Managing questions

Lead-in



1 **In small groups, discuss these pieces of advice for managing a Q&A session. Which ones do you think are the most useful? Why?**

- Breathe deeply.
- Wait a few seconds before you answer a question.
- Ask a colleague/friend to attend the presentation to give you support.
- Prepare to answer possible questions before the meeting.
- Ask a colleague to ask a question you prepared before the meeting.
- Repeat the question to check you have understood and make sure the audience have heard it.

2A **Work in small groups. Brainstorm two or three advantages of working in an open-plan office and a closed office.**

Open-plan offices encourage colleagues to work together. / It's easier to concentrate in a closed office.

B 8.02 **Elena and Ted have just given a presentation to colleagues. The compan they work for is moving to a new site. Listen to the first part of the Q&A session and match the names (1–3) with the topic(s) (a–d).**

1 Steve	**a** travel to other sites
2 Keira	**b** a place to hold meetings
3 Ben	**c** the timing of the move
	d some staff moving to the temporary office

C **Listen again and decide if the statements are *true* (T) or *false* (F). In pairs, correct the false statements.**

1. Staff will no longer have their own office.
2. There will be one meeting room on every second floor at the new site.
3. Most of the staff will move to the new site in May.
4. Staff will have to take a thirty-minute bus trip to reach the temporary site.
5. Ben will not be moving to the temporary site.

3A 8.03 **Listen to the next part of the Q&A session and answer the questions.**

1. How does Jen feel about the move to the new site?
2. What is she worried about the most?
3. How does Elena manage Jen's question?
4. Why do staff members need storage space?
5. What does Jen want to do?

B **In pairs, discuss the questions.**

1. Which two strategies in Exercise 1 did Elena and Ted use to manage the Q&A session?
2. What other strategies do *you* think Elena used during the Q&A session?

LIVEWORKSHEETS

Managing a Q&A session

4A **Complete the expressions from the Q&A session with the phrases in the box.**

answer your question	have a question	is about
good question	not sure	that right	you're asking

1 Does anyone _____ _____ _____ ?
2 So the question _____ _____ meeting rooms.
3 It's a(n) _____ _____, thanks.
4 Does that _____ _____ _____ ?
5 Sorry, _____ _____ how we allocate space. Is _____ _____ ?
6 I'm _____ _____ I can answer that.

B **Put the expressions from Exercise 4A into the correct section in the table.**

Inviting (more) questions	1 _____ Are there any (more) questions?
Repeating the question	2 _____ So, Ben asked who's moving to Oxford Road.
Thanking	3 _____ Thanks for your question.
Checking/Clarifying	4 _____ I'm sorry, I'm not sure what you mean.
Making sure the question is answered	5 _____ Does that help?
Saying you can't answer the question	6 _____ Sorry, I don't have the answer. Maybe I can email you.

5 **Work in pairs. Use one or two expressions from Exercise 4 to respond to each question.**

1 I don't understand why we have to move to new offices. Can you explain the reasons?
2 I'm worried about noise. What happens if I can't concentrate on my work?
3 Can you explain exactly how you've chosen our desks? What if I don't like where I'm sitting?

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53.2 Study the phrases for dealing with questions below. Try to guess the single missing word in each gap. Write your answers lightly at the side. Several answers may be possible.

1 That's a very good _____ .
(Think of something else besides 'question'.)
2 Sorry, can you _____ that again?
3 Has anyone else _____ the same thing?
4 OK, I think there's time _____ one last question.
5 That's an interesting question. What's your own _____ ?
6 Sorry, I didn't _____ that.
(Think of something else besides 'understand'.)
7 I think that's outside the _____ of this presentation, but I'm happy to discuss it with you _____ .
8 I'm _____ you asked me that.
9 I promised to finish _____ time, and I see that it's nearly ten o'clock.
10 You _____ have thought quite a lot about this. What conclusion have you _____ to?
11 Could you be a little more _____ ?
12 Anyone like to _____ on that?
13 I don't have that information to _____ . Can I get _____ to you? Is that all right?
14 So, if I understand you _____ , you're asking ...

53.3 Match phrases 1–14 from the previous exercise to the techniques below.

a Respond positively ☐ ☐
b Clarify / Ask for repetition ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
c Redirect to the questioner ☐ ☐
d Redirect to the group ☐ ☐
e Delay an answer ☐ ☐
f Control the timing ☐ ☐

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Now fill in the gaps above with the suggested words in the box below.

afterwards	*back*	*catch*	*come*	*comment*	
correctly	*experienced*	*explain*	*for*	*glad*	*hand*
must	*on*	*opinion*	*point*	*scope*	*specific*

Read the scenario and decide who will be the Presenter, Questioner 1 and Questioner 2.



Scenario

Your team is moving to a new building where they will have to work in an open-plan office. An informal presentation to explain the move has taken place and now it is time for the Q&A session. Not everyone agrees with the idea.

Here are the benefits of an open-plan office for the company. You may also think of some of your own.

improved communication and opportunities to work together, savings on equipment costs, reduced heating bills, better work processes, more creativity

Here are ideas the company have thought about. You may also think of some of your own.

closed meeting rooms, allowing staff to work from home when necessary, a system to reserve meeting rooms online, a plan for everyone to change desks once a year, a relaxation area with a TV, table tennis competitions and similar activities to encourage team-building

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Presenters

During the presentation, you realised that some of the team are against the idea of having an open-plan office. While you understand and have the same worries, you have to respond positively and in line with company policy.

Use strategies from Exercise 1 and expressions from Exercise 4 to manage the Q&A session. Remember to do some of the following to make sure the Q&A session runs smoothly:

1. Invite (more) questions from the audience.
2. Repeat the question so that everyone can hear.
3. Thank the participant for their question.
4. Ask for clarification if necessary.
5. Make sure you have answered the question or say you can't answer the question.

Q&A session 1

Questioner 1

You work in a creative role and need a lot of space. You often work with freelancers and need space to meet with them. You've worked in an open-plan office before and didn't like it.

Questioner 2

You deal with staff-related issues and need privacy from time to time. You are new to the company and like the idea of working in an open-plan office. However, as you have never worked in this way before, you still have some questions.

Choose 2–3 points from the box or think of your own. Make questions to ask the Presenter.

noisy, difficult to concentrate, not enough storage space, too hot / too cold, difficulty booking meeting rooms, desks are allocated to the people who arrive first, possible problems with private information, makes it easier for people to get sick, not much privacy, reduces the amount of work that gets done

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Q&A session 3

Questioner 1

You are very organised, and everything in your office is always in the right place. You have never wanted to share an office in the past. You feel most people are not tidy or organised and you think this will make it hard for you to work.

Questioner 2

You are new and would prefer to share an office with a more experienced member of the team, such as Questioner 1. You like the social side of work. You have some questions about the open-plan office as this is a new idea for you.

Choose 2–3 points from the box or think of your own. Make questions to ask the Presenter.

noisy, difficult to concentrate, not enough storage space,
too hot / too cold, difficulty booking meeting rooms,
difficult to adjust temperature to individuals,
possible problems with private information,
makes it easier for people to get sick, not much privacy,
reduces the amount of work that gets done

LIVEWORKSHEETS