



# How to Manage the Speaker's Calendar

**Handling the speaker's calendar is a lot like juggling – the VSA has to keep a lot of balls in the air at one time. Logistics make the difference between a rested, vibrant speaker ready to make a great speech and a stressed and struggling pro who performs well but not great.**

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For many speakers, the speech is a chief way they get other business. So not only is the VSA scheduling the speech and travel itself but also all the ancillary activities around the speech that makes the event more profitable. You will want to establish a way of sharing the speaker's calendar (usually using an online application) so that either one of you can make changes at a moment's notice that the other can see.

## Calendar Activities

VSAs handle several different kinds of calendaring activities:

1. Actual speaking engagements (sold dates)
2. Hold dates (see Section 3-1 for more details)
3. Travel dates
4. Sales calls and related deadlines
5. Deadlines for ongoing projects such as blogging and special projects such as website upgrades
6. Personal time so no conflicts occur
7. If the speaker is also a coach, consultant or trainer, client meetings must be scheduled as well

## Scheduling the Speech and Travel

For every speaking engagement, there are three things that need to be scheduled for that time:

- The speech itself and travel to and from
- Activities to promote and customize the speech
- Activities that get leads and revenue after the speech.

The role of the speaker is to give a great speech that's customized to the audience. To do that the speaker needs to be fresh and ready to go when he or she hits that stage. Speakers also need to be seen as easy to work with, once they hit the ground, they're hitting the ground running. They're meeting with people, sometimes they have a welcome reception, if they're a keynote speaker, they're doing a lot of

networking before they speak. They also handle any book signings or product sales during the time of the event. They are answering questions and if they're a celebrity people are taking their picture.

Another thing you need to ask the speaker about is energy level and approach to meetings in general. How long do they want to stay at the meeting and network? Some speakers are high-energy and burn the candle at both ends until they get home; they will stay the duration of the meeting and network. Other speakers will either want down time to prepare for their speech beforehand or wind down afterwards; some will even want to get back home as soon as possible after the speech. Every speaker is different so this needs to be addressed at the beginning of your relationship. The best approach is to include this information in your Speaker's Travel Preference form so you can follow their wishes as much as possible.

## Down Time After an Event

Usually the day after a speaker comes back from a speech, the speaker needs some time in the office to get caught up on phone calls and e-mails and talk to you. Some speakers also need time to come down from that performers high, so it's usually a good idea not to schedule any important conference calls or meetings the day they get back. The VSA needs to get in touch with the rhythm of a speaker. Is she a night person, a night owl or an early riser? How does he schedule his own days? The VSA is an important partner in managing the speaker's energy and helping them be their best when it counts.

## Using Online Calendaring Services

Most speakers have online calendars either through the database such as ACT or Goldmine and/or a local copy via Outlook. The first step is to find out what

system the speaker uses if there is a calendaring system already in place.

Going over changes in the calendar is an essential agenda item for the weekly calls between the VSA and the speaker.

A popular way to manage the many speaker activities is via color coding. For example:

Speaking engagements = blue

Dates holding but not finalized yet = red

Travel days = orange

Sales calls = green

Projects = purple

Personal time = pink

Client meetings = yellow

The key is keeping the system current at all times and creating a way that you and the speaker can instantly see his or her availability.

There are also online services to help with the speaker's calendar and then post the events on the speaker's website. The most popular one is [www.eSpeakers.com](http://www.eSpeakers.com).

There are various levels of service, but the most useful for speakers will be about \$75 a month and includes multi-user Calendaring, Event Management and Marketing connections, such as social networking. If your speaker is booking engagements at least 4 times a month, this is probably worth considering.

## The VSA's Role in the Process

1. Make sure you have the Speaker Travel Preferences form completed so you can book travel in the best way for the speaker.
2. Keep track of when the speaker talks about events, client appointments, etc. to make sure everything gets on the calendar and is color-coded the right way.
3. Keep the calendar current, minute by minute, so it is always up to date.
4. Print or back up the calendar regularly - losing this data would create a crisis in the office.
5. Make sure the speaker has access to the calendar and decide who will be updating it - either one of you or both of you.