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January 13, 2022

Public Chatter

How to Handle Unexpected Questions (This is the “Biggie”)

Following up on the [series of shareholder engagement blogs](#) that Broc is running this month, if your engagement team has done their homework, the meeting should go well. According to plan. Until that curveball comes swimming in. Starting your response with something predictable like, "That's a good question" is not a response at all. It's a stall tactic and it's not impressive. Try to use a one-liner that sounds like you were expecting that question all along. You might say, "That's the *right* question." Now you said something unexpected *and* you complimented the questioner at the same time. You also could say, "There's a right answer and a wrong answer to your question. Let's go with the right one." Then, use an impromptu structure that gives your questioner a direct response that is both complete and brief. (The words in parentheses are your internal structure - not what you would necessarily say out loud.) (*What* is the issue?) "Our company expects X to happen..." (*Why* is that significant?) "This is important because it means our bottom line will be ..." (*Where* does that leave your shareholder?) "That impacts you by ..."

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