Choosing a Speaker Who Fits Your Needs

Key factors to discuss with your speakers bureau

by Diane Goodman, CMP | December 01, 2013

FOLLOW-UP

- Did the speaker add value to the meeting’s theme?
- Did the speaker meet your expectations and those of your attendees?
- Did attendees respond well to the presentation?
  In what ways?
- Share your thoughts and impressions of the speaker, as well as those from your attendees and executives, with the speakers bureau. Feedback will be helpful in the future.

The following checklist was compiled
by Diane Goodman, CMP, president of the
Goodman Speakers Bureau
(goodmanspeakersbureau.com) in Windsor, Conn. Planners should consider the following before collaborating with a speakers bureau; such information can be a great aid to both the bureau and the speaker.

Key logistical elements
- What is the name, date and location of your meeting?
- How flexible are the date and time, should you want to hire a specific speaker?

• How often is your meeting held?

Audience Demographics
- How many attendees do you expect?
- What are their titles and education backgrounds? What company divisions to they represent?
- What is the age range?
• What is the male-to-female ratio?

**Senior leader perspectives**

• What books are your senior leaders reading?

• What challenges are your industry, organization and/or audience facing?

• What personal interests inspire your executive team? Are they fans of a particular sport? Are they strictly business in the workplace, or have they demonstrated an interest in humor, creative thinking, music or science?

**Meeting objectives**

• What is the overall objective or purpose of the meeting?

• Does the meeting have a strategic message or program theme?

• Can you relate the theme directly to a particular kind of speaker or speaking style? For instance, would the theme be relevant to a recognized business leader, industry expert, celebrity or sports figure? Does the theme lend itself to a style that is motivational, humorous, interactive or educational?

• How will the meeting structure communicate the theme or message?

• Where on the agenda would the speaker be most effective?

**Expectations of the speaker**

• In what way do you expect the speaker to reinforce the meeting’s theme or message?

• Is there an ideal takeaway you’d like the attendees to get from the speaker’s presentation?

• What would you like the speaker to do, if anything, in addition to delivering the presentation? Are you interested in a book signing, question-and-answer session, attendance at a reception or follow-up webcast?

• How important do you feel the speaker’s role is with respect to the meeting’s success?

• What are your budget parameters, and are they in line with what value you are placing on the speaker’s contribution to the meeting’s success?

**Past experiences**

• Who is the best speaker you’ve had in the past, and why?
• Who was the worst speaker you’ve had, and why?

• If your first speaker choice were unavailable, how significantly would that affect your meeting? Would it lessen interest from potential attendees, upset executives or alter the agenda you’ve developed?