

## By Invitation



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## Presentation Skills

**T**ime and time we see this occurs to all of us. Let's say you're presenting insightful work that you've spent hours crafting or you're in the midst of an everyday collaboration with co-workers when someone poses a difficult question. A few seconds pass as you frantically search your wealth of knowledge for a response. Yet, for whatever reasons, you cannot answer it. In short: you're stumped.

It's a common experience in the business world and it can occur in a variety of situations, such as important presentations or job interviews. Though your mind might run into dead ends and your palms become a touch sweaty, it's important to stay calm and not feel overwhelmed.

Well, it's time to think ahead and mentally prepare for the next occasion. Here are several steps you can take to help you handle tough questions – before, during and after the imposing situation.

### Preparation

- Know your audience: Whether you're presenting to business clients and co-workers, or attending a job interview, make sure you know the topics and specialties in which your audience excels. You may grasp your own area of expertise, but don't forget about that of your audience.

- Think ahead: After rehearsing your material, consider any questions or topics of discussion that may arise. Write them down and take the time to think of responses. Better yet, present your material to a friend or colleague and have them ask a wide range of questions to test your readiness.

- Practice, practice, practice: If it's a presentation, how well do you know your own material? It's important to fully understand your own ideas before tackling questions from others. If it's a job interview, how well do you know the company and the job position? With today's extensive access to information via the internet, make sure you're up-to-date on the latest company and industry news.

### During: React

- Think it through: When you're posed a difficult question, think through the answer, especially if it's on the tip of your tongue. Ask the person to elaborate on their query, which provides you with more information and more time. Overall, this tactic often relies more on acting as a problem-solver or detective, rather than simply providing an exact answer.

- Emphasise what you know: Point out the information that you do know by saying, "From my research and experience, I've learned that..." This helps you stay in control of the situation. But also acknowledge the information you don't know by simply stating, "I don't have the latest information on that." However, let your audience know that you'll research the question and get back to them.

- Be confident: This may be the most important step in confronting a difficult question. Whether you know the answer or not, be confident in yourself and the knowledge that you have. And along with confidence, honesty is also important – so don't try to fool or trick your audience.

### Reflection

- Research the question: Whether you were able to provide a suitable answer or not, research the question after the situation. Not only will this prepare you for similar questions in the future, it will also broaden your knowledge.

- Integrate: As you prepare for your next presentation or job interview, integrate the question and its response into your repertoire. This can add a new layer of insight into a business meeting, or can pleasantly surprise a potential employer during an interview.

- Follow up: Whether you knew the answer or not, contact the question asker and provide additional information. By doing this, you're showing initiative as well as an appreciation for the question. This can be especially helpful with a business client or potential employer.

The truth is there isn't one answer to finding the correct response to a difficult question. But, as mentioned above, you can take many steps to handle the situation.

It's also important to remember that when you're asked a puzzling question, it's a sign that your audience is interested in what you have to say. Imagine if a room full of peers didn't ask any questions during your presentation's Q&A session? Or if a prospective employer didn't ask anything compelling? What would that say about you?

In the short term, difficult questions can be a displeasing challenge. In the long term, however, they're a vital step in helping us grow as professionals.

*(The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the policy or position of this newspaper.)*



Highlights of the event

# National Day celebrated



### DT News Network Manama

**T**he Bahraini-Pakistani Friendship Society celebrated the 46th National Day of the Kingdom of Bahrain and the 18th Anniversary of His Majesty the King's Accession to Throne at its headquarters in Riffa.

The ceremony was attended by Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan to the Kingdom of Bahrain Javed Malik and a number of notable figures of the Bahraini society and Pakistani community in Bahrain.

During the ceremony,

Bahraini-Pakistani Friendship Society Chairman Abdulla Binhowail welcomed the attendees and congratulated them on the occasion of the national occasions.

Binhowail highlighted some of the main achievements and developments attained during the rule of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa in his speech.

He also noted to the remarkable and historic Bahrain-Pakistani ties, reflecting the strong bonds and relations between the people and leaders of both countries.

