

# 3 TECHNIQUES to Help You Master Even the Toughest Q&A

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We all get 'em. Difficult questions. Being prepared, and practicing three tried-and-true techniques can help you field with ease that challenging employee question (or the reporter who's looking for a compelling angle).

The first thing to know is it's best to answer the question. Directly. We've

all heard non-answers and know what that feels like to be on the receiving end of some babble. Or someone who thinks "spin" can take the place of "truth."

Your employees know the score, and your credibility (or lack of it) will be front and center in how you answer those tough questions. ►



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## HERE ARE THE BIG 3 TECHNIQUES:

### 1. BRIDGE:

Move to a point you want to make  
– Use this technique to answer a question and then promptly shift in the direction of what you want to get across—your key messages.

#### Examples of bridging:

- "Yes..." (the answer), "and in addition to that" (the bridge)
- "(Brief answer), "and what I can tell you is...." (the bridge)
- "No..." (the answer), "let me explain..." (the bridge)
- "That's the way it used to be..." (the answer), "here's what we do now..." (the bridge)
- "I don't know..." (the answer), "but what I do know..." (the bridge)

### 2. HOOK:

Increase curiosity about a topic –  
End your message with a statement that likely will prompt a follow-up question. Hooking can create dialogue focused on what you want to get across.

#### Examples of hooking:

- "That's just one of the ways we're innovating to drive growth in the long-term..." (The natural follow-up is, "What's another way?")
- "Here's one result we're seeing right now..." (The follow-up is, "What are other results?") ▶



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### 3. FLAG:

**Emphasize main points** – Use flagging to emphasize or prioritize what you consider to be the most important points.

#### Examples of flagging tools:

- "If you only remember one thing today..."
- "The most important point is..."
- "It boils down to this..."
- "The heart of the matter is..."
- "I can't underscore enough..."
- "Fact is..."

Bridge. Hook. Flag. Three additional tools for your leadership and communication toolkit, which can help you be your best self, answer questions with ease, and ensure you're getting across what's important to you, and to your audience.

Which technique – if mastered – can help you the most? ■



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**David Grossman, ABC, APR, Fellow PRSA** helps leaders drive productivity and get the results they want through authentic and courageous leadership communication. He's a sought-after speaker and advisor to Fortune 500 leaders. A **three-time author**, David is CEO of

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