

Guidelines for a Great Panel Discussion

Use these guidelines to create a successful panel discussion.

Number of panelists: No less than 3; no more than 5-6.

Facilitator will get these items from the panelists at least a week before the event:

- one paragraph biographies/introductions with their specialties
- what they want to talk about
- questions from everyone—what they want to be asked

Facilitator should notify panelists to bring enough handouts for the audience if they have an exhibit

One week prior to event: Facilitator holds a webinar with panelists to go over the specifics of the event.

Contour of the panel discussion:

1. Facilitator introduces topic. Tells audience the procedure
 - a. Introductions (from those gathered by the facilitator)
 - b. Each panelist talks for 5 minutes—tell audience to prepare their questions based on the panelist's area of expertise
 - c. Questions from the facilitator or audience (note length of time)
 - d. Closing comments from each panelist (note length of time)
2. Panelists each have one minute to do closing comments
3. Facilitator thanks audience.

Things to watch for:

- Each panelist has equal time
- Panelists can ask questions
- Time does not drag; keep it moving (usually panel discussion should not last over one to one and one half hours)
- Facilitator should probe to ask the next question (clarify/expand on what the panelist says)
- Audience should be encouraged to ask lots of questions; stay on track
- Facilitator shouldn't talk much; he/she is not the star!

Excerpted from [The Ultimate Real Estate Trainer's Guide](http://www.carlacross.com), www.carlacross.com

