while question is being asked;

Zoom out and include all when answering to prevent hijackers;

If no question is asked – ask yourself one you wished you were asked;

If you don't know the answer – admit it and give specific commitment to get it;

Split multi-layered questions;

Paraphrase long-winded questions;

Keep things on time by mentioning “I am conscious of time....”;

Stay in control – any question not for the forum, say so and **firmly**.



DON'T KNOW THE ANSWER?

Be as honest as you can. If it is a case of you do not have the information to hand tell them you will get it to them and be **specific** e.g. *"I will get that to you by close of business this coming Friday"*.

Above all else, make sure you get back to them as agreed, even if it is only to say that you are still working on getting them the answer. **This maintains your credibility.**

An honest answer can often be – "I have never been asked that before, I don't know. However, what I can tell you is....." And lead the question to an area of commonality about which you **do** have the information.

If it is not your area of expertise – say so, confidently.

If there is someone else in the room who has the answer – if appropriate, ask them to respond.



ORGANISING THOUGHTS

Think **STORK** process...

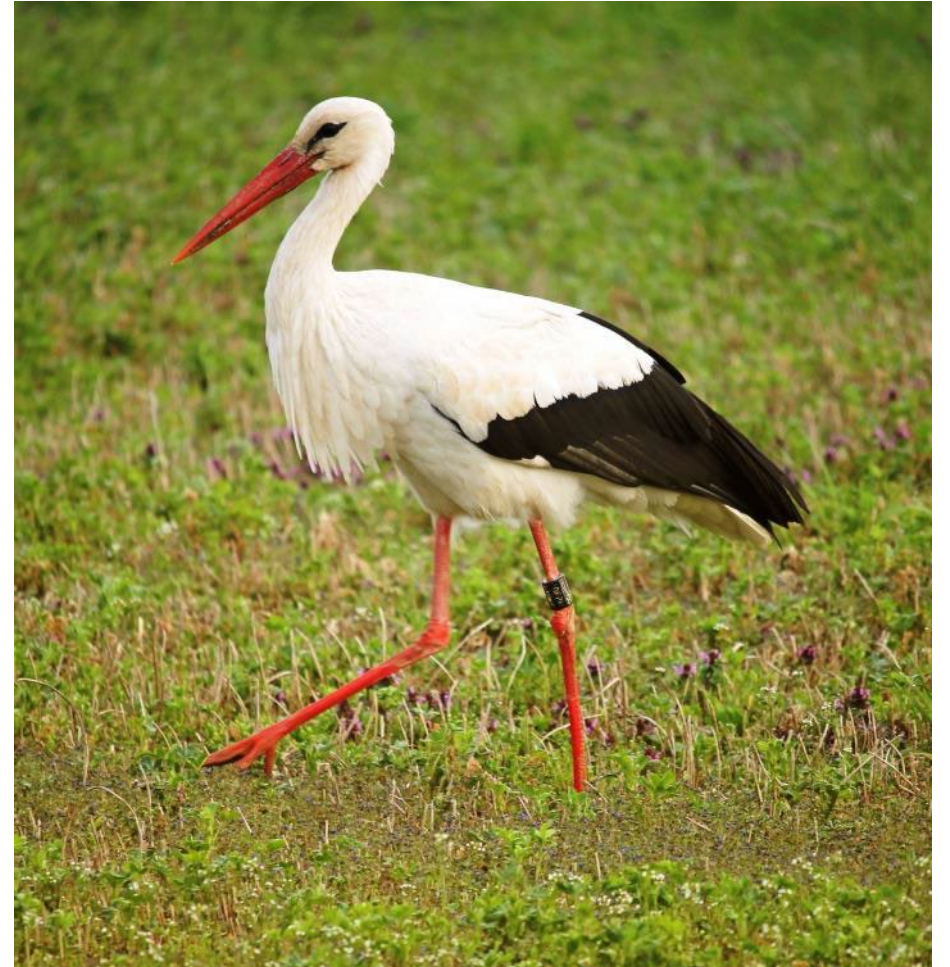
Stop

Think

Organise

Respond

Keep your mouth shut!



6 SIMPLE RESPONSE STRUCTURES



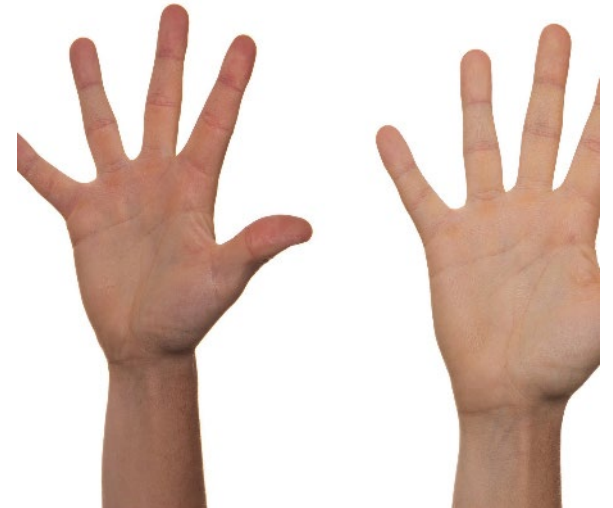
Talk on the topic in a timescale.

You could talk in terms of the past, present and future or last quarter, this quarter, next quarter. You can do this in days, weeks, years etc. It just gives you some little structure for formulating an answer.



Arrange your answer into 3 headings.

Begin talking by listing the 3 headings under which you will be speaking.



On the one hand, and on the other hand.

This structure is particularly useful when asked for your opinion.

6 SIMPLE RESPONSE STRUCTURES



Point, Reason, Example, Point.

You open by stating a point.

In the body of the topic you outline reasons for stating this point and illustrate with examples.

Your conclusion restates the point you first made.

Example:

“Ireland is a wonderful holiday destination (*point*). It is a country with beautiful scenery (*reason*). The ring of Kerry is probably one of our finest examples with stunning beaches, spectacular mountains and cliffs (*example*). The ring of Kerry is just one of the reasons Ireland is a wonderful holiday destination.



Answer the 3 questions - **What Why How**

What do I think?

Why do I think that?

How can I add **credibility** to my answer? *For example, facts, statistics, my own personal story etc.*

The most important part of this is the credibility element. Prepare to back up your response.



Choose from the 5 Ws and H

Structure your answer using appropriate headings from:

Who, What, When, Where, Why and How.

ENDING THE SESSION

People often finish their presentation with their last response in the Q+A session. However, ending abruptly after this session means that you are ending with words that have not been chosen by yourself.

So, when the Q+A is over, take control and briefly reinforce your message or share your closing message.

This will be the last thing the audience hears in your presentation so take the opportunity to leave a lasting, positive impression.



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