GUIDELINES FOR ASKING QUESTIONS

The following guidelines apply no matter what types of questions and questioning techniques you use.

- Know the purpose of every question you ask and the level of response you are seeking. This allows you to monitor and manage the discussion.

- Make sure the questions you ask are concise, simply worded, one thought, and challenging. The Facilitator Guide includes many standard questions, but discussions will provide opportunities to ask different questions.

- Plan backup and follow-up questions you can use to achieve the administrative, instructive, or facilitative outcome you are looking for.

- Use follow-up questions to:
  - Clarify a response that is not clear
  - Challenge a participant to justify an answer
  - Refocus an answer
  - Encourage participants to expand on a response

- If possible, customize your questions to reflect your participants’ business realities.

- Use the language or jargon of the group.

- Do not ask “trick” questions that participants cannot answer correctly.

- Never interrupt someone who is answering a question, even if the person is having a hard time getting his or her ideas out.

- Use rhetorical questions sparingly.