# Moderator Guidance

Successfully moderating a panel requires some advance work. Read on for guidance on the moderator's role and key tips.

## The Role of the Moderator

- Opens and closes the panel, and facilitates discussion among the panelists and with the audience. Moderators can introduce each panelist, or ask them to introduce themselves (in 30 seconds).
- Keeps the panel on time (giving equal time to speakers and saving time for audience questions), balancing the desires of the speakers and audience.
- Helps the audience make sense of what the panelists say, highlighting themes and connecting the dots.

## Tips for Managing Time

- Announce time limits to the audience. You or the organizer should have already communicated them to panelists in advance.
- Politely announce what you want to happen, rather than trying to be subtle.
- Leave sufficient time for discussion among the panelists and with the audience.

## Tips for Encouraging Discussion

- Limit the use of slides; in most panels, the focus should be on the discussion.
- Frame the panel with a clear, specific question rather than a vague, open-ended topic. Consider ways to structure the discussion.
- Start off with broader, easier questions; ask about overall importance, benefits, and risks. Then get into the details with more difficult questions such as "what if…" or "why is (or isn't) that the case?"

## Tips for Managing Questions

- Reserve time for questions from the audience. Decide in advance when you're taking questions.
- Ask the questioner to state their name and affiliation. Repeat the question before directing it to a speaker. If a question is long or unclear, ask speakers to give just one example. Break a long question into two, or rephrase.
- If the questioner gives a long-winded statement, politely interrupt and ask for their question.

## Sources: Include

The Eloquent Woman's Guide to Moderating Panels, Denise Graveline
How to Be A Great Moderator, Guy Kawasaki
How to Successfully Moderate a Conference Panel, Jeremiah Owyang