



# Working Effectively with a Hostile Audience

Professor Neal Hartman  
Sloan School of Management



# Use effective listening skills

- Attending skills – nonverbal behaviors
- Encouraging skills – set the tone
- Following skills – ensure understanding between listener and questioner



# Dealing with difficult questions

- Unclear questions – confusing because of structure, length, or word choice
- Question framed in a limiting way – can trap or restrict you
- “Don’t know” questions



# Dealing with difficult questioners

- Be polite – don't lower yourself to their level
- Lessen hostility by pointing to common ground
- Paraphrase the feelings behind questions
- Interrupt repeat offenders
- Look elsewhere after responding



# Delivering effective responses

- Stick to your objective and organization
- Provide a preview if you have a long answer
- Make your responses interesting
- Keep the audience involved in Q&A
- End with a summary statement