

How to Find Speaking Engagements

Public speaking provides tremendous opportunities to grow, promote, and breathe new life into your network. And with the right preparation and research, you'll find that many wonderful opportunities are within your reach. In this article, we'll help you lay groundwork and find the perfect audience for your expertise.

Step 1. Update your website with a press kit

Before you even begin the process of seeking engagements, make sure you have this important box checked. Organize your press kit and make sure its presence on your website is accessible and inviting. Once you start applying for engagements, this will make it a snap to share your information with prospective hosts.

Your press kit is one of the first impressions you'll make, so include video or audio clips from past speaking engagements, if you have them. This is a great way to give viewers a look at your personality and speaking style.

Remember that a high-quality press kit lends legitimacy to you or your firm, so be sure to review *How to Create a Press Kit* if you need guidance.

Step 2. Showcase your expertise through thought leadership

If you have written on topics relevant to your area of expertise, use your thought leadership to your advantage. Point prospective speaking hosts to your blog, executive guides, or other resources that showcase your expertise. During the vetting process, your writings can set you apart and demonstrate the depth of your knowledge.

Step 3. Find industry associations

Often, professional associations offer some of the best and biggest speaking opportunities. Breaking into one can open the doors to others. Take time to do thorough research and find the best fits for your industry and area of expertise.

But where do you start? A simple Google can point you in the right direction. Even if you know exactly what organizations you need to pursue, spend a little time doing research to make sure you are considering the whole field.

While you are searching, consider each association's point of view. They want speakers who can address the biggest trends, topics and challenges faced by their members. If you can identify these challenges and provide an interesting — or better yet, provocative — point of view, you can become a serious candidate.

Step 4. Leverage local

Organizations like Rotary, Kiwanis, and chambers of commerce will often feature speakers at their local meetings. These appearances won't pack the punch of a large association gathering, but they can be great places to get started and build experience and confidence. They also offer intimate access to business owners and other high-level employees who may offer you speaking opportunities at their own companies. At the very least, you will walk away with some experience to showcase in your press kit.

Step 5. Look at your competition

This is another angle not to be overlooked. Your competition can offer important insights as to where your audience is hanging out. Use Google, LinkedIn, and their websites to find out where your peers have made appearances. These can be great opportunities for you, since many organizations like to add fresh presenter faces to their events.

Step 6. Review conference directories

Use online resources to identify potential events and organizations. Here are some good places to start:

- All Conferences (<http://www.allconferences.com/>)
- Lanyrd (<http://lanyrd.com/>)
- Plancast (<http://plancast.com/>)
- Conferensum (<http://www.conferensum.com/>)

Run a search to help you build or broaden your list of targets. These sites also let you sign up for event notifications based on preferences you set. These sites can be great tools that will deliver leads and keep you informed even when you aren't actively looking.

Step 7. Publications

Many business publications will list events relevant to their readers. *Fortune* and *Inc.* magazines are two prominent examples.

Look within your own industry, as well—trade publications will often feature event calendars. Their coverage of events may also include valuable clues. You'll learn more about the kind of content and speakers your targeted organizations are drawn to.

Step 8. Speaker directories

Speaker directories can be another useful tool in your quest. Just be advised that some may charge for their services. Check them out, browse your options and decide if one of these might be worth it for you or your firm. Here are two popular directories:

- Speaker Services (<http://www.speakerservices.com/>)
- Speaker Zone (<https://www.speakerzone.com/>)

While the initial investment of time and energy may seem overwhelming at first, it doesn't have to consume you. Begin by picking just a few resources and explore them. You don't have to take it all on at once. Over time, you'll establish yourself as a sought-after speaker — and that will bring exciting growth to both your firm and your own personal brand.

Good luck!

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