



3 STEPS TO CHOOSING THE RIGHT EVENT SPEAKER

Why do you need this guide?

A fantastic speaker can make or break your event. Choosing the right motivational speaker can make your delegates forget about the flavourless vol-au-vents, the uncomfortable seats and leave them feeling energised and motivated.

I've heard too many horror stories of unprepared speakers, last minute dropouts, vibe killers and cringe-worthy anecdotes to last a lifetime. This guide gives you the knowledge to ensure every event you host is a roaring success.

The Simple 3-step Guide To Choosing The Right Event Speaker:

Step 1: Brief - Know your audience and your purpose

Step 2 Plan - Know the when, the where and the how much

Step 3 Execute - DIY vs Agency: Which is right for you?

CHOOSING THE RIGHT EVENT SPEAKER | THE BRIEF



Define Your Audience

In events, audience is king and catering to their needs will ultimately define which speaker is right for you. For example, if you're planning an internal event for the sales team, the type of speaker required will be very different to the type of speaker you'd want to entertain the Managing Directors of your prospective clients.

No-one wants to see the look on either the speaker or your boss' face when the tumbleweed drifts across the stage after the first joke.

DEFINE YOUR AUDIENCE

Paint a clear picture of your audience by considering all the options. Here's 9 essential questions you should ask to define your audience

- 1. Are they prospective clients or slightly rowdy colleagues?**
- 2. What is the age range?**
- 3. What will the education level be?**
- 4. How diverse will the audience be?**
- 5. What is the dress code?**
- 6. Will alcohol be served? (Trust us - even this matters!)**
- 7. What time are you hosting the event?**
- 8. Will there be food? A meal?**
- 9. Will the speech be before the food or after?**

Define Your Purpose

With such time pressure to deliver a successful event, some event organisers don't stop to consider why they're hosting an event in the first place. This is crucial for getting the right speaker, and more importantly, achieving the desired results.

Define Your Purpose

Define your primary purpose by asking yourself:

*What does a successful event mean to your organisation?
What is the overriding feeling you want your audience to take away?*

—— To Inspire

An inspirational speaker uses personal achievements, often deemed impossible, to highlight the possibilities of overcoming personal and work-related obstacles offering the inspiration to succeed.

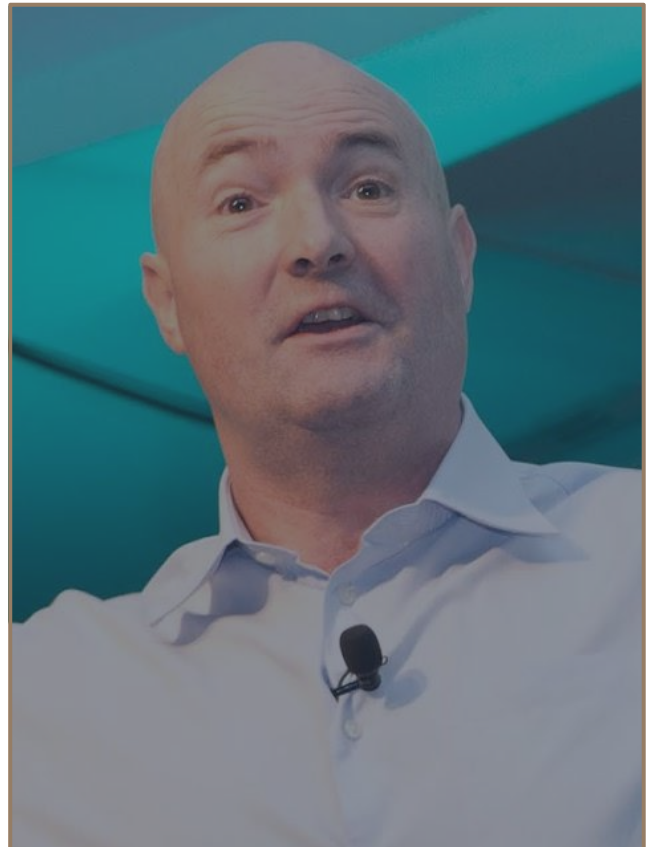


Sir Ranulph Fiennes

The World's Greatest Living Explorer's lifetime of expedition stories will leave your audience in awe and ready to take on any challenge.

—— To Motivate

A motivational speaker engages with delegates by empowering them with insights, tips and tools on particular key topics usually gained from personal experience.



Adrian Webster

This international best-selling business author delivers motivational key messages in an engaging, down to earth style that impacts a diverse range of people.

Define Your Purpose

To Educate

An educational speaker may have specific industry experience and knowledge and be able to provide actionable takeaways which can be used to improve your daily work routine.



Karren Brady

The UK's most high profile business woman, Karen's honest approach to business can give your team or clients actionable advice on improving your processes.

What If I Just Want To Sell Tickets?

Getting bums on seats is an important aspect for making your event a success and you may well be tempted to draft in a "big name" speaker to help achieve this. However, always keep in mind the relevancy of the speaker's content and how valuable this will be to your audience.

The return on investment (ROI) from any event is seldom obtained through ticket sales, but through the relationships and reputation gained from hosting a valuable and successful event.

CHOOSING THE RIGHT EVENT SPEAKER | THE PLAN



How To Choose

I will admit, the below has nothing to do with choosing a speaker for your event - yet, getting these parameters clear, even tentatively, can have a big impact on the choices available and appropriate as your killer event speaker.

Choosing The Right Event Speaker

— Time & Date

Selecting a time and date may seem a simple task but there's actually a lot to consider. Which time would be best for your audience and how will that affect the type of speaker you'll need? Are you hosting a breakfast event - how will it affect the mood of the event.

Our advice is to start off with a broad date range in mind and let a combination of your audience and the speaker's availability narrow that down to a couple of finite options.

— Location and Logistics

You'll usually want a location that is accessible for delegates, speakers and colleagues and you will also need to factor this into your event budget. The vast majority of speakers will happily travel anywhere as long as expenses are paid for and logistics are organised prior to the event.

Budget

As we have established, there is a lot more to consider than just the speaker fee, particularly when your event is a long distance from the speaker. When negotiating, make sure to iron the details of all costs required before confirming their services. The speaker may require travel expenses and overnight accommodation.

— Expenses

With expenses, you don't need to organise the particulars so this can often stretch your budget. The speaker may have specific requirements, such as type of hotel and the mode in which they will travel to your event.

Although speaker fees can rise to astronomical levels (think Barack Obama or Tony Blair), the average fee for motivational speakers in our experience is between £2,000 – £20,000.

A man with a beard and a microphone is speaking, pointing his right index finger upwards. He is wearing a light-colored button-down shirt and a watch. The background is dark and out of focus. A quote is overlaid on the image, flanked by two horizontal lines.

*“With event speakers, price does not
always affect quality.”*

Why are some speakers more expensive than others?

This is one of the most common questions I get asked and the answer is always the same:

“With event speakers, price does not always affect quality.”

In essence, you don't always get what you pay for - and this is a good thing. However limited your budget (as long as there is some budget, well £1,500 minimum), you will be able to book a motivational speaker that's right for your event.

There are 3 main reasons why a speaker is more expensive:

— Experience

The more experienced a speaker is on the circuit, the more their price will rise. This is because their performance will be more polished and they will be able to prepare at short notice.

— Availability

The busier a speaker is, the more their price can sometimes rise - simple supply and demand. This might be because they are an expert on a niche topic like Brexit or they've just captained a Rugby World Cup winning side.

— Fame

If the speaker is a household name that will attract ticket sales solely on their appearance, the speaker will naturally be able to command a higher rate.

Paying for a famous name can be a sure-fire way to sell tickets but it doesn't guarantee to leave your audience feeling motivated.

Be wary of being dazzled by a famous name. Think again about the primary purpose of the event and what you want to achieve. Do you need a star name at a high price or would a, less well known, specialist in your sector be a better fit?

CHOOSING THE RIGHT EVENT SPEAKER | EXECUTE



CHOOSING THE EVENT RIGHT SPEAKER

Now you know the pillar details of your event and you have a plan and budget to stick to, you should be in a position to get the right speaker to make your event unforgettable. The choice now is whether to execute your plan DIY or to seek some expert advice.

Choosing The Right Event Speaker

DIY

If you decide to go it alone, you will have to be more methodical, forthright and trust in your gut as to who the right speaker is. However, there are a number of things you can do to minimise the risks.

— CREATE A SHORTLIST

This should be a comprehensive shortlist complete with availability, type of speaker, fee and expenses mapped onto an Excel spreadsheet. Depending on availability and status, it may be that you can only negotiate directly with their agent or PA so it might be difficult to get concrete answers to a lot of these questions.

— CHECK RELIABILITY

When hosting any event, your biggest worries are:

*What if the speaker
doesn't show up?*

*What if they do show
up but they're
terrible?*

Guarding against this can be difficult on your own because there aren't any handy TripAdvisor-esque review sites to depend upon. The best approach is to assess the speaker's website to see if there are any testimonials or videos and ask any friends who have booked speakers in the past.

Once you have made contact, assess how professional their relationship is with you and make an informed decision based on that. Then, make sure to get an acceptance in writing whether this is a letter or an email. This won't act as a legally binding contract but can deter speakers from dropping out.

CAN YOU PREPARE FOR A DROP OUT?

If the worst does happen, and your speaker does drop out, getting a credible speaker at the last minute is next to impossible without an agency.

However it can look like incredible foresight if you've already thought to ask a charismatic colleague to prepare a backup speech.

Choosing The Right Event Speaker

AGENCY

Most of the advantages of using an agency when booking a motivational speaker seem obvious. Years of experience, established contacts, people who do this sort of thing for a living. All Talent Agencies have these things to a lesser or greater extent. However, a lot of the advantages of using a great agency are unspoken - they're not things we can advertise on the site or make a big song and dance about.

Here's what to expect from a great agency:

— KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERTISE

By partnering with an established agency, you should be guaranteed a sales process that involves getting to know your event, your audience your purpose and aligning you with a shortlist of suitable speakers. With years of experience, they will be able to collaborate with you in creating a shortlist and arranging to speak to them to define concrete dates.

But the great agencies can give you a heads up from behind an open palm.

“I wouldn't book so and so if it's going to be a morning do” or “The last three gigs I've booked with such a body were incredibly stressful.”

— CHOICE

Agencies have spent years building relationships with hundreds of top UK and international speakers, so that you can select from a range of reliable speakers with ease. If you need to know more about individual speakers, you can discuss this with knowledgeable agents who will often know the speakers personally.

But the great agencies are the ones that will ask, “If your event is for x you should really consider so-and-so - I know they're not on your list but they're really engaging, they'd be perfect for this and well within your budget.”

Choosing The Right Event Speaker

AGENCY

— RELIABILITY

In addition to strong relationships, speakers are contracted with agencies which reduces the chance of a last minute drop out. Furthermore, a good agency can often provide a testimonial from a real life company who have used your prospective speaker in the past.

The agent you want is the one that cares enough about your event to let you know if the speaker you want is doing a talk in Dubai the night before, or is notorious for running late and knows that your shareholders are going to be there. By partnering with an agent you can trust, you can give yourself the best chance of booking the right speaker.

— SPEED

An agency can contact more speakers more quickly than someone looking to DIY, which is crucial if time is of the essence. If you're looking to book a speaker on a short timeframe, an agent is a lot more likely to be able to get hold of a quality speaker - that's their job. A great agent will go above and beyond.

They'll understand the urgency, that getting a good speaker booked and confirmed means you'll only have one sleepless night before the event - not 7 in the entire week preceding it. They'll keep in touch and keep making suggestions until you're in the clear.

— LAST MINUTE

The best thing about working with an agent that you trust and like, is that you know they have your back. If it's all going wrong, you can call them up - they've done this before, they know you, and they can get stuck in to sorting it all out. If you've - god forbid - had a last minute dropout, the agent you want is the one you can call up at no notice and trust them to leap on the grenade and do everything they can to ensure your event goes ahead smoothly and that your audience walks out motivated, inspired and educated.

There are a lot of great speakers out there, waiting to inspire and motivate. We hope this guide will help you find the right one for your next event.

GORDON POOLE WHO WE ARE

For over 50 years the Gordon Poole Agency has been supplying Celebrity Entertainers, Keynote Speakers and Guest Speakers to International Organisations, Media Corporations, PR Companies and to thousands of private individuals around the world. So if anybody know the process of choosing motivational speakers - it's us!

A family business, the Gordon Poole Agency prides itself on having a reputation of delivering a reliable, personal and efficient service offering both the talent and booker a hassle-free experience.

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