

HOW TO BECOME A **PROFESSIONAL SPEAKER**

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DOUGLAS KRUGER is a full-time professional speaker and 5x winner of the SA Championships for Public Speaking, hosted by Toastmasters International. See him in action, read his articles, or sign up for his newsletter at www.douglaskruger.co.za.

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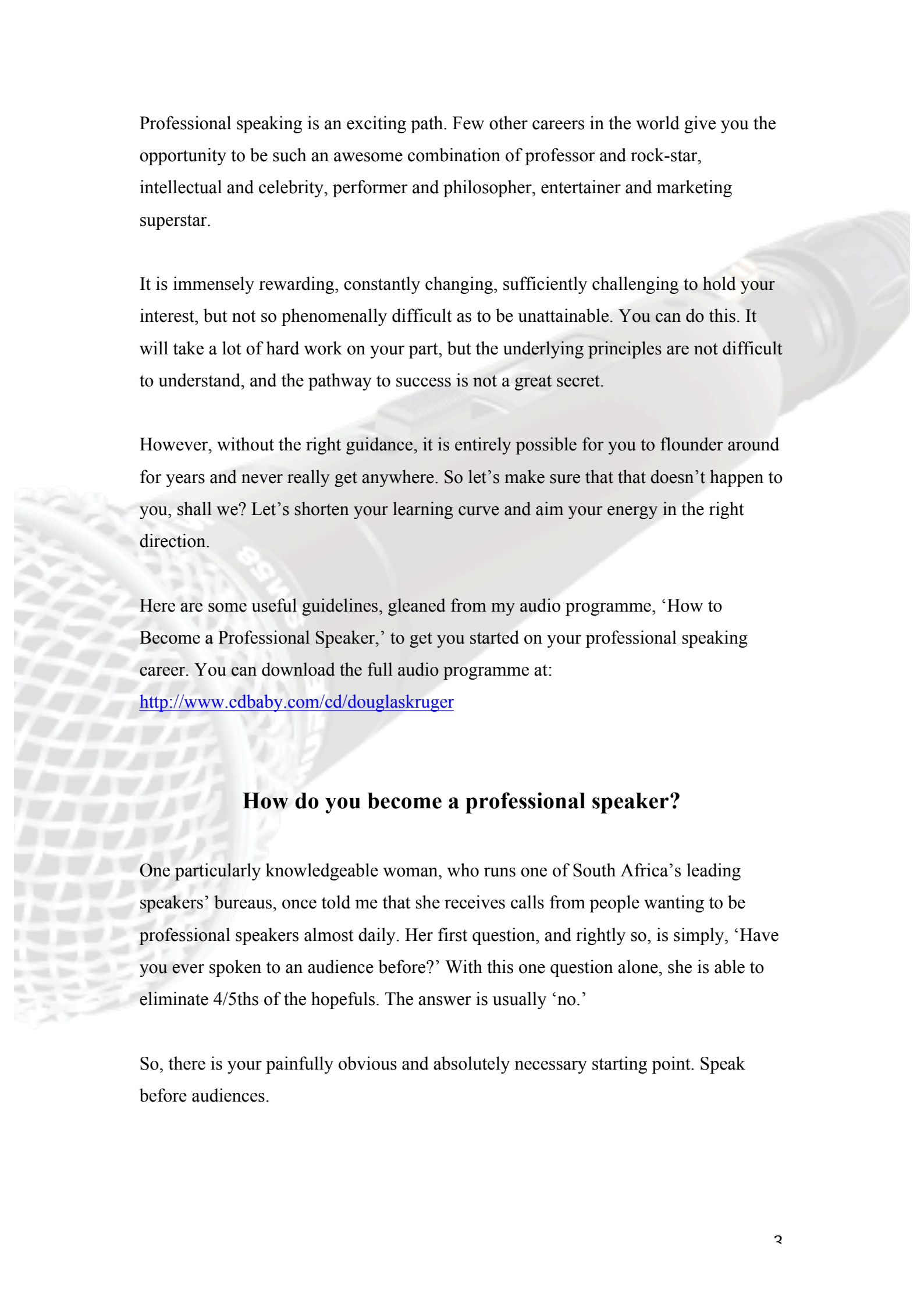
WELCOME TO MY WORLD!

Congratulations on choosing a fascinating career-path. Half a century ago, it didn't even exist as a paid vocation. Today, it's an industry. And on that note, here's your first useful tip. Yes, you are entering the speaking industry.

But actually, you are entering a number of different industries. For starters, you are entering the meetings and events industry. Moreover, you are entering the 'corporate success' industry. You're also getting into publishing, marketing, PR and theatre, but we will explore those ideas later.

What difference do these additions make? Well, if you think of yourself as a member of the speaking industry only, your emphasis might be a little too heavily focused on yourself, and the genius of your own public speaking skills. If you think of yourself as a member of the meetings and events industry, or a member of the corporate success industry, you start to look at your target market, to consider their needs, to grow yourself in such a way that you fit what your market wants. You start to think of this career path as a genuine business.

It's the difference between saying, 'I speak on a stage for money,' versus, 'I help corporate companies to meet their goals through various channels.'



Professional speaking is an exciting path. Few other careers in the world give you the opportunity to be such an awesome combination of professor and rock-star, intellectual and celebrity, performer and philosopher, entertainer and marketing superstar.

It is immensely rewarding, constantly changing, sufficiently challenging to hold your interest, but not so phenomenally difficult as to be unattainable. You can do this. It will take a lot of hard work on your part, but the underlying principles are not difficult to understand, and the pathway to success is not a great secret.

However, without the right guidance, it is entirely possible for you to flounder around for years and never really get anywhere. So let's make sure that that doesn't happen to you, shall we? Let's shorten your learning curve and aim your energy in the right direction.

Here are some useful guidelines, gleaned from my audio programme, 'How to Become a Professional Speaker,' to get you started on your professional speaking career. You can download the full audio programme at:

<http://www.cdbaby.com/cd/douglaskruger>

How do you become a professional speaker?

One particularly knowledgeable woman, who runs one of South Africa's leading speakers' bureaus, once told me that she receives calls from people wanting to be professional speakers almost daily. Her first question, and rightly so, is simply, 'Have you ever spoken to an audience before?' With this one question alone, she is able to eliminate 4/5ths of the hopefuls. The answer is usually 'no.'

So, there is your painfully obvious and absolutely necessary starting point. Speak before audiences.

The idea of wanting to be a professional speaker, if you have never spoken in front of an audience, strikes me as absurd. It's like proclaiming that you want to be a professional ice-hockey player when you don't know how to ice-skate. How do you know that you will enjoy it? Or that you can even do it?

The business of public speaking, which has its own intricacies and internal dynamics, is certainly not a 'get-rich-quick' profession. It can be very well paid, indeed, immensely lucrative, but it requires hard work, a high level of speaking skill and the patience necessary to acquire experience. It takes years to earn good money as a speaker. And you're not going to put in the years if you discover that you don't actually like it.

Step one to becoming a professional speaker, therefore, is learning to speak. The fact that you are consuming information like this programme is a good sign, and I encourage you to consume more such material, but your interest should not be merely academic. If your intention is to make a profession out of speaking, get out there and speak... Anywhere. Everywhere.

Speak for anyone. Speak for everyone who will have you! Start practising and see what it's really like. You may discover that you *don't* like it. Or you may discover that it's pure bliss. But you'll never know until you've tried.

My friend Darren Le Croix, who started by winning the Toastmasters World Championships and transitioned into full time professional speaking, says that it's all about 'stage-time, stage-time, stage-time.'

Professional speaker Rory Vaden was told by a big name speaker that he could come for mentorship 'after he had spoken for over 100 audiences for free.'

After the hundred speeches, Rory didn't really need the mentoring. It was the mentoring. So your first practical take-away task from this programme is this: Speak, speak, speak. Go and speak anywhere that they will have you, Toastmasters clubs, schools, staff meetings. Take any and every opportunity you can get to rise to your

feet and address human beings. I particularly recommend Toastmasters clubs, because you can speed up the process.

Once you're a member of one club, you can go and speak at any club that will have you. This means you can speak as often as you want and need. Not only that, but you will receive qualified and competent feedback from people who know what they are looking for. I joined Toastmasters International when I turned 18, and I am still a member to this day.

At this early stage, your topic will not be as important as getting the speaking practice.

But, of course, once you have some speaking skills in place, the next thing you will need is a topic (or number of topics) to offer to the market. Here's a useful way of orienting your thinking, and I'd really like you to take this idea to heart: Try to regard your topics as 'products', rather than just 'talks.'

Why is that important?

Well, for starters, they are products. You have to sell them to buyers, which makes each presentation a product. Although we share many elements in common with performers, music stars and theatrical entertainers, our one great difference is that we are not a theatrical play for its own sake. We are a product that must be sold to buyers, and usually, to companies. The fact that our product finds its expression through various forms of theatricality is secondary. The primary thing that we sell is a useful idea that helps people to grow.

So don't think of it as a talk. Think of it as a product.

A *talk* can be given on absolutely any subject, like 'Exploring Nail-biting,' or 'My Pet Iguana.' But a *product* is something that companies will pay real money to hear, along the lines of 'Disruptive Changes that Will Affect Your Industry,' or 'How to Think Like a Winner During Recession.'

If you want to make a profession out of speaking, you'll need to earn money from it. Unless you speak on a topic that companies or social groups are willing to pay money to hear, you will not earn an adequate income.

This is not to say, however, that all speakers *must* offer topics with a distinctly corporate appeal. You can actually offer a wide variety of subjects, and still be in demand as a paid speaker. The key is to provide either training, insights into strategy, specialised knowledge, or something of human interest, *that is deemed useful or necessary*. In other words, you need to provide a product that sells.

Here are some actual topics (*products*) being used by people who are earning a living as paid speaker:

- * Sales (Lots of people speak on sales. There is money to be made here. For that reason, though, it's a highly-saturated market. Do you have something new or different to say that might set you apart from the herd?)

- * Leadership (Similar story to Sales, but a unique angle that offers valuable ideas will certainly sell. And, of course, there are about a trillion different angles on leadership, like 'how to be a leader versus a manager; developing eq as a leader; leading in tough times, and so on.)

- * Communication skills

- * Body language

- * Effective flirting (No kidding! This is quite a popular talk.)

- * Entrepreneurship

- * Creating a vision for a company

- * Creating a vision for your life

- * Trends and future-planning

- * Disruptive changes and how to prepare for them

- * Scorpions and their lifestyles (again – no kidding!)

- * Understanding the differences between generations

- * Understanding the differences between the genders

- * Time-management

- * How to become more creative

- * How to become more productive

How to Innovate

- * How to use both sides of your brain together
- * How to live a more balanced life
- * How to overcome fear and take chances
- * How to become a professional speaker (There is a HUGE market in the US and UK for this talk, and there are speakers who make a killing out of talking on it full-time, exclusively for audiences of wannabe speakers).
 - * Lessons from Nature
 - * Lessons from Bushmen
 - * Scenario planning
 - * The classic ‘I Climbed a Mountain’ talk
 - * The derivative ‘I hiked or swam a great distance, got hijacked, survived a war, had both legs chopped off and got eaten by a shark’ talk
 - * The celebrity talk (I play rugby and have a range of expensive clothing named after me – hear my wisdom)
 - * and so on.

It’s well worth noting that in almost all cases (except for inspirational stories), there is always something an audience will *gain* from your speech. They will learn, grow or develop in some way that justifies your fee. In fact, I might even argue that in the case of inspirational speakers, audiences receive both inspiration and entertainment. These are tradable commodities.

Entertainment is also an important component. I can’t count the number of times I’ve heard a client share insight on a specialist that sounded something like, ‘He really knows his stuff, but he was so boring!’ Entertainment factor does matter.

Many speakers have just a single topic and become very well known for it. They advocate the idea that it’s actually more powerful, in terms of marketing yourself, to stick to one concept and become known for it.

Which approach is best? The one that evolves naturally for you over time.

I believe that my topics do all intersect. Essentially, they are about the links between work and wealth. You could sum up all of my topics using the phrase: Working smarter in order to become wealthier. That's my thing. That's what I do. And I make sure that each time I do it, I offer a solid mix of useful ideas and information, and humour and entertainment.

So having honed your speaking skills, and having developed at least one product, your next step is to start marketing yourself. Congratulations! You have arrived... at the bulk of your work. In fact, you will need to come to terms with the idea that 90 per cent of your business, as a professional speaker, will comprise of marketing yourself. That's most of what we do. At least initially. The good news is that it can actually be a great deal of fun. Think about it: Your primary task is to grab a metaphorical microphone and spend your days telling the world about your value. Talk about an ego trip!

14 OPTIONS FOR MARKETING YOURSELF

Marketing really is everything. If people don't know about you, they won't book you. If people don't know about you, you can't earn money. If people don't know about you, it doesn't matter how astonishingly good your speaking skills may be, or how devastatingly clever and interesting are the ideas in your keynote. Get known. Create desire for what you do. That's your primary task in building your career.

And you have a number of different options in this regard. Some speakers only do one or two things to build their careers, and become quite successful that way. Some use the full mix. You'll soon see which marketing approaches get the best results for you. And what are the best results? Bookings. Bookings are the goal. Without paying clients who ask you to speak at their events, you don't have a career.

Some marketing doesn't lead directly to bookings. It just increases your total visibility. Some increases your credibility, so that when you are being considered for a booking, you come across as a better option than the other speakers who are also being considered.

We'll take a look at each option in turn, but here's an overview of the ways in which you can market yourself:

You can:

1. Be undeniably awesome every time you speak
2. Speak for free
3. Write a book
4. Develop products and programmes
5. Design marketing materials
6. Maintain a Database
7. Write articles
8. Appear in the media
9. Use social media
10. Contact speakers agencies
11. Develop celebrity in other areas
12. Network with the right people
13. Make direct contact
14. Create special offers (win a speech)

1. Be undeniably awesome every time you speak

Nothing on earth will promote you quite as effectively as you, in action, being undeniably awesome! It doesn't happen often in the early stages of a speaker's career, but as you get better and better at your stage-craft, your magic, your entertainment-factor, your engagement with the audience; the total brilliance of what you do; you will start finding that speeches generate more speeches.

Some speakers rarely have to do any marketing at all, because their gigs simply create more gigs. Each time they speak, they are asked to speak again.

I want to stress, however, that this is rare. Most speakers, and even the really, really good ones, do have to market themselves.

Nevertheless, your capacity to mesmerize and awe an audience is undoubtedly your number one marketing tool.

2. Speak for free

Again, I recommend this to every speaker who truly wants to launch a career, and so does almost every other successful professional speaker. It's called paying your dues, but it's not a punishment. It's actually a very clever and effective way of building a career.

Speak for free for anyone who will have you around: schools, businesses, social clubs etc. The objective is twofold: to practise, and to become known. Your speeches are your greatest marketing tool. As I mentioned in Number one; Many professionals will confirm that their biggest source of revenue is repeat bookings and referrals; the blessed 'That was great! Could you come and speak for us?' scenario.

If and when you do speak *for free*, be sure to collect testimonials, and to have the MC mention that you are available to replicate this talk for corporate companies.

Then, make sure that your details are available afterwards. Take cards and brochures along with you. Be easy to find and contact.

And possibly the most important part of all, try to film every speech that you do. Better still, when it's a big speech in front of a good audience in an impressive auditorium, try to have someone who knows what they are doing film you.

Video footage of yourself in action is very, very important to you. Some speakers argue that it is your single most important marketing tool. And while it is important that the video should be as high-quality and as well filmed as possible, there is also an effect of the total weight of video footage. In other words, even if it's not Spielberg, the fact that you have a good number of speech clips available to view online can, by itself, increase your credibility.

Video matters greatly. Get as much of it as you can. Get as high-quality as you can arrange or afford.

3. Write a book

To quote the exact words of the owner of a speaker's bureau: 'When you have written a book, people regard you as one step down from God.'

Nothing increases your credibility, or visibility, quite like having a book in print. And it's not critical that your book should be a Dostoyevskian masterpiece and a New York Times bestseller. It's the simple fact of the thing that counts. Publish a book and you are regarded as an authority.

I speak about this principle in my book '50 Ways to Position Yourself as an Expert' as well. It is immensely important as a profiling tool.

The second advantage of publishing a book is that you can use it to gain publicity. You, or your publisher if you're fortunate enough to have a good one; might send out press-releases to television or radio talk-shows, and ask to be interviewed. There are many things you can do to enhance your marketing efforts with a book behind your name.

Some speakers' agents urge their clients to consider self-publishing instead of submitting their manuscript to a publisher. Their rationale is that potentially you can make more money by selling your own books after your presentations than by having them on the shelf in bookstores, where you profit per book is less.

The counter-argument, of course, is that a publisher can achieve greater reach for you by retailing your books. And there is an element of satisfaction to having your book 'accepted' rather than simply paying for its publication yourself.

There is no doubt that being accepted by a publisher carries much greater credibility and total clout. If you can, I would recommend going this route.

I've done both. I've also used a blended model, in which a corporate client of mine paid for a print-run of self-published books in return for a small strip of branding on the cover and a foreword. When I've self-published, however, I have always used a professional editor and typesetter. There is no excuse for a sloppy book, riddled with errors. That can actually do more harm to your reputation than good.

Writing a book is an excellent way to boost your speaking career, and although the profit margins from book sales are not generally very high, they do add an additional income stream to your total revenue. And as I mentioned before, if you sell a book and a CD and a DVD, you have greatly increased your total profit from a single event. That brings us to marketing idea number four:

4. Develop products and programmes

As a speaker, the number of products you can develop and sell is limited only by your imagination and willingness to put in the work. The great thing about products is that once they are developed, and once you've paid to have them produced, the profits grow exponentially. Develop one audio CD, and you'll always have one to sell.

Increase it to three, and you will always have three items selling, and so on.

Video and audio products are usually perceived as being easier to create than writing a book, and they're often quicker too. It may not rank on the same level as writing a book in the world of public perceptions, but it's certainly an excellent idea. I currently have four different audio CD's and three different DVD's on offer, in addition to my books.

Why have multiple products? Because if your followership likes what you do, they will buy as much as you will offer. I am sometimes amazed by the people who will approach the products desk after a speech and ask for one of everything. That's a lot of money for a person to spend on you in one go, but people certainly do it.

There are two ways in which you can go about recording a programme, be it audio or video. Either you can do the recording in private, talking into a microphone or camera

(usually from a script) or you can record a talk or training session you do live, and turn that into a CD or DVD.

Many experts choose to do a combination of the two. They might, for example, produce an audio CD that goes like this:

(Studio voice-over): “Hi, my name is Joanne. Thanks for buying my course on social skills. I’d like to start by sharing with you some tips on how to overcome social anxiety. Listen to what I told this audience...”

(Cuts to public presentation, recorded live): “There are five ways to overcome social anxiety...” And so on.

So, which should you do first: A book or CD?

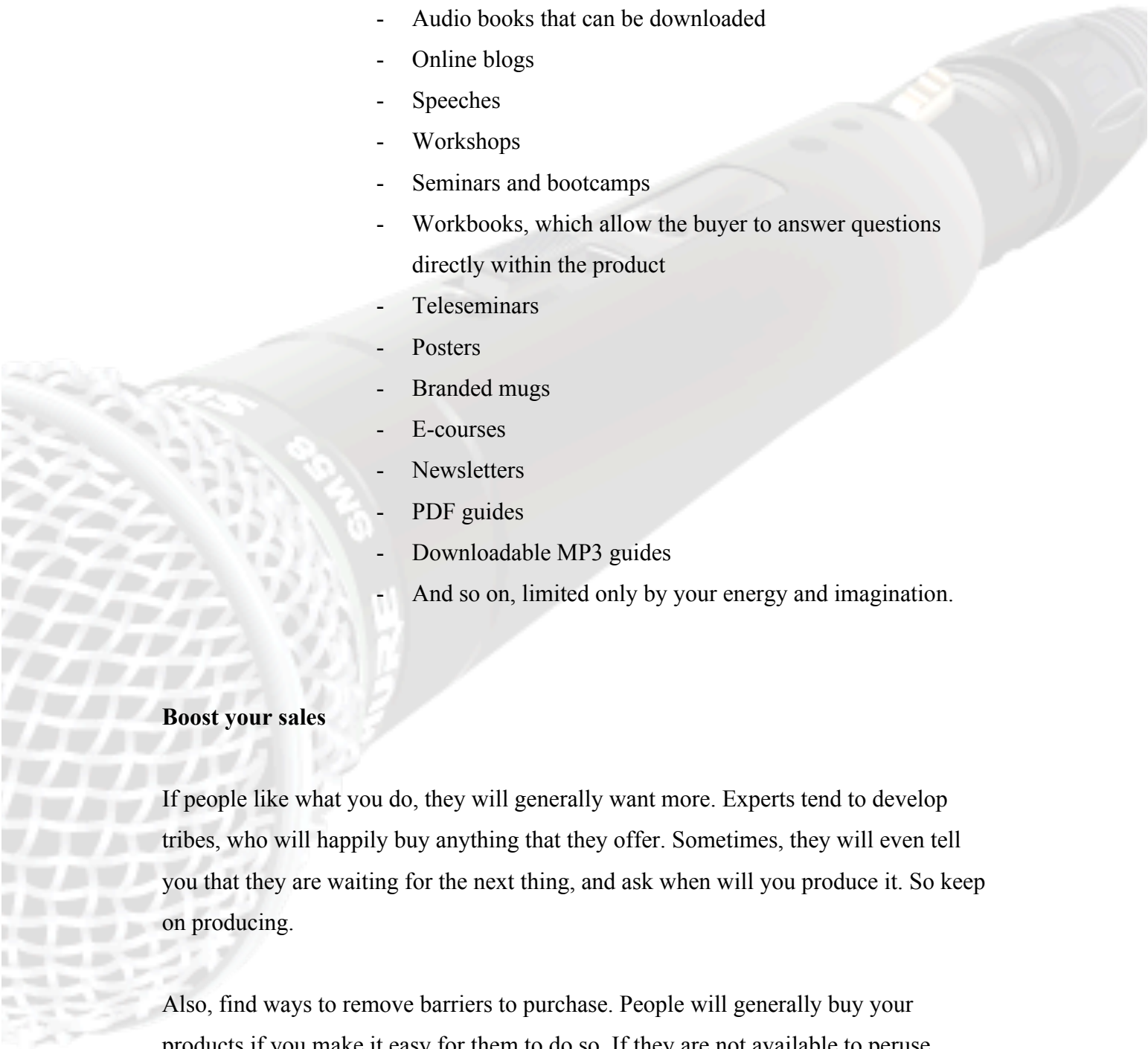
CDs and DVDs are quicker. So if you’re in a rush to get a product out and start building credibility, you might start by recording two or three audio CD’s and a video, and begin to market yourself with these, whilst writing a book in the background.

Personally, I did it the other way around, and started with the book. But the choice is yours, just be sure to become a producer of materials soon. And don’t stop at your first product. A book is good, but in isolation, it’s not enough. Do the CD as well. Then do the second book. And the second CD. Keep going, and as the total weight of your creative output grows, so will your reputation.

At this point, I’ve only mentioned books, CD’s and DVD’s. There are many, many more channels. Many additional ways in which you can earn greater income.

Here is a list of some of the options for products and means of expressing your expertise that you can develop to increase your total professional presence:

- Books
- DVD’s

- 
- DVD Sets
 - CD's
 - CD sets
 - Audio books that can be downloaded
 - Online blogs
 - Speeches
 - Workshops
 - Seminars and bootcamps
 - Workbooks, which allow the buyer to answer questions directly within the product
 - Teleseminars
 - Posters
 - Branded mugs
 - E-courses
 - Newsletters
 - PDF guides
 - Downloadable MP3 guides
 - And so on, limited only by your energy and imagination.

Boost your sales

If people like what you do, they will generally want more. Experts tend to develop tribes, who will happily buy anything that they offer. Sometimes, they will even tell you that they are waiting for the next thing, and ask when will you produce it. So keep on producing.

Also, find ways to remove barriers to purchase. People will generally buy your products if you make it easy for them to do so. If they are not available to peruse, people won't buy them. If you can't accept their method of payment, they won't buy either. If you don't have change, they won't buy. If they can't click on a simple link on your website to purchase your products... You get the picture...

Here is a quick look at the products that I have developed, and which I currently sell, at events, and through my website:

I currently have 4 Audio CD's, with the following titles:

- The Discipline Difference
- Is Your Thinking Keeping You Poor?
- 8 Epiphanies that Every Entrepreneur Must Have,
- 50 Ways to Make Your Point Without PowerPoint, and
- How to Become a Professional Speaker

I currently have 4 DVD's, with the following titles:

- Is Your Thinking Keeping You Poor?
- How to Position Yourself as an Expert
- Grow Your Business; How to Add an Extra Zero; and
- How to Innovate

In addition, I currently have the following books for sale:

- Own Your Industry, How to Position Yourself as an Expert
- 50 Ways to Become a Better Speaker
- So You're in Charge, now What? Which was co-written with my friend Tony Cross, and coming in early 2015:
- Relentlessly Relevant – 50 Ways to Innovate
-

I also have a small, branded flash-disk, on which I've loaded PDF's of the three books mentioned above, plus a bonus book titled '50 Ways to Make Your Point Without PowerPoint. This small flash-disk is an absolute blessing in my world, because they are relatively low-cost to produce, incredibly light, which is useful when I travel to overseas events, and very lucrative, because I sell them for just under the price that one would pay for four physical books. This represents a good deal for buyers, too, because it is, in fact, slightly cheaper than buying all four physical books.

Those are my current products. I'm also working on two new books, with the working titles 'Is Your Thinking Keeping You Poor?' and 'Africa's About to Boom; what you should be doing about it.'

So as you can see, I try to be constantly producing, constantly developing, constantly writing and recording. This keeps me relevant, and makes everything I do more lucrative.

Developing products, and especially books, is a very big deal. I can't force you into your writing room or recording studio, and I can do no more than urge you to sit in that chair and tell you that it matters to start producing.

But let me ask you: Will another December arrive and catch you bookless? Or will you take the initiative and radically change your place in your industry? Will you keep telling people that you mean to do it? For the next seven years? Or will you simply sit down and begin?

5. Design marketing materials

These days, you can't be a professional speaker without a website. That is an absolute basic and a given. And today, arguably the most important part of your website is the video footage of you live in action, speaking to actual audiences in different settings. For that reason, as you begin to grow your speaking career, film everything!

We face an interesting credibility challenge as speakers. Our product is ethereal. It is an intangible. You can't hold it, taste it, juggle it, or pack it in a box. For that reason, we need to be at pains to constantly show that we are for real, that we offer genuine value, that we have a real and sustained career in this industry, and that we, ourselves, take our own business seriously.

Signage, branding and marketing materials help greatly to this end; websites, cards, brochures, banners, physical products, and so on, all help to elevate you from 'someone who claims to be a speaker,' to someone who is clearly an industry heavy-hitter. Impressions matter greatly in our world. There is something about print on glossy paper or having a web address that adds authenticity to the claim, 'I am a professional speaker.'

6. Maintain a Database

Many speakers collect contact details, so that they can create and grow databases of names, to which they send out newsletters. I have to admit to being remiss in this department. I've never had a proper database.

That said, I have heard other speakers say, 'He who owns the database, rules the world.'

If you do choose to use this marketing tool, one universally acceptable way of going about it, rather than simply spamming people against their wishes, is to include a 'sign up' option on your website, in to grow your numbers with people who opt in.

A generally good way of going about using databases is to give a great deal of free value, and only advertise a little. In other words, you might send out free, useful articles or links to informational video clips. Then, at the end, you might mention that you have a book or product for sale, or promote an upcoming event. There is an entire art to effective database marketing, and if this is an avenue you'd like to pursue, make a point of reading online articles on it, buying books on the topic, and speaking with other professional speakers who are using them successfully.

7. Write articles

Writing articles for various publications is another excellent way to market yourself. I do a lot of this, and I've been published in the Workplace section of newspapers, in business and sales magazines, in inflight publications for airlines, once in Forbes, and often in online magazines focusing on work or lifestyle.

Every article that I write gets uploaded to my website as well, which increases my online presence, gives more value to visitors of my site, and allows me to announce articles through social media like LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter and so on.

Generally speaking, you should write these articles for free (although sometimes you might be fortunate enough to receive payment for them). In return, you get to have your contact details, and sometimes a small photo, published at the end. This is the way 'public relations' (PR) works, and it works well.

Article writing is one of my greatest marketing tools.

The important criterion is *value* – value for the readers of that particular publication.

Although you are using an opportunity to have your contact details publicised, this is not the same thing as advertising. You cannot blatantly punt your services. But there is an implied trade-off: you are offering some insights or ‘lessons’, which are of value to the readership of the publication, in return for the chance to have your name in print.

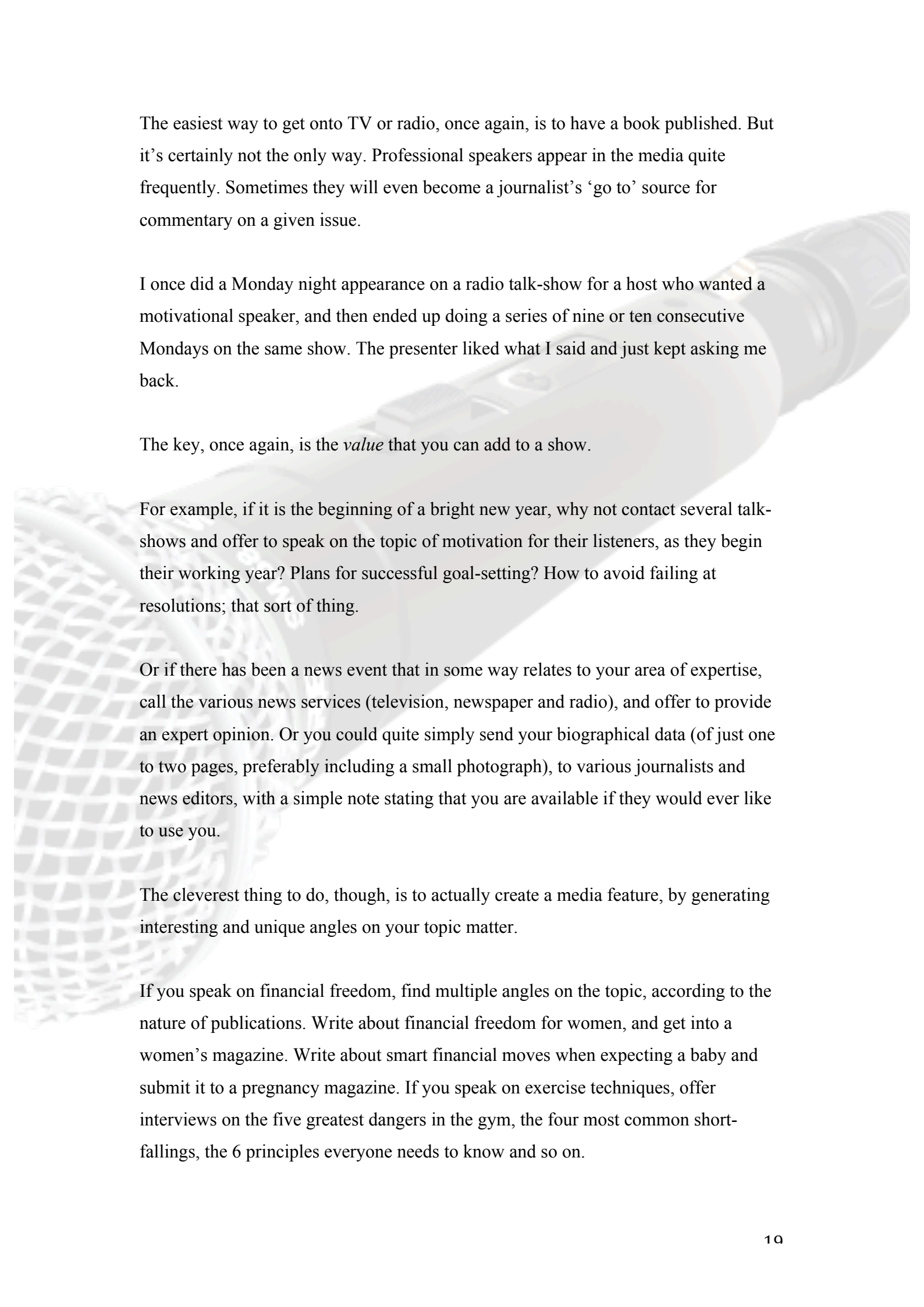
You can weave a subtle advertising message into any text, but it must be covert rather than obvious. Publishers will balk at an obvious punt and likely reject your article.

One of the great things about articles is that they can be re-purposed. A while after an article has appeared in one publication, and been forgotten, you can spruce it up, change the headline and send it to another. You may only write five articles, but those five articles could, if cleverly repurposed, represented more than 50 unique instances of publicity.

Make sure that in all cases, your website is mentioned. Where possible, try to use a little blurb at the end that sells who you are and what you do. My current article blurb goes like this:

Douglas Kruger is a professional speaker and author who encourages people to think. He speaks on Expert Positioning and the misunderstood link between work and wealth. He is a 5x winner of the SA Championships for Public Speaking and the author of three books. See him in action or read more of his articles at www.douglaskruger.co.za. Email him at kruger@compute.co.za. Follow him on LinkedIn or Twitter: [@douglaskruger](https://twitter.com/douglaskruger).

8. Appear in the media



The easiest way to get onto TV or radio, once again, is to have a book published. But it's certainly not the only way. Professional speakers appear in the media quite frequently. Sometimes they will even become a journalist's 'go to' source for commentary on a given issue.

I once did a Monday night appearance on a radio talk-show for a host who wanted a motivational speaker, and then ended up doing a series of nine or ten consecutive Mondays on the same show. The presenter liked what I said and just kept asking me back.

The key, once again, is the *value* that you can add to a show.

For example, if it is the beginning of a bright new year, why not contact several talk-shows and offer to speak on the topic of motivation for their listeners, as they begin their working year? Plans for successful goal-setting? How to avoid failing at resolutions; that sort of thing.

Or if there has been a news event that in some way relates to your area of expertise, call the various news services (television, newspaper and radio), and offer to provide an expert opinion. Or you could quite simply send your biographical data (of just one to two pages, preferably including a small photograph), to various journalists and news editors, with a simple note stating that you are available if they would ever like to use you.

The cleverest thing to do, though, is to actually create a media feature, by generating interesting and unique angles on your topic matter.

If you speak on financial freedom, find multiple angles on the topic, according to the nature of publications. Write about financial freedom for women, and get into a women's magazine. Write about smart financial moves when expecting a baby and submit it to a pregnancy magazine. If you speak on exercise techniques, offer interviews on the five greatest dangers in the gym, the four most common short-fallings, the 6 principles everyone needs to know and so on.

You can also get coverage for participation in community events. For example, if you've just set a new record, accomplished something interesting, or been part of a community initiative, contact the local newspaper and ask if they would like to write an article about it. Provided the story is of some interest, you stand a very good chance of getting into your local paper, and perhaps even a regional or national paper. If and when you are successful in appearing in the media, be sure to stay in touch with the particular journalist or editor, and offer to appear again should you be needed. Keep the media updated on new developments, send them samples of your CD's and books, and you might enjoy repeat appearances.

One of my most successful techniques for repeat appearances is to simply offer 'the next thing,' once we've finished an interview. Say that a radio journalist has just concluded a half-hour in-studio chat with me. While we're saying our goodbyes, I'll mention another, different topic that we could cover in future should they be interested. Two times out of three, they say yes. So be sure to offer.

9. Use social media

Yes, you do need to be available online. I'm on YouTube, LinkedIn, Twitter, Google-Plus and Facebook, in addition to having a Facebook Fan Page.

I am constantly announcing to the world, whether it's simple, motivational quotations, or links to new video clips, or links to new articles, or simply (and this is often the nicest part of social media) things that I find funny, amusing or entertaining.

Once again I return you to the idea that video is incredibly important. You must have a YouTube account, or a Vimeo account if you prefer. Or, preferably, both. The more video footage you have available online, the better for your growing career.

Although there are opposing views on this subject, most experts do advise that your video clips should not be very long. 1-3 minutes is pretty good. So you might choose a snappy or humorous section out of a live presentation and upload it. Or you might film a video blog of yourself making one short, profound, memorable point.

Having said that, some very successful speakers have entire hour-long keynote presentations available to view online. I have some pretty long clips available myself, and I think it's worth doing that at least once or twice, for anyone who may really like to settle in and watch you in action.

Here's one important thing to remember when uploading your videos. Platforms like YouTube allow you to add key words or phrases to your video. In addition to keywords that describe the content in my videos, I add the terms: professional speaker, motivational speaker, conference speaker, keynote speaker, inspirational speaker, and so on. The whole point in uploading these videos is to make it easier for potential clients to find you. So, ask yourself: What sort of key words or terms would your potential clients use, when searching for someone like you?

So make use of all of the social media forums. And remember, social media is similar to all other forms of PR in the sense that you shouldn't just blatantly advertise all the time. You can occasionally, but by and large, think of it as a conversation with the public. Be entertaining, interesting, amusing, relevant, poignant, profound, funny, moving, witty, and get a marketing message in there from time to time. That's a pretty good balance.

10. Contact speakers agencies

Speakers agencies are essentially one central source where clients can go to look for the right speaker for the right event. Their value is in being able to tell the client, 'Yes, this person will suit your needs; no that person isn't a good fit for an event of that nature,' and so on.

I work well with a number of agencies. Some speakers have less luck with them, and others say they are a complete waste of time.

I'd say that agency-work represents somewhere in the region of half of my total bookings, which is pretty good. That said, it has taken me years to build up trust and credibility with the few agents with which I'm close.

You can seek out agencies and bureaus for speakers on the internet and contact them directly. However, I will point out that, according to their feedback, most aspiring speakers go about it very poorly.

For starters, you will need to have a number of speeches under your belt already before an agency will consider representing you. They are not there to mentor and grow new speakers. You will also need to have clarity on your topic matter and target audience. If you don't know what you sell, and to whom, how can they possibly sell you any more effectively?

Approach them respectfully, and make sure you are offering them something worth representing. It's generally a good idea to have a professional bio ready to send through, including photos of you in action, and perhaps a link to a live speech.

Often, they will ask if they can attend one of your speeches to judge your level and quality. Be proactive and offer to set up such a speech, perhaps at a division of a corporate company. In order to get the speech at the corporate company, offer your services for free. Just set the criteria that there must be thirty or more people in the room. Less than that can be too few to create a good vibe in the room and truly showcase your talents.

The average agency commission these days is around 20 per cent of your total fee. I think that's not bad, particularly given our low overheads, and the fact that you wouldn't have landed that speech at all without them.

A well run agency provides a lot of value to the speaker in terms of handling logistics. They can sort out flights, provide directions to the venue, get a brief from the client, do the invoicing, make sure the payment is received, and so many other things that can take huge chunks of time out of your day.

I actually prefer to work with agencies when I can, even at the expense of the 20 per cent of total profit. I sometimes even give speeches to agencies, in order to let them handle all the logistics, and, admittedly, to strengthen our relationship.

One thing that I believe I do right is that I constantly communicate with my agents. I tell them about new articles, new books, new speeches and new developments of any kind. I help them to promote me, and in turn, we both win.

Oh, and a thought in passing: DO NOT make enemies with an agent. They all know each other and they all talk to each other. If you get a no, respectfully accept it. You might approach them again at a later date. Don't pester or insult these people. Not worth it.

Another thought: I like to make sure that my clients pay the same exact fee whether they book me directly, or through an agent. For that reason, I insist that the agency commission come out of my regular fee, rather than being added on top of it?

Why? Well, it actually protects the agent, believe it or not. If clients suspect that they can get me cheaper through direct contact, they cut the agent out of the loop. The more often this happens, the less agents there will ultimately be around to win new business for me and for other speakers. Keep the agents happy and well fed.

Everybody wins!

Final thought on agents: Don't ever cheat them out of their commission. If you find out that a client contacted an agent, who told them about you, and then the client went behind their backs and contacted you directly, give the commission for the assignment to the agent anyway! You will remain in their good books, and it's good, ethical practice. Ethics matter in this industry, and if you get caught out, your reputation will suffer. Just do the right thing. Everybody wins.

11. Develop celebrity in other areas

If you would like to shortcut the entire process, and elicit instant demand, become a celebrity in some other sphere. Radio and television presenters, well-known actors, sports stars, politicians and famous faces have a really easy time landing speaking assignments. It is a strange truth that in this industry as in others, celebrity often counts for more than track-record. If you are able to exploit this, by all means do so. You should see the kind of fees Bill Clinton commanded!

12. Network with the right people

A well-known South African sales trainer, Paul Naidoo, once told me that he built his entire career by going to events (sometimes *sans invitation*), and networking with the convenors. He would make a point of finding out who they were, chatting with them, and eventually selling himself to them as a speaker for their next event.

I admire that sort of audacity!

Every social function provides *some* opportunity for networking. Have business cards at the ready, be prepared to actively promote yourself, and perhaps consider investing in a book on how to develop networking skills. There are plenty available, and there is a body of collected knowledge on the topic that is well worth learning about. Get out there and hustle!

You should also network with other speakers. Why? Because speakers can't always handle all of the engagements that come their way. And if they know and like and trust you, often they will share business with you.

Also, we are a uniquely charitable bunch in this industry. Many times, while chatting with a client, a speaker will recommend another speaker that they know for the client's next event. It's well worth your while to be in the loop in this regard.

Plus, it's nice to have friends who are going through the same things as you; people with whom you can discuss your challenges and frustrations.

One excellent organisation for this sort of networking is the National Speakers Association. It falls beneath the umbrella of the Global Speakers Federation, and their outlets have different names in different countries. In South Africa, for instance, they are called The Professional Speakers Association. The learning and networking are well worth the fees they charge.

I also find that one of the most valuable aspects of my Professional Speakers Association membership is the audio CD that I receive in the mail every month. It's

called Voices of Experience, and it is invaluable to me. Each month, an assortment of successful speakers talk about how they accomplished various things in their careers, and the learning from these interviews is solid gold!

13. Make direct contact

This one isn't terribly much fun. Nevertheless, you might consider cold-calling, and or writing email directly to the people who might book you for an event. This could either be the director of a division, the CEO of an organisation, the head of regional sales, or it could be training or events companies.

Some companies specialise in public events, and they can be very useful allies. Simply offer them your services and point out that you are available to help them delight their customers with your various programmes, keynotes, and so on. Once again, make sure you have a nicely formatted biography to send, and a website, with video, that they can visit.

This is tedious, time-consuming and might require a thick skin, but if you are truly interested in developing your career, this is certainly an option to consider.

I believe much more strongly in positioning than I do in cold-calling (see my book, 'Own Your Industry – How to Position Yourself as an Expert'), but on a small scale, you might enjoy some initial success this way.

The most effective form of letter, should you choose to write to your prospect, is one addressed by name (anything else is perceived as junk-mail), and which speaks about something relevant to the recipient in the first paragraph (perhaps an observation on a newspaper article concerning his or her company). Sometimes, you might have success with an approach like: Saw you on the Monday edition of Financial Geniuses! Well done. By the way, do you ever use speakers?

Also, make sure that you are writing to the correct person. Consider very carefully what your speech (product) is and does, and target the person who would be most interested in providing precisely that expertise to their staff. It's usually the Director

of a division and *not* HR. In fact, I would advise you to avoid *HR* like the plague. Professional speaker, author and consultant Alan Weiss once said, ‘HR is not the end of the world. But you can see it from there.’

You need to speak to the person who owns the problems that you can fix, and who feels their emotional effect in his or her everyday business life. Be sure to talk about ‘what they can get’ from booking you, rather than just ‘who you are’. Your fees are largely based on ‘what they can get.’

It means the difference between a headline such as: ‘Marvin the Fantastic Speaker!’ and ‘Is the recession affecting your sales team? Let Marvin treble your sales quota.’ The latter is benefit-orientated, solves an emotional problem, and will meet with greater success.

Remember also that with this sort of approach, you are playing a numbers game. The more you try, the greater your chances of success. Twenty letters will simply not be enough. You need to send out hundreds.

14. Create special offers

After winning the Toastmasters Southern African Championships for Public Speaking, I created a special offer, which I publicized through a newspaper. I offered to speak for free for any company that was registered with the Proudly South African body. I ended up speaking for scores of companies as a result, all of which increased both my experience, and my exposure.

Could you create a special offer? Win a book, win a speech, something down those lines? With a little strategic thought, you can use this avenue to publicize your offerings.

There are many more ways to publicize yourself than the 14 we’ve just covered here, but these are really the primary ones. Use three or four of them in conjunction, and you should be well on your way.

UNDERSTANDING VALUE:

And that brings us to the The V-Word

There is no industry in our post-recession world that is not psychotically hung up on the word *value*. We spin around it like planets in orbit and it guides our decision-making processes. Everything, especially intangibles like speeches, has to clearly demonstrate value.

So what makes a speech valuable? A great smile? A nice voice?

A valuable keynote presentation, of the kind that earns its additional zeroes honestly, has a number of informing factors. Put some or all of them together, and you are probably looking at a top-level speech.

Here are 9 of them. They are by no means exhaustive, but I think these are the main ones:

- 1. Problem solving:** A speech on the joys of tinkering in a garden, delivered well, may be riveting, but it doesn't solve an expensive problem. However, a speech on how to ensure that a sales team keeps selling effectively during tough times could mean life or death to an organisation. For that reason, the problem that a keynote solves is arguably the greatest part of its total value. Teaching someone to sell is worth x. But teaching someone how to land a million dollar deal is worth x and a few more zeroes. And so the intrinsic value of the topic matter is our starting point for determining value.
- 2. Depth of knowledge:** International speaker, Dr Graeme Codrington, often asserts that for every hour a speaker delivers live, he or she should be able to go another three hours deeper on the topic if necessary. That kind of depth of knowledge is worth money. Proven expertise raises the value of a keynote.
- 3. The ability to make it come alive:** Knowledge alone doth not a speaker

make. All the expertise in the world might add up to a really clever guy, but a lousy speaker, because a valuable keynote is not an information dump. Nor is it about showcasing the speaker's knowledge for the sake of an ego-stroke.

Instead, it is a discerning selection of the most valuable, applicable elements from a total body of knowledge, chosen for their benefit to the delegates. And the task of the speaker, in creating value, by no means ends at sifting and selecting. Once a speaker has chosen the most poignant ideas and content, he or she then has to find ways to make it all come alive, by expressing it through stories, humour, drama, audience interaction, memorable thematic phrases, visuals and metaphors, and very clear take-home instructions.

4. **Customization:** When it comes to content, a perfectly designed keynote (if such a thing exists) is a good foundation, but it is not the whole package yet. This is performance art. And every audience is different. A presentation should generally comprise around 80% standardized content, and then about 20% customization. A speaker creates additional value by slanting a topic toward the specific audience that will be present on the day. Making it relevant is worth money, and the skill and effort necessary to do that adds to the total value of the presentation.
5. **Celebrity:** Oddly, and often to the great irritation of highly trained and developed professional speakers, celebrity is worth money too. Kim Kardashian may not be an award-winning orator. Nor does Tiger's backswing necessarily qualify him as an insightful business strategist. But the sheer weight of their names can often add considerable value to an event. Of course, there are also people like Bill Clinton, who speak on leadership and are eminently qualified to do so. In such cases, keynote fees may go into the hundreds of thousands of dollars. Combining celebrity and substantial depth of knowledge is like unleashing a value juggernaut. Wise is the speaker who works to accumulate both forces.
6. **Credentials:** Credentials are different to celebrity. Credentials answer the question: Does this person know what he or she is doing? Credentials can take the form of experience - he's been a professional speaker for over ten years -

or they might be more formal; she's a member of the Professional Speakers Association. These badges of experience and learning go some distance to show that a speaker has sought knowledge and education on their craft and has had enough experience to have made mistakes, learnt from them and grown in their mastery. Credentials, thus, are worth money. They add value to that hour on stage, when it finally rolls around.

7. **Entertainment value:** Ever heard of the speaker who is all flash and no substance? They're not generally spoken of in glowing terms, but there is value in flash. Entertainment is worth money. Vibe certainly does add something to a conference. International speaker Randy Gage once said, "Make no mistake. Keynoting is show business!" There must be something just a little spectacular about a good speech. It should tug on heart-strings, widen pupils, set pulses racing and send goose-bumps down the spine. It should breathe a shiver-inducing breath over the imagination and leave an audience with a sense of wonder. A keynote is not an hour lecture. It is a notch up from that in terms of showmanship and energy, and it must have greater evocative value than an hour in a varsity hall. Naturally, the trick is to balance flash with substance, showmanship with content, entertainment value with a solid body of useful knowledge. It's difficult to do and it's rare to behold, which, of course, is why it's well remunerated.
8. **The total experience:** People often fail to consider the periphery of public speaking; what it's like to deal with the speaker; the look and tone that they bring to a conference; small touches like humour in their introduction and the availability of books and CD's, and their time interacting with the audience afterwards. There is much that a speaker can do to add to the total experience of their presentation and maximise their value. Initially, it's the professionalism they display in preparation for the event. On the day, it's the magic and rapport-generating value of their presence. Afterwards, it's the lasting impact of their ideas and the buzz created by their presence. It can even be the quality of their handouts, or the quality of the substance on their handouts. All these subtle intangibles have currency. I recall the case of one professional speaker who, despite being an excellent live presenter, was so

awful to work with that one conference convener confided in me that they would never use him again. "It's all the stuff around the edges," she said. "Not his talk; his talk is excellent."

- 9. And finally:** Humour. Yes, it counts, and for a good deal actually. There is an adage among members of the Professional Speakers Association that goes:
Question: Should I use humour in my presentations? Answer: Only if you want to get paid!

A symphony in sixty minutes

It is the total effect of all, or a good selection of these qualities that makes a keynote valuable. No, it's not just an hour's work for an absurd fee. It's years of practice, months of preparation, hours of rehearsal and one hour of sheer, theatrical and psychological brilliance. It's depth of knowledge, credential and celebrity. It's the total experience of the speaker. And above all, it's the capacity to solve an expensive problem. And leave them wanting more.

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This text represents half of the total audio programme, which you can download at:

<http://www.cdbaby.com/cd/douglaskruger>



DOUGLAS KRUGER is a full-time professional speaker and 5x winner of the SA Championships for Public Speaking, hosted by Toastmasters International. See him in action, read his articles, or sign up for his newsletter at www.douglaskruger.co.za. Connect with him on LinkedIn or Twitter: @douglaskruger.

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