Guide to Asking Effective Questions

Before you ask a question

Preparation is key. Take a moment to reflect before you ask.

- Are you sure your question hasn’t been answered in the meeting materials?
- Why are you asking it?
  - You may discover you don’t actually have a good reason.
  - If you have a clear idea of what you want to accomplish it will help you structure your question to get a better answer.
- What kind of answer do you want?
  - Yes or no answer
  - Clarification of facts
  - Presenter’s opinion
- Would it be better to email your question?

Strategies for asking effective questions

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<tr>
<th><strong>Come prepared</strong></th>
<th>Read the materials in advance and understand your role as a representative.</th>
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<td><strong>Ask questions respectfully</strong></td>
<td>You will be more successful if you treat others with the respect you wish to be treated with yourself.</td>
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<td><strong>Draw from your own expertise</strong></td>
<td>Draw from skills you’re learning in your studies to structure coherent, meaningful questions.</td>
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<td><strong>Listen carefully</strong></td>
<td>Don’t cause repetition, and listen to others to learn how to say what you want and get the best reaction.</td>
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<td><strong>Practice</strong></td>
<td>Ask lots of questions, learn by trial and error.</td>
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Basic Question Theory

How do you get the kind of answer you’re looking for?

- **Open Question**
  - Deeper, more complex answers.
- **Closed Question**
  - Specific answers.
- **Factual Question**
  - Data or clarification.
- **Evaluative Question**
  - Assessment of strengths, weaknesses, or progress.
- **Interpretive Question**
  - Opinion or speculation.
- **Hypothesis Testing**
  - You think you already know the answer but want to test it.
- **Leading Question**
  - Lead the respondent to a particular answer.
- **Convergent Question**
  - Has one answer.
- **Divergent Question**
  - Has multiple answers.