

## Frequently Asked Questions: Audience Response System (ARS)

### **Q: *What is the Audience Response System?***

A: The Audience Response System, or simply, ARS, provides for interactive audience experiences. Through the use of individual keypads, the ARS enhances presentations by allowing all attendees to interact directly with the speakers and with each other.

Speakers can determine what the audience is thinking and how their presentations are progressing. The audience can provide their opinions and compare them with those of their peers.

### **Q: *What are the advantages of using this system?***

A: At the beginning of the presentation, you may choose to get the feel for the overall knowledge of the group on a subject matter. The ARS is a good way to gather such information.

During the presentation, you may choose to ask questions to stimulate discussion. You may want to find out if the group is able to follow or comprehend the material, or if a review of the material that you have just covered is in order. After the question results are displayed, you can then invite discussion of responses to further increase audience engagement. Have the participants defend their choices by sharing within small groups their reasoning.

In addition, using the ARS, you can attempt to provide some diversion by interspersing some occasional questions that bring a light touch or humor at appropriate moments.

At the end of the presentation, you may want to determine the audience's level of understanding of their opinions, either as an absolute measure or as a contrast to the initial information you gathered about them. Asking knowledge assessment questions may give you insight on how you can improve your methods in the future.

All response data is captured for later viewing, printing, or for further analysis and manipulation.

### **Q: *I am the main speaker for a presentation. How should I introduce the system? Is there a script I can use?***

A: The main speaker is the best person to introduce the audience to the ARS. In order to get the audience acquainted and comfortable with it, take the time to explain why you are using the system.

To assist in orienting the audience to the ARS, we have written a sample script. We recommend that the speaker hold up a keypad and point out the various keys to be used while describing the keypad, then follow up with one or two questions to warm up the audience.

In addition to the speaker's introduction, you may want to have a slide or text screen to accompany it. This slide can include information such as Response System Instructions and how questions and responses will be displayed on the screen.

*Sample Script:*

During this presentation, we will use the Audience Response System, or ARS, to gather your responses to questions that I will pose. The use of this will **[insert your reason for using the system]**.

Each of you should have a keypad just like this **[show the audience]**. Does everyone have one? **[Ask that those without one raise their hands so that our staff can give them one.]**

Each of the It has 12 keys. To enter your response, all you need to do is press the button representing your choice. If you change your mind, simply press the button that matches your new choice. The computer will only accept the last response that you entered.

Please note that your responses will be anonymous. For the process to be effective, select the answer that represents your own choice and not what your colleagues or someone else may expect you to select.

The screen will display the question (or poll) which I will read aloud, and then the computer will activate the system. You will have 10 seconds to enter your response. The countdown clock will appear on the lower right hand corner of the screen.

Immediately following the countdown, the screen will display a graphical representation of the distribution of responses. All of us should be able to view these graphs.

Shall we try a sample question to help you become used to the ARS?

**Q: *What are the characteristics of good questions?***

A: Here are some characteristics of effective and well formulated questions:

- Brief and concise question and choices. The audience is able to grasp the question quickly and to make their choices accordingly.
- Meaningful and appropriate. The audience is more engaged and reflective if the questions are relevant to the topics at hand. (Avoid superficial questions, or those whose answers are obvious.)
- Clear and unambiguous. Carefully edited questions and choices will increase audience understanding. (Reading them aloud to others may help.)
- Engaging and intriguing. Questions that arouse audience interest can help focus their ideas and, therefore, their responses.
- Individualized. Questions directed to individuals will be most effective in gathering the appropriate responses.

**Q: *What types of questions can I ask?***

A: Your questions should directly relate to the choices that you provide for the audience. To help hold the audience's attention, use a combination of the different formats. There are six basic ways to structure your questions:

1. Yes or No
2. True or False
3. Multiple Choice
4. Select answer from a range or a likert-type scale, such as:
  - a. A scale of 1 to 5, *from strongly disagree to strongly agree*
  - b. A scale of 1 to 7, *extremely unimportant to extremely important*
  - c. A range of 1 to 9, *very unlikely to very likely*
5. Audience vote: Yes, No, or Abstain
6. Audience poll. For example: *Choosing the top 3 items from a list of 8 choices. The audience is polled 3 times and then a graphic is displayed of the overall results. Response is weighted higher for the more important/significant items.*

**Q: *At what point should I ask the questions?***

A: All meetings are different, so there is no correct answer as to the timing of your questions. If possible, the ARS should be incorporated throughout the meeting. Some presenters like to use a 10-2 rule, where you ask one or two questions every ten minutes. Ask questions to find out about your audience.

**Q: *What else should I know about the wording of the questions?***

A: To get the audience involved, ask questions that are provoke reflection. Formulate them so that your objective(s) for using the ARS supports your overall presentation objectives.

Individual responses may be tracked, but such is not the usual practice. Attendance may be taken or a test given to the audience through the system.

Although responses are anonymous, keep the following in mind when formulating your questions:

- Ask only for responses that the audience may want to publicly disclose, although they will be deemed anonymous.
- Formulate questions or ask for responses that attempts to reduce bias or to avoid compromising the speaker, audience, or organization sponsoring the meeting (including Kaiser Permanente).

**Q: *I would like to use the ARS for my next presentation. What do I need to do?***

A: The ARS is administered by the staff of Physician Education Consulting, Pasadena, CA. The consultants can assist you with the planning process and provide you with support on the day of your presentation, in coordination with the Multi-media Department. Contact the consultants at [PhysicianEducation-Consulting@kp.org](mailto:PhysicianEducation-Consulting@kp.org).