

7 TIPS FOR LANDING YOUR DREAM SPEAKING GIG

Speaking at events – whether in-person or virtually – shows you are a thought leader. Speaking gives you credibility, can help you grow your business, find new employees (or be recruited yourself), expand your industry contacts, result in media coverage, and provide a platform for your compelling content. Here are 7 tips to help you land the speaking gig of your dreams.

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PACKAGE YOURSELF

In order to pitch a topic to a conference organizer, you must first be prepared to pitch yourself. Events want dynamic, engaging personalities that can both entertain and inform their audiences.

As a speaker, you'll be judged primarily on your credentials and experience. As you develop and consolidate your pitching materials, make sure you do so in a way that accentuates your personality and character. Challenge yourself to highlight what makes you qualified to share your unique perspective.

"Less is more. A presentation with a powerful core message and a limited number of slides (8–10 is always my preference) will always have the most impact. We intentionally keep all our talks on the short side – nothing is longer than 25 minutes – because that's the world we live in," says Stephen Twomey, Senior Speakers Director, WebSummit, which attracts more than 100,000 attendees. *"Attention spans have never been shorter and you always have to put yourself in the attendees' shoes. What do they want? How do you make it resonate with them? What will they take most away from your time on stage? Once you think like this,*

...you can produce amazing content that will be engaged with, shared on social and have a lifespan far beyond the event itself."

Remix recommends the following materials for your speaker package:

- Headshot
- Short & Long Bios
- Video of you speaking
- List of previous speaking engagements
- A few bullets of topics you can discuss
- A short abstract of your proposed topic



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FIND THE RIGHT EVENT

As a prospective speaker, make sure the event is as much of a fit for you as you are for it.

Each event will have its own atmosphere, personalities, audience, and experience. Make sure the event is a fit for you. What is the audience profile? Is it technical? Formal or informal? Who has spoken in the past and what is their level of experience and title? Research events from an attendee's perspective. You'll be able to identify opportunities and events that align with your personality, messaging and vision. From there, it's up to you to find out how they program their conferences. Look for a "Call for Speakers" or "Submissions" section on event websites. Check their social media for updates and announcements. Lastly, see if you can find the head of programming for the event and contact them to learn more about specific opportunities and the best avenue to pitch your content.

ESTABLISH YOUR VISION 3



You must have intention to guide your messaging. These are the central ideas, trends, and predictions that underpin each of the presentations you will give. As a thought leader, you have a unique perspective on where the world is headed. This is a great time to dig deep into your business narrative.

"Does your brand story match your values? Everyone loves a good story and it starts with your vision."

– Whitney Greer of Remix partner RebelMind

Your very purpose for speaking is to share your vision and these views, whether positive or negative, to start conversations and provoke change. Before you even begin to dive into specifics, take some time to reflect and distill your perspective from which you'll build your speaking platform.

Start by brainstorming:

- Write down your predictions for the 2–3 biggest disruptions that will challenge your industry in the next five years
- Write down the names of three industry leaders in your space that you follow for insight. What are their thoughts and predictions on your industry?
- Interview your company's leadership and C-suite: What keeps them up at night? What opportunities or technologies get them excited for the future?



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NARROW DOWN YOUR TOPIC

Once you've established your vision in step 3, you may have some ideas that you feel have the potential as a speaking topic. If not, no problem. As you begin to brainstorm topics, take a minute to reflect on what drives you daily. The topic should never be product-focused (unless it's a how-to workshop). Think about cultural trends, common challenges or problems, narratives, and industry storylines. Choose a topic that is timely, current, engaging, and even controversial.

"Consider the type of session that would grab your attention as an attendee. It can't be boring, it can't be an overdone topic, and it can't be self-serving. Be ready to take some risks with your topic."

– Katy Boos of Remix.

As you or your team pitch your session idea to organizers, put yourself in their shoes. Think about what subjects might stand out against typical conference topics and sessions.

Ask yourself these questions:

- What are the aspects of your job that make you genuinely excited? What would your ideal job description be? What makes that aspect of your work so interesting and is there an angle there that you could expand upon?
- What are the hardest challenges you've had to face in your professional life? Are those challenges still relevant and how did you overcome them?
- What topics are controversial in your industry? And are you willing to take a stand? Conferences love controversy and hearing opposing voices.



5 INVITE YOUR COMMUNITY

One of the challenges of engaging narratives is that too often we find that we aren't necessarily the right person to tell the story. Maybe your perspective is valid, interesting and engaging, but the nuances of the topic demand an alternative view or a devil's advocate to truly open the discussion for the audience.

You have an opportunity to open your platform to the greater community and invite a few of your brightest colleagues, customers, and partners to join the discussion.

At Remix we regularly program session ideas such as a standing-room only session we placed at SXSW that featured Adobe and Oculus. Panels with different viewpoints are appealing to conference organizers and audiences alike.

6 INVEST IN YOUR CONTENT

As charismatic as you are, without quality graphics and compelling visuals you're going to be fighting an uphill battle for your audience's attention.

Too often we see a fresh and unique viewpoint diluted on-stage due to a lack of quality presentation materials. It doesn't take a professional designer to make the difference; additional effort such as using high-quality stock photos/visuals and limiting on-slide text can make a world of difference.



7 GREAT DELIVERY

Here's a secret: Nobody was born a knockout speaker. It took having a real reason to show up, practice, and train to deliver a presentation that kept the audience engaged, enthusiastic and off their smartphones. As you prepare to take your personal brand on stage or in a virtual event, make sure to challenge yourself to become comfortable speaking to large audiences. This can be as small as picking up extra shifts as presenter at "lunch and learns" or having a coworker record you presenting and give you feedback. Or go one step further and hire a pro to give you feedback and direction.

Remix partner Whitney Greer helps our speakers with delivery tips such as "*Your audience isn't judging your performance. They're wondering what you want them to do with the information. So, tell them.*"

As your platform grows and audiences become larger, there's no substitute for a speaking coach to bring your presentation skills to their true potential.


WANT MORE VISIBILITY? WE CAN HELP!
We place our clients on stage and at virtual events, as guests on podcasts, and we create impactful content. We cultivate, shape and make high-visibility placements happen for you. We have an extensive network, deep industry experience, and visionary thinking. Remix has worked with Adobe, Apple, Facebook, TEDx and some pretty smart startups too. Let us know if we can help you land your dream speaking gig!
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