

12 Qualities to Look for in an Event Moderator

The event Moderator leads the way in determining the success of your live event. This individual has a significant influence over how smoothly the event goes, how it is perceived by participants and the end results achieved.

While it may be your event, that doesn't mean you are well suited, or *best* suited, to be the Moderator. Consider your options with care.

Some of the key qualities to look for (not in particular order of priority) include:

Rapport skills – The ability to read and connect with audiences as well as hosts, sponsors and presenters is vital.

Exceptional communications – Related to but a broader strength than rapport is a person's overall communications skills ... being able to understand what others are saying, to articulate thoughts clearly and effectively (verbal and written) and to otherwise communicate well with all involved (attendees, speakers, staff, supporters, IT personnel, others).

Ability under pressure – Things happen fast in a live event and the actions of your Moderator are front and center. Someone who gets flustered, irritable, confused or who otherwise may be thrown off balance by unexpected developments or undesired situations would not be a good choice in this role.

Punctuality – The Moderator controls the clock. Starting on time is an important standard for most events. Knowing how to work with presenters and others to keep events on schedule will make a difference in whether or not you achieve your program goals. Some participants have to leave at the announced end time and some speakers can only be there for the time agreed upon.

Organizational skills – Moderators often wear multiple hats. Keeping event notes, presentation materials, participant texts, the flow of communications and other business in good order is likewise important to the end results.

Strong listening skills – To do their job well, Moderators should be highly adept to listening ... to instructions from the event host and staff ... to communications with presenters ... to questions and feedback from participants ... as well as interpreting well what they have heard.

Humor – Having a good sense of humor can go a long way in an event. Knowing when, and when not, to interject humor is likewise important.

Good judgment – Moderators must often make on-the-spot judgment calls that are implemented very quickly. Good instincts and appropriate conclusions and actions make a very big difference.

Respectful treatment of others – A respectful demeanor is a basic consideration. Moderators also need to understand that speakers are “on the spot” in a live event. They don’t want to be embarrassed, pressured or made to look bad in any way and, of course, they want to look good. The Moderator’s communications affect everyone.

Technology know-how – Moderators sometimes also run the event technology and, if in that role, need to be very familiar with the particulars. If technical problems occur and they’re under the pressure of a live event but lack sufficient know-how the results could be quite bad. Even if the Moderator isn’t in the lead technology role they should know how things work in the way that speakers are expected to know for purposes of a smoothly run event.

Subject matter knowledge – Moderators can’t be an expert in every subject, nor is it necessary for them to be in order to do a good job. In some roles, technical or other subject matter knowledge can be a plus, particularly in judging how to interact with speakers and participants during the live event. Otherwise, having a broad base of multi-disciplinary training and knowledge can position a Moderator to perform the job well.

Compatibility – The “total package” of an individual will determine how compatible they are. In addition to the above, this includes their personality and the “gut feel” that you have (and others will likely have) on whether or not they’re a good fit for your organization and your event.

Need further help with Moderators or Interviewers? See the Contact page at www.WebEventExperts.com. We welcome the opportunity to serve.