



Moderator Guidelines

1. ***Please be mindful of the difference in the role of the moderator, versus the panelist.*** We are honored to have you facilitate discussion, and hope that you keep in mind the importance of your role in managing the conversation, and that you please reserve the speaking role for the panelists.
2. ***Start and end on time.*** Each panel is scheduled for 75 minutes. Since our panels are scheduled fairly tightly, it's important to keep on schedule. To get things rolling on time, ask your panelists to appear at least 10 minutes in advance of the panel, especially if you have any last-minute thoughts on coordination. Often, audience members straggle in late. If attendance is sparse, it's fine to wait a few minutes past the designated start time for your panel, but then bring the program to order ("Okay, let's get started..."). It's also critical to end on time so that you don't delay the next panel in your room or cause audience members to be late to another convention event. If audience members are lined up to ask questions at the close of the panel, suggest that the group move to the hallway so that you can make the room available for the next program.
3. ***Have them from hello; and start the substance early.*** Your introduction of your panelists is your first chance to wow the audience, so make the most of it! Keep your formal introductions short and punchy, and move to the substance quickly; rather than reading the entire website biographies of your panelists (which are in the mobile app), focus instead on a few key facts that are most relevant to the panel. Double- and triple-check your panelists' past positions and the pronunciation of their names.
4. ***Avoid the talking head effect.*** Don't ask panelists to give formal introductory remarks. Instead, start off with a question – and don't feel like you have to direct it to the panelist sitting next to you. When the person to whom the first question is finished speaking, you may want to ask another panelist for his or her reaction, but don't just go down the line and pose the same question to every panelist before moving on to another question. As part of the planning process, determine which of the panelists are most likely to have interesting and insightful answers to a particular question, and focus on them for that question. And encourage the panelists to talk to each other! Also, where possible, please refer to the written materials that are made available to the attendees, or at least ensure they understand what's been provided.
5. ***Keep control.*** A moderator's job is to keep the discussion moving. Be prepared with a few transition phrases to segue the discussion in another direction once a particular topic has been exhausted ("Let's switch gears just a bit. Jane, let me ask you about Z...") or to cut off long-winded speakers ("

Thank you, John. Now, let's hear from Jane. Jane, what do you think?"). Similarly, you may have to intervene if audience members ask questions that are so specific as to be of little interest to others in the room ("That's a very interesting question, but since our time is limited, I think it may be better to take that up with Jane after the presentation.") or if they ask a great deal of questions about a single topic to the exclusion of others ("We've heard a lot of questions about Issue X, and it's certainly an important and interesting issue. But since our time is limited, are there other questions that anyone would like to ask?").

6. ***But don't be controlling.*** One of the great challenges of moderating a panel discussion is keeping control of the program without seeming overbearing. Don't worry if the panel goes in a slightly different direction than you'd planned; that's often the sign of a successful discussion. But stick to your guns on the important things – making sure that the panelists get more or less equal air time, that the audience participates appropriately, that the panel starts and ends on time. The best way to do this is to be firm but nice – smile!
7. ***Save time for questions.*** 10-15 minutes should be reserved, and ensure you have follow up questions to maintain an interactive environment.
8. ***Say thank you.*** Make sure you thank your panelists and call on the audience to give them a hand at the end of the program.