

Preparation

- **Know the Goal**
 - Share best practices? Generate change? Exchange ideas?
- **Know your Audience**
 - What do they already know? What do they *need* to know? What do they *want* to know?
- **Know your Speakers**
 - What is their expertise? What are their opinions? Where do they converge and diverge?
- **Know the Duration**
 - Don't go over. Don't go under. Signpost at specific times to keep the audience engaged.
- **Know the Format**
 - Q&A Style? Initial Remarks Style? Presentation Style?
- **Know the Content**
 - Why is it important right now? What are 2-3 key points? What is the elephant in the room?



PRO TIP

Format

- **Q&A Style:** Back-and-forth between the moderator and speakers (and/or audience) in rounds
 - Change the order of who answers – Going in a circle is predictable
 - Have panelists respond to each other's comments rather than the questions
 - Invite an audience member on stage to comment or ask questions
- **Initial Remarks Style:** Panelists open the session with comments for 3-4 minutes, then transition into back-and-forth Q&A
- **Presentation Style:** The sharing of a specific event or idea through a pre-planned speech
 - Works best for sharing a project or best practices followed by a discussion
 - May require moderator intervention if the presentation runs long or there is a good moment for audience Q&A

Discussion

- **Open with Impact**
 - Open with something memorable
 - Ask the audience – Poll them, ask for a show of hands, invite an audience member on stage
 - Engage the senses – Play videos or music, have an activity for the audience
- **Vary your Questions**
 - Quick-fire, Softball, Hardball, Open-ended, Yes or No
 - Read the Room – "Show of hands..."
- **Master Multi-tasking**
 - Practice active listening
 - Link speakers' comments together and steer the discussion
 - Think about summarizing key points
 - Pay attention to the audience engagement level
- **Manage your Speakers**
 - Balance speaker participation, intervene if someone is going long
 - Probe them for more if they're not giving enough
 - Ping-pong – Pass specific comments from one panelist to another for response
 - Use body language to communicate with speakers

PRO TIP

Know Your Speakers

Research your speakers and meet with them individually before the presentation to understand what points they will want to make during the panel.

Build your session outline from your speakers' expertise and opinions, and meet as a group on the day of the panel to review your plan.





PRO TIP

Moderating Traits

- **Not the Star**
 - Have a personality and know the topic, but keep the focus on the speakers
- **Structured**
 - Know where the conversation should go and drive it there
- **Engaged**
 - Balance the participation of the panelists *and* pay attention to what the audience wants/needs
 - Makes eye contact with both the speakers and the audience
- **Has Presence**
 - Good visual, verbal, and vocal communication – what you show, what you say, how you sound
 - Have an urgent but friendly tone

Discussion *continued*

- **Conduct Q&A**
 - Mention questions in opening to explain the rules
 - Repeat the questions for clarification and volume
 - Direct questions to a specific panelist
 - Give speakers time to respond – 3-4 minutes
 - Intervene if audience comments run long
 - Have extra questions ready
- **Close with Impact**
 - Reprise – Repeat your opening activity with the new context of the discussion
 - Recap – Pass it back to the speakers to summarize key points/takeaways