

Frequently Asked Tough Questions

Don't get caught unprepared.
Anticipate FATQ (Frequently Asked Tough Questions) and
ARM™ (Align—Respond—Maintain) yourself for the best possible outcome.

Then... Prepare your answers

First... Brainstorm
possible questions
from the listener(s)

Align
Acknowledge facts
and empathize
w/emotions



Respond
Succinctly provide
necessary information



Maintain
Reinforce position,
action, or benefit

ARM™ Guidelines

Handling Questions

- Actively seek questions from listeners; give them time to ask
- Listen with your body in an open, neutral stance
- Prepare to respond by pausing, asking a clarifying question, or re-stating the question if others in the group may not have heard

1. Align

Put yourself in the listener's position.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Acknowledge and validate the fact and/or emotion the listener is expressing. Use some of his or her words if appropriate.▪ Caution: avoid superficial responses, such as "I know how you feel," or "I understand."	<i>"That would be a problem for me as well."</i> <i>"No question: in your business you definitely need to stay ahead of the curve."</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ State what you understand to be the listener's critical issue. Use his or her name if that seems appropriate.	<i>"Mr. Shaw, it sounds like you need to find another way to fund this."</i> <i>"You're saying it's critical that the next project go forward without any cost overruns."</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ If necessary, ask a clarifying question to check your understanding or to learn more.	<i>"It sounds like we need to consider a broader range of support for you. Would you please tell me a little bit more about your requirements?"</i>

2. Respond

Keep in mind the listener's important needs.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Indicate how you can address the listener's concern.▪ Be objective, not defensive.▪ Avoid using words or phrases like but, however, although or nevertheless.	<i>"Let me try to clear up the confusion. First..."</i> <i>"We have a way to help with that. For example..."</i> <i>"What I will do next is..."</i>

3. Maintain

Use this exchange to build your relationship with the listener and move the presentation forward.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Return to a component of your core message: your position, action or benefit.	<i>"Think and Speak for Results will prepare you for your 'moment-of-truth' communications..."</i> <i>"My recommendation is that we start with a proof of concept..."</i> <i>"Implementing this solution will provide you with a 15% savings in annual licensing fees..."</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Let the listener know that you are committed to his or her success.	<i>"I'd like to help you make this project a success."</i> <i>"I believe this solution will produce the best result for you."</i> <i>"I am committed to helping you find the best approach."</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ If necessary, ask a question to make sure the listener doesn't have additional concerns, and is ready to continue the discussion.	<i>"What questions do you have about this approach?"</i> <i>"How do you think this will work for you?"</i> <i>"What other questions do you have?"</i>