5 Tips to Successfully Moderate a Session

1. **Prepare the physical environment in advance.** Ensure all speaker nameplates are visible from the audience and that each speaker has water available. Know where the microphones are and how far they reach.

2. **Stay on topic and on time!** Moderators help meet audience needs and expectations by keeping speakers on track, ensuring they provide relevant information to the current session.

   Plan the timeline for introductions, panel remarks, and Q&A. If you have a 1-hour panel with 5 panelists and 20 minutes of Q&A, each panelist can talk for roughly eight minutes. If a panelist is going off-topic for an extended period of time, gently interrupt and assure them that you can revisit that topic later in the panel and move on.

3. **Keep introductions short.** Don't read panelist bios in full. It takes too much time away from the session and shortens the audience's attention span. When introducing panelists, list only a couple of career highlights. Remind attendees they can review speaker bios in the conference mobile app at any time.

4. **Give guidance for Q&A.** When calling on an audience member, instruct them to ask their question in one sentence. Gently cut them off if they go on too long and restate the question for the audience and panel.

5. **Thank the panelists & audience**. You have the power to wrap up a session easily and positively (and on time!). "Thank you. You've been a great panel." Acknowledge the audience too. "You've been a great audience. Let's give the panelists a hand!"

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