



Conference Tips - Choosing a speaker

Charged with the responsibility of finding a speaker/facilitator for your business event - how do you know who is going to be suitable for your meeting or conference. Here are some useful hints to help in your search.

If you have previously had a speaker that you liked, use him or her as a resource to refer you to someone who will be a good fit for you. Seek recommendations from within your company and Industry Associations.

Consider your reasons for having a speaker or facilitator. Is it to attract more people to the meeting? Is it to motivate the sales team to sell harder? Is it to bring information that the audience could not get elsewhere? Or is it to start the meeting off with a bang so that everyone is switched on for the working sessions.

Communicate your needs clearly. A common error made in choosing a speaker is not being clear about your expectations and needs. Prepare a brief, which can be sent out. Some people feel nervous about giving instructions to a celebrity, but whether you are paying \$1,000 or \$10,000, the speaker is there to meet your objectives. The clearer you are about what you expect, who is in the audience, what has happened at previous events, the easier it will be for the speaker to be on the money and do a good job.

Educate your speaker. Don't assume he or she knows all about your organisation and industry. Send information about your company, no matter how well known it is. Too much background is better than not enough. Make sure you provide that person with enough information about the company to help him or her be successful. They need to know about your company, your key players, and your businesses.

Treat the speaker like an attendee. Make sure your speakers get all the relevant information the attendees do, so they know who else is speaking and the schedule of events.

Do your homework and check them out, make sure you check their credentials and their previous clients for references, you need to avoid any surprises.

Clearly understand what is and is not covered in the fee arrangement such as travel costs, overnight accommodation, meals etc for the speaker. The last thing you need is an unexpected fee dispute after the event.