



American Translators Association

*The Voice of Interpreters and Translators*

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## ATA Client Outreach Kit

### Skills Module

### Handling questions and answers

As you prepare your presentation, try to anticipate the questions your audience may have. Remember, questions are good—they confirm that your listeners have tuned in. Think of a few general recommendations you can make to the audience on:

- Finding professional linguists in language combinations other than your own. ATA's searchable *Online Directory of Professional Translators and Interpreters* is the best source for finding qualified linguists.
- Criteria to keep in mind when hiring a translator/interpreter (native speaker; relevant experience)
- Price issues: side-step all price-related questions by pointing out that good quality always has a price. It is useful to remind potential clients how much time (and thus money) they have spent developing the texts they now want to translate or the products and services they would like to promote through translation.
- Computer translation: when to use it and when not to.

Some professional speakers keep a few “backup” slides at the end of their PowerPoint presentations to answer frequently asked questions. (A humorous slide of a computer-translated text—into the audience's native language—or a flawed text that was not proofread can be terrifically effective). If you tend to be a nervous presenter, this additional preparation will be worth its weight in gold. Remember: your responses should position you as an expert and seasoned professional rather than a salesperson.

It is also important to plan for what you will do if you can't answer a question. The best response is to comment, “Good question! I'll have to get back to you on that.” Ask for the person's name and contact information (which they might provide after your presentation), look up an answer, and get back to him or her promptly. Not only will you come across as a professional, you also have established a true dialog with a potential client.