



Approaches to Help You Say the Dreaded Words "I Don't Know"

The Well Researched Approach

(you know you know...you just need a second)

"I can't remember that off the top of my head, but I do have it in my notes if you'll give me just a second to look it up."

The Deflect to the Expert Approach

(you know the expert... and it's NOT you!)

"I'm actually not the best person to answer that question. Melanie is our expert in that area."

The Get Them to The Right Department Approach

(you're in the finance department and its a marketing question)

"That's not something I deal with regularly, but I can point you towards the department that will most likely know the answer."

The Best Guess or

Current Thinking Approach

(when it's ok to have an opinion or idea even if it's not 100% researched)

"Based on the current best thinking & information I do have, here are my thoughts."

The We're Not There Yet But Will Be Someday Approach

(when you know the answer is bound to be discovered if you keep following the path you're on)

"Despite the amount of research we have done, that is one question we are still unable to answer. We are continuing to work on it. Would you like me to e-mail you when we do have an answer?"

The We're On The Same Page Approach

(they're asking good questions that you still have yourself...and would really like answered!)

"I actually have the same question. Does anybody know the answer to this?"

The Facilitator Approach

(to increase engagement and get them talking)

"That's a great question. What do you guys think? I'd love to hear from you before I answer."

The Stall for More Time Approach

(you know where to get the answer, you just don't have it with you right now)

"I want to ensure I give you correct information, so let me research that and get back to you within 24 hours."

The Slightly Smug, "You Really Can't Look This up Yourself?" Approach

(question could easily be answered with a Google search but you don't want to embarrass the person by saying, "Are you serious right now?!")

"Let's Google it to see what information is out there."

The Humor Approach

(when they really got you and if you don't laugh you may cry)

"Wow...you totally stumped me!! Way to go! Can anyone rescue me from having to put on the dunce hat?"