

Becoming a Professional Speaker



Do you want to be a professional speaker?

- Are you willing to pay the price?
- Are you willing to do what unsuccessful people won't do?
- Are you ready to take full responsibility for your future?

So just what is it you have to do to become a professional speaker?

GETTING READY

Develop at least four topics that would be of interest to you and the audience you want to speak to.

When selecting your four topics keep these requirements in mind at all times,

- 1) Will your topic fill the needs of your audience?
- 2) Who is your market?
- 3) Will your topic solve a problem?
- 4) Will your topic be entertaining?
- 5) Will your topic give your audience new information?

TOPIC DEVELOPMENT

Developing your "Topic." Will your topic fill your audience's needs?

Topic Examples: *Become an expert on any topic you choose*

- Stopping violence in schools
- Eat more and lose.

- Improve your communication skills in 7 easy steps
- Double your business by improving customers relations
- Making your job "fired" proof"
- Are you handling your strongest asset well?
- Make more money staying at home.
- Taking back your parental rights.
- Buying stock in a down market.
- Cut your marketing budget and increase your exposure.
- We all die, if we destroy our environment.

You can become an expert on any topic you choose, if you are willing to do the work. Do you realize that if every day you only devoted 20 minutes reading, studying, writing or researching any given topic, you would become a recognized expert in that field within 3 years?

Do the numbers

- Devoting 20 minutes a day 7 days a week equals 140 minutes a week
- Times 52 weeks is 121 hours a year
- Times 3 years is 363 total hours spent on one subject

You will be a sought after expert in your field by simply investing 20 minutes in "YOU" every day.

WHO IS YOUR MARKET:

Determine the markets you want to go after. This will take some time for you to sort out. You must determine where it is you feel comfortable. What information do you have that will be of benefit to what group of people? How can they use or apply your information. Does this market place require additional updates? If yes, how often and why? Does the market you choose have sub-markets that would be of benefit to you through other programs and seminars?

- | | |
|---------------|---------------|
| • Business | • Food |
| • Industry | • Travel |
| • Educational | • Media |
| • Family | • Health |
| • Activists | • Social |
| • Banking | • Political |
| • Marketing | • Agriculture |
| • Personal | |

ADDITIONAL TOOLS

What are some of the things you need to have and develop as a public speaker?

1. Name of your company
2. Your logo
3. Business cards
4. Brochures
5. Flyers
6. Audio Tapes (professionally done)
7. Video Tapes (professionally done)

FINDING PLACES TO SPEAK!

Local social clubs are a great place to start. Listen to your friends and business associates. Find out which clubs and organizations your friends are members of. Most social and community services clubs are always looking for guest speakers.

- Social clubs
- Lions
- Kiwanis
- Rotary
- **Political organizations**
- Community clubs
- Community clubs
- Social organizations
- Churches
- Schools clubs
- Merchant associations
- Trade associations

Search the web for many more opportunities. Below are some organizations taken from the web just to jar your thinking. The list of available clubs that want speakers is endless. Finding someone to speak to for nothing is easy. Finding someone who will pay you is a totally different story.

Adventure Role Playing Club

Students who come together to participate in role-playing and strategy games.

Afro-American Society

Serves minority students so they can collectively support awareness of their cultural heritage.

Alpha Eta Rho

Professional Aviation Fraternity

American Marketing Association

Work on community service projects as well as products in the marketing field.

Armed Forces Club

Public Relations Association of BSC

Cultivates a favorite relationship between students and public relations practitioners.

Residence Hall Association

Representatives appointed from each of the Residence Halls, designed to discuss current issues, topics, and programs pertinent to residing on

La Sociedad Latina

The purpose of this organization is to promote unity and cultural awareness to the college and community, and to recognize all Hispanic heritage.

Men Integrated in Brotherhood (MIB)

To promote the ideals and values of the U.S. Armed Forces.

Athletic Training Club

Allows students to meet and discuss athletic training issues.

Best Buddies

Best Buddies colleges matches student volunteers and Individuals with mental retardation in one-on-one friendship

The Cape Verdean Student Association

Organization that was formed to unite all students, faculty and staff that may show an interest in the heritage and culture of Cape Verde.

Christian Fellowship

Ministers to students who are from different religious traditions and helps them grow spiritually, academically and socially.

Circle K

An organization that provides volunteer service to both on and off-campus projects within the community.

Crimson Ambassadors

Promotes pride, tradition and spirit to present and past students at BSC.

Dance Company

Presents opportunities for dance performances to BSC students.

Ensemble Theater

Designed to bring together members of the college community interested in the theater.

Building a stronger foundation for future generations through Brotherhood and education.

National Student Speech Language Hearing Association (NSSLHA)

National organization for undergraduate students interested in the study of normal and disordered human communication behavior.

Outing Club

Involved in a wide variety of outdoor activities, from hiking to rock climbing. Come and host events on campus.

Philosophy Club

Offers various discussions topics in a philosophical and constructive manner.

Physics Club

To promote interest and the pursuit of knowledge in the area of physics to the student body of Bridgewater State College in a relaxed and fun atmosphere.

Political Science Club

Promotes the study and discussion of politics.

Psychology Club

To expand student interest and knowledge of the field of psychology

Students In Service/Newman Club

The ongoing involvement in and commitment to community service by the students

Student Council for Exceptional Children

The purpose of this organization shall be to promote the welfare and Education of exceptional children and youth.

DEVELOP SEMINARS

Who do you present your seminars to?

- 1) Members of those local groups to whom you have spoken to in the past? Did you get their names and address?
- 2) Local organization that could use your information.
- 3) Small companies that have little or no educational budget to work with. These also become training sessions for you. Make sure that if they like your presentation they give you referrals. More on that later.

PREPARATION

The longer the seminars or presentations, the more information you will need. It is important that you have at least three times as much information as you will deliver per hour.

- A one-hour presentation requires 3 hours of worth of information
- Three-hour presentations require 9 hours of information
- Six-hour seminars require at least 18 hours of information

One of the hardest tasks a speaker will face is to remain on track. We all had classes, seminars and lectures where the speaker tells us, please keep all your questions till the end of the program. Write them down so you don't forget them. Why? You may have time restraints to present your materials. In addition, the last thing you want is for your audience to take you down a road you are not prepared to travel just yet. It is so easy to get drawn into a topic not related to your presentation. Yes you want to share and help, but in a short time you won't remember where you were. Until you have developed the ability to handle off-topic questions and return to your presentation material in stride, try and stay away from audience participation. In some cases it can't be avoided but be aware of un-traveled roads. Good speakers can change directions and come right back to where they left off. Only through abundant information and complete knowledge of you topics can you do this.

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS:

At the end of your presentation make sure you have set time aside for Q&A. The questions asked by the audience can help you improve your next presentation.

- What didn't you tell them?
- What needs to be clearer?
- What topics can you eliminate?
- Did you present too much information?
- Is there information you need?
- What stimulated your audience the most?

With each presentation the wants and needs of your audience will change, but with proper preparation you can adjust.

INTRODUCTION

- Write it yourself.

- Don't ever expect your host to introduce you the way you want without telling him or her how. Make sure they can pronounce your name.
- Where are you from?
- It is very difficult to become a successful speaker in your own town. It has been my experience that I was Raymond Kane, the guy down the street who everyone remembered when I tried to speak in Baltimore. But in Boston, Chicago, or Dallas, I was Raymond Kane from Baltimore, Maryland. Being from someplace else adds creditability and recognition to you. Simply being from someplace else give you creditability.
- Credentials.
- Make sure your introduction clarifies why you are qualified to be speaking to this group. What are your credentials and background? Do you have any degrees, written books, news articles, appeared on TV or talk radio? All these factual statements lend more creditability to you.
- Tell them what they will hear.
- Have one or two sentences prepared for your introducer to introduce your topic. Tell them what you will be talking about and what they will be learning.

WHAT NEXT?

So now that you have ironed out all the bugs, practiced, polished and perfected your presentations, what next? It's time to do it for money! It's now time to talk about those four letter words that most people hate.

Sell, Sell, Sell!

SELLING YOUR PROGRAMS

Without "Sales" there is no money. If you don't "Sell" there are no "Sales". It's after you feel comfortable with your presentations and topics that you start looking for paid engagements. And even then you may still have to speak for nothing. You will need recommendations and experience. So where do you get them? You'll get most of those letters of recommendation and an endorsement from the free clubs you speak to. Those letters will reinforce you abilities and talents with the potential paying audiences even if the first presentation is also free.

SPECIAL NOTE

It's ok to give a presentation for free to a potential client. I call these job interviews. Just make sure there will be future sales in it for you if you deliver. Find out what they expect and

what has to happen for you to get future bookings. How many future bookings could you expect and how can you be assured that your services will be secured if you do what's expected? That's why you should practice on small local groups at first to get them out of the way. Sell to larger organizations that have the potential of placing you in front of numerous groups in multiple locations.

LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION

Earlier I mentioned that you need letters of recommendation. Make sure that you get a letter of recommendation from every group you speak to. Most people will gladly give you a letter but don't know what to say. After asking them for a letter that expresses their appreciation and feeling about your presentation, hesitate, and suggest that you understand how busy they are and suggest that you write something for their approval. Offer to send it back to them for their final approval and signature. Encourage them to make any additional comments or changes they wish and return it to you. I would strongly suggest that any presentation given to a group or organization that you feel would have an impact on the market place you are after, take the letter to them for their signature and comments. It has been my personal experience that, although some people took the letters for review, the only additions ever made were more complimentary. Remember you are the one with the greatest vested interest in your success. People are willing to help if you only make it easy. I would suggest that you develop at least six strong letters of recommendation for yourself.

"GUIDELINE FOR DEVELOPING YOUR "LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION"

- Was the subject material appropriate and timely?
- Was the material useful to the participants?
- Could the audience apply the information presented?
- How did the audience respond to the material?
- How did the audience respond to the presenter?
- What were the mannerisms of the presenter?
- What value would you put on the materials?
- Would you consider taking future classes, seminars or training?
- Was it done in a timely manner?
- Were there handouts?

Design your letters so that they can be retyped and filled in with a generalized statement of endorsement. It's ok to ask, to what extent they would like you to structure the letter. Some people will like retyping and adding their comments. Others don't have the time and really appreciate a final letter for their signature. Blow your own horn, if you don't, who will?

BUILDING A DATABASE

In addition to the letters of recommendation, create a filing card system or computer database from all your presentations. You want the names of the contact person you booked with. You also want their phone number, address, where they work, where others in the organization work or have associations. Jot down as many notes as you possibly can about the chairperson and other members of the organization. Make mental and actual notes, if possible, of any person or persons that have connections or influences in the market places you're after.

DATABASE AND MARKETING

The hardest booking is always the first professional booking. Make sure you have a list of all those organizations and clubs you've spoken to for free. It's time to work your list. Send letters re-introducing yourself to them. Explain that you are now developing your professional career and could use their help. Ask them directly for any possible leads they may have for you in the market place you are after. Let them know what programs you are offering and briefly describe your presentations. You may even want to enclose a copy of your brochure as well as a copy of their recommendation letter to refresh their memory. Let them also know that you will be calling them to set up an appointment to discuss possible leads.

Review your database and index cards. Who did you meet or talk to that might lead you to someone you need. Network as much as possible. Drop them a note, stop by or lastly, call. We all get too many calls today. When sending notes, send them on colored invitation note size stationary. It will have a greater chance of being opened than regular mailings. Remember you are always selling and you must stand out.

TIME TO SELL

Now you have the appointment, what do you do to sell yourself and your programs?

- First of all, be yourself.
- Have a small presentation program available to share.
- Make sure it's put together professionally and looks good.
- Keep it simple and clear, but get your message across.
- Most of all, tell your client what's in it for them.
- Tell them what's in it for their organization.
- What will their employees or staff learn?
- How can they or will they use your information.
- What results can they expect from your program?

- How long will the seminar or program last?
- What will the seminar or training class cost?
- When talking cost, break it down to its lowest denominator of value. If your program costs \$1000 for 25 people, including handouts, then it is \$40 a person. Keep in mind that your client will not have use of those employees during the program but most likely will still have to pay them for the day, which will also increase their program cost.

MEASURING YOUR RESULTS

It's very important to know how to measure the results of your work. What has to happen in order for you and your client to feel his or her needs were filled. Ask what kind of results your client would expect from your program? Not knowing what your clients expect makes it impossible for you to determine if you have delivered the expected results. Knowing what's expected gives you and your client a yardstick for results.

Example; I would hope that sales from a more professional staff would increase by at least 10% over the next three months. You will need to know the current sales average and then the results in three months to determine your effectiveness. Or, I would expect my outside sales to increase by 15%. Or, people would start creating goals and managing their time, getting more work done in a shorter period of time.

If you feel you can deliver, don't hesitate to guarantee the results, just make sure you have something to measure the results by. Consider using up-front guarantees: They like it, they pay. They feel the information will help their business, they pay. They feel their staff profited from the information, they pay. They learned, they pay. They feel they got their money's worth, they pay. They would recommend you to others, they pay. Any "No's," and they don't pay. This is why you need guidelines to measure your results by. If you've delivered, you need to be paid, but if you didn't, learn what wasn't accomplished and what needs to be corrected.

After you have successfully booked a program and presented your materials successfully, make sure you "Sell Yourself Again." Ask for future bookings. Ask in what other areas you could be of help. Use probing questions to discover their other needs may be. Recommend other training or learning programs. Ask if they know someone else that could also benefit from your program. If they say yes, ask if they would call and get an appointment set up for you. This kind of recommendation will propel you into the speakers circuit. Don't forget to follow-up with thank you notes after your programs.

WHAT TO DO WHEN YOU FINALLY A PROFESSIONAL SPEAKER!

- Register with all your local and national speaker bureaus.
- Make a professional set of audio or videotapes.
- Produce sample programs tapes that you can send to potential clients to whet their appetite.
- Write a book or sell other authors books.
- Contact publishers and find out if you can buy their books, sell them and still make a profit.
- Continue increasing your database.

**"Knowledge Is Worthless
Until You Give It To Someone!"**