



How to Handle the Marketing and Sales Process

The marketing and sales process is one of the most challenging areas in a speaker's business. If a speaker is unable to make enough in speaking fees to sustain his or her business, the business will not survive. Getting speaking engagements is job one. There are a lot of moving parts that must be executed simultaneously to the marketing and sales process.

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Marketing is how a speaker builds awareness for his or her expertise and topics. **Sales** is how a speaker qualifies leads for a speaking engagement and then how he or she gets the contract for the engagement.

The Role of the Speaker in Marketing and Sales

There are four primary roles for the speaker in marketing and sales:

1. Branding - What makes the speaker different and why someone might hire him or her and for what purposes?
2. Identifying the target market (the natural audience for the topic) - Who is the ideal client? What is the correct pricing for different types of speeches for various types of clients?
3. Creating a plan and setting goals - What are the best tactics for attracting the target market?
4. Approaching prospects and sponsors and closing sales - Initial sales conversations, pitching the speech, negotiating fees and other perks, and closing the sale.

Branding

The speaker's first role is branding. Speakers are in charge of knowing how to differentiate themselves. They are the ones who come up with new speaking topics, article ideas, book ideas, and product ideas. The VSA can certainly provide input about what they might see from other speakers or in reading what is going on in the industry, but that's not their job. The VSA supports the implementation of anything the speaker decides to do.

Target Market

The speaker is in charge of defining the ideal client. This is probably a client for whom the audience is the same as the audience for the speaker and his or her topics. The speaker will want a client who needs what he or she provides - a keynote, training, workshops - whatever will work best for this audience. And of course, the client's budget must match what the speaker wants to charge for his or her work.

The speaker also needs to know what distribution systems are the best for them. Are they more likely to find speaking engagements working with a speaker's bureau or talking to corporate training directors? Various types of clients respond to different sales styles and the more the speaker can understand the challenges of the client, the better he or she can speak that language and help the client meet the needs of the audience. Determining the target market is not the job of the VSA, but knowing who the speaker wants the target market to be, is.

Marketing Strategy and Activities

One of the first things to think about when planning marketing activities is the speaker's goals in terms of number of speaking engagements for the year. What is already booked and what activities will have to be undertaken to get to the ultimate goal number (ex: 25-30, 30-50, 50-75, 75-100 or 100+)?

This is where the VSA can really shine. Once the speaker has decided what marketing activities would work best to attract the types of clients he or she wants, the VSA can help with the execution, including website updating and maintenance, keeping the media kit up to date, updating the

speaker one sheet as new testimonials come in, distributing the newsletter and highlighting the speaker, his or her products and events in social media. We will be covering all of these activities in much more detail in this section and others in this course.

Approaching Prospects

Speakers should be the ones to approach prospects and carry through the sales cycle. Because they are so busy with other things and asking for work is such an intimidating experience, they often want someone to do this part for them and they will ask the VSA to do it. It is not a good idea for the VSA to email or telephone prospects, except to follow up when the speaker has already had initial discussions. This is not a fair position to put the VSA in because the VSA doesn't know the market well enough to have the kind of discussion that will lead to a sales. If the VSA doesn't make the sale, or says something wrong out of inexperience, the speaker may blame him or her for the loss of opportunity. So it is critical for the VSA to really have strong boundaries about what he or she is an expert at and know when a client or potential client should be talking to the speaker. If the potential client has strategy or other high level questions the VSA should refer that client to a resource that has the market intelligence to answer those questions effectively.

Approaching Potential Sponsors

It is also possible for a speaker to talk to potential sponsors on working with an event or organization to pay the speaking fees if this is a problem for the host organization (maybe a non-profit). There are many ways to make it worth the investment for the sponsor, including having the sponsor introduce the speaker and sell products or services at the event. Many times the event host will approach the potential sponsor, but if the speaker has a prior productive relationship with the sponsor (including buying a volume of the speaker's books, CDs or DVDs), then the speaker may be the best person to talk to the sponsor.

The VSAs Role in Marketing and Sales

The VSAs primary roles are in three areas:

1. **Logistical support.** Making sure that the speaker knows what he or she is supposed to do and when to do it. Also making sure the speaker has everything needed in order to implement the plan, such as keeping the database up to date with the correct information so that when the speaker calls a prospect the appointment time has been confirmed and the information on the prospect is correct.
2. **Enforcement of boundaries.** Weeding out the prospects that are not a good fit, maintaining key relationships with speakers bureaus and prospects and providing a buffer between all the potential distractions and the speaker.
3. **Coordination of marketing tools.** This includes coordinating the website updates and maintenance, coordinating newsletters and social networking and making sure marketing tools are available. Marketing tools include online elements as well as the physical elements:
 - Business cards
 - One sheets (ready to print)
 - Postcards
 - Stickers to add to folders and envelopes to customize them
 - Demo Videos

Finally it includes sending out information to prospects and making sure that any tasks that support the marketing and sales efforts get done.

The VSA has a management coordination role. If the VSA has good sales skills, and if he or she decides with the speaker to take an active role in selling the speaker, he or she should make that a separate project and charge for it separately, because this is a very, very slippery slope. Many speakers need sales help, and so they are looking for that perfect sales person who can do what maybe the speaker can't. VSAs must decide if they can really jump on the phone and cold call for speakers. Because once they take on that responsibility if it doesn't go well that is a good way to lose your primary work as a VSA.



Speaker Marketing Plan

Expected Speaking Engagements this Year: _____

Time to Spend	Activity	Notes	Who	When
30% Basics				
<input type="checkbox"/>	Website/Media Kit	Content or brochure website		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Testimonials	Do separate plan		
<input type="checkbox"/>	One Sheet	2-sided Full color		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Demo Video			
<input type="checkbox"/>	Newsletter	Once a month		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Blog/Community	Once a month minimum		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Articles	5-12 maximizes effort - tips, top 10s		
30% Outreach				
<input type="checkbox"/>	Email/Postcard Campaigns	Speaker's Bureaus, Meeting Planners, Association Execs		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Webinars/Teleclasses			
25% Media				
<input type="checkbox"/>	Media List	Do separate plan - Bloggers, Columnists, Interviewers		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Dream Media List	Your top 5		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Media Strategy	National/International naturally relevant dates to market the speaking tour		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Social Networking Plan	Do separate plan		
15% Big Wild Ideas				
<input type="checkbox"/>	National/International Events	Spend a half-hour a week brainstorming possibilities		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Sponsors			
Maybe Later				
<input type="checkbox"/>	Virtual Product Launch			
<input type="checkbox"/>	Surveys/Polls	Report to media and in blog		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Membership			
<input type="checkbox"/>	Exhibiting			
<input type="checkbox"/>	Training/Facilitators			