**SECTION A: NSA SPEAKER STUDIO READING LIST**

**ANNOTATED TABLE OF CONTENTS**

4/11/23

**NOTE:** Page numbers are not assigned to this table of contents for volunteer editor convenience as the content expands! Page numbers are so noted in the upper left corner of each multiple page document page.

**SECTION A: FORMS: SPEAKER STUDIO FEEDBACK FORMS**

*The following forms will generally be made available at the beginning of Speaker Studio sessions. Please feel free, however, to copy and download these forms if so desired.*

* **Some Practice Session Feedback Criterion** (Thoren; 4-4-23)
	+ Introductions
	+ General Speech or Other Presentations
* **Practice Session Feedback Form** (4-4-23)
* **Speaker Studio Learning Journal** (Thoren; 2/22)

**SECTION B: SPEECH/PRESENTATION PREPARATION**

*The following articles, posts and papers may help the reader to create, develop and improve presentations. Many of these materials are from the files of Don and Kathleen Thoren. Other documents will be added as made available by Don and other NSA-Az members.*

* **Be a Captivating Speaker and a Remarkable Presenter!** (Thoren; 2009)
* **Fripp on writing a script** (Fripp; 7-22)

*Incorporating these three techniques made the script easy for Mark to remember.*

* **HOW YOU FORMAT SENTENCES TO MAXIMIZE IMPACT** (Thoren; 2022)

*You reach your audience through a series of written and/or spoken sentences or bullet points…*

* **Template For Writing and Evaluating Content** (Thoren; 2022)

*Value Proposition; Commercially viable content; What is the $ value if they are paying?*

* **Impactful sentence examples** (Thoren; undated)

*Who, what, when, where, how, why…*

**SECTION C: BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT**

*NSA-Az is an association of professional speakers. The following material may be of help in developing your professional business.*

* **Outline of a value proposition** (Thoren; undated)

*A well-defined and written value proposition makes a great first draft for your speech…*

* **My View of Success as a Commercial Communicator** (Thoren; 2020)

*Determine your passion and audience…(worksheets)*

* **Comparing Your Presentation to a Product** (Thoren; 9-20-22)

*The following example can be quite helpful to you…*

* **Scott McKlain on Clarity** (McKlain; undated)

*A successful speaking business -- just like any other type of business -- is built on clarity.*

**SECTION B: SPEAKER STUDIO FEEDBACK FORMS**

**NSA-Az Speaker Studio**

**Practice Session Feedback Form**

4-4-23

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Presenter** | **Observer** | **Date** |

|  |
| --- |
| **Presentation Topic/Theme/Purpose** |
|  |

|  |
| --- |
| **Target Audience/Venue/Event** |
|  |

|  |
| --- |
| **Speaker Value Proposition Related to Topic/Theme/Purpose** |
|  |

|  |
| --- |
| **Requested Competency Feedback Focus** (see back of page) |
|  |

|  |
| --- |
| **Strengths of Presentation** |
|  |

|  |
| --- |
| **Improvement Opportunities** |
|  |

**Practice Session Feedback Form** (page 2)

|  |
| --- |
| **Other Comments** |
|  |

**Some Presentation Competency Topics**

|  |
| --- |
| * Commercial value
 |
| * Introduction
 |
| * Opening
 |
| * Key point (e.g. 1, 2, 3)
 |
| * Closing
 |
| * Graphics, design, props
 |
| * Humor and audience entertainment quotient
 |
| * Audience/presenter interactivity
 |
| * Vocal tone, pitch, volume, inflection
 |
| * Facial expressions
 |
| * Hand and body movements
 |
| * Word choice, clarity
 |
| * Humor
 |
| * Overall congruence of content, purpose
 |
| * Persuasive impact
 |
| * Content pacing, timing
 |
| * Projected confidence, energy, professionalism
 |
| * Story-telling
 |

Page 1 of 2

**NSA-Az Speaker Studio**

**Some Practice Session Feedback Criteria**

Adapted from Don and Kathleen Thoren 2021 Rev 11/3/22

4-4-23

|  |
| --- |
| **Opening**  |
| * Relevant to the occupation, age, culture, education, etc. of the audience?
 |
| * Specific to a need or opportunity of most individual audience members?
* Does it affirm the speaker’s knowledge of that problem or opportunity? Key sources of attention getting topics are: Pride, Profit, Need, Love and Fear.
 |
| * Along with the content of the introduction, what in the opening content adds to the speaker’s credibility to speak on this topic?
 |
| * Are there less “I am, I will, I have”, etc. and more “You will, Your future”, etc.?
 |
| * Does it feature startling facts, extremely thought-provoking questions, etc. to generate a sense of urgency for the audience to hear this presentation NOW?
 |
| * Is the value proposition (VP) clearly stated? Does it promise specific benefit(s) to the audience, i.e. higher quality of life? better results? Does it cause audience members to feel delighted to hear great info?
 |
| * Does content & delivery imply you will be “interesting and easy” to listen to?
 |
| * Visuals – are they integrated to content and make an indispensable impact?
 |

Page 2 of 2

|  |
| --- |
| **NSA-Az Speaker Studio****Some Practice Session Feedback Criteria**Adapted from Don and Kathleen Thoren 2021 Rev 11/3/224-4-23**General Speech or Other Presentation** |
|  |
| **What Worked Well?** |
| * Asked questions prior to and at beginning of presentation
 |
| * Good voice modulation
 |
| * Appeared relaxed and very comfortable
 |
| * Named previous speakers and related to something they said
 |
| * Excellent eye contact
 |
| * Easy and pleasurable to listen to
 |
| * Great content
 |
| * Took time to gather information and customized it to needs of audience
 |
| * Outstanding diction
 |
| * Summarized “why we need to get better”
 |
| * Involved audience, connected quickly
 |
| * Appeared sincere about helping with topic
 |
| * Referenced slide first, then elaborated
 |
| **What Can Be Improved?** |
| * Mixed use of rhetorical questions and questions for audience to answer
 |
| * Visuals: overly wordy, some slides not used, mis-spelled words
 |
| * Visuals: read content or listen?
 |
| * Too much information for time allowed; complicated information
 |
| * Repetitive gestures, seemed “canned”
 |
| * Some key points not understood by audience
 |
| * Some key points not understood by presenter
 |
| * Disjointed, uncoordinated slide transitions
 |

**NSA-Az SPEAKER STUDIO *“LEARNING JOURNAL”* Date:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Vicarious Learning for Today – What I Learned by Observing Others and Listening to the Positive Reinforcement and Enrichment Suggestions**

**From what I saw and heard today:**

1. I could use or incorporate these ideas, concepts, techniques, etc. (Not stealing others’ material but learning from their example!)
2. I want to avoid these ideas, concepts, techniques, etc. (Not because I judge them bad necessarily, but they are not congruent with who I am)
3. I want to explore the usefulness of these ideas, concepts, techniques, etc. because while they may be outside my current comfort zone, they may represent a growth goal for me for the future

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**SECTION C: SPEECH/PRESENTATION PREPARATION**

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BE A CAPTIVATING SPEAKER AND A REMARKABLE PRESENTER!

**Make your Presentation Convey Believability and Desirability**

Presented by: Don Thoren

**The Beginning of A Successful Presentation**

**Audience Research:**

Who has as much time to prepare a presentation today, as he or she would like to have? Many of us have given the first thoughts about how we are going to present our information as we are walking to the meeting room. Thinking and planning time is at a premium today; multi tasking is no longer even a choice. Most of us have to find ways to do things faster and better and here is a way of thinking to help you plan and present more efficiently and with better results.

It starts by asking, OK, what is my highest priority outcome for this meeting?

Who will be attending?

Who *should be* attending?

What can I do to get as many of the “right people - key resources” attending as possible?

Now that you know who is attending, how do you plan the agenda to achieve your highest priority outcome for this meeting? Do you *really* know your own objective (consistent with organizational objectives of course) for your presentation at this meeting as clearly as you must if you are to be convincing to others?

Once you are crystal clear on your own objective, you ask yourself (and others who may have shared responsibility), three vital questions:

1. What are these attendees (some or all) not doing that I want them to *start doing* – actions I want them to start taking and things I want them to start saying and promoting to others?
2. What are these attendees (some or all) currently believing and doing that I want them to *stop doing* and promoting to others?
3. What are these attendees (some or all) now believing or doing that I want them to *continue* believing and doing?

The answers to these 3 questions give focus to your content because the actions others are taking is based on their beliefs. And, others beliefs are based on the information and experiences they have had, AND, how they interpreted them.

Attention and significance are the first two stages of a presentation and these stages were featured in the module titled, “Make Your Presentation Command Attention and Significance,” taught by Kathleen Thoren.

**I. Attention: “O.K., this is important”**

You are only one minute into your presentation and you can feel the eyes of your audience glued upon you, focused on what you have to say. Somehow, you and/or your topic is commanding *attention* and your audience is hanging on your every word. They are exuding a positive anticipation for what ever is coming next. Feels good doesn’t it? “Wow, am I in control! I have them eating out of my hand.”

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**II. Significance: “We have to take action now”**

Now that you have your audience tightly focused, you are asking yourself how to present the significance of this next project step you are presenting today. You will know if they “see and feel” the *significance* if they develop a real sense of urgency about assembling our resources in pursuit of a series of solution oriented action steps. To establish *significance*, you describe the magnitude of the opportunity in terms of the 6 month market penetration improvement. In addition, you validate the need for urgency to meet this window of opportunity while raw materials are still available. Your audience is practically unanimous in their reaction – *this is a priority issue* and we want to begin looking for the elements of a believable and desirable action plan to achieve the desired result.

*This module will focus on Believability and Desirability*

**III. Believability: “Great, the action you presented will work”**

The test of believability will be proof that the proposed solution will work.

As conflict occurs, let ideas compete-not people!

Resist compromise and remain open to the discovery of a new and better “3rd idea.”

**IV. Desirability: “That not only works, but on balance, it is the best way to do it”**

The test of desirability will be selecting the best among many believable solutions. Desirability means a solution will not only work, but its desirability is based on having the fewest possible unintended consequences. And, is not likely to set a bad precedence for the future while reinforcing our organizational “future vision.”

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The Four Stages to an Effective Presentation

Obstacles and Solution/Actions for Each Stage

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Process Step** | **Obstacle** | **Solution/Action** |
| **Attention**“We hear you, this is important” | * What are you talking about?
* Where does this fit in?
* Is this in the strategic plan?
* Maybe I don’t understand what this is.
* Why bring that up now?
 | * History of the issue to explain why to address it now.
* Important people or forces interested in this topic – the VP is tracking weekly progress
* Explain where this topic fits in the “big picture,” strategic plan, critical path
 |
| **Significance**“We have to take action now” | * Why this when we have bigger fires to fight.
* There is no pressure for this now
* The customers don’t care.
* Top management’s interest is not focused here.
* I have my own preferences
 | * Emphasize the gaps of “have” vs. “want,” or was forecasted, budgeted, committed to a customer, etc.
* Size or magnitude of issue, reward, penalty, etc.
* Consequences of acting, not acting, winning, loosing, advantage or disadvantage to a competitor, etc.
* Urgency of deadlines, drop dead dates, closing window on available resources
* Opportunity – now or never, etc.
 |
| **Believable**“Yes, that method will work” | * It won’t work here
* It won’t work now
* We don’t do it that way
* Not invented here (NIH)
* The theory is great, but it hasn’t been tested.
* I don’t believe it!
 | * Provide evidence that it will work – it will fix the problem or capture the opportunity
* We know what is expected
* We have the resources
* We have the expertise
* We have a method that has worked before in similar circumstances
* The schedule is doable
* Our people are committed
 |
| **Desirable**“That not only works, but on balance, it’s the best way to do it” | * It will work, but I/we don’t want to do it that way
* It sets a bad precedence
* It exposes us to too many unintended consequences
* It will cost too much, take too long, etc.
 | * Prove that we can manage any adverse consequences of this fix
* This solution rates highest when compared to our decision criteria
* This solution is consistent with our “future vision” for the image we want to convey in the market place
 |

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\*Lets look at a diagram that explains how peoples beliefs get formed. From the age of consciousness, people are exposed to information (education, etc.) and the context in which they receive it determines how they interpret it.

**My
Education
Information
Experience**

**Observations
etc.**

**My
Personal
Interpretation**

**What I Believe**

**What**

 **I Do**

Another way to state this process is to say that your preparation planning, beyond practicing excellent presentation techniques, is to identify the content that will enable you to change peoples’ minds!

*This is the simplest strategy for presentation planning this author has ever seen.*

Information and experience- what new or different information will you present that leads to a different interpretation and conclusion or belief. When people take or change actions after they have modified their original belief, their change is congruent, and reliable for the future.

Interpretation – how you lead people through their current information and/or experience and cause them to discover a different way to interpret that information, that can lead to a different conclusion or belief that is also congruent and reliable.

* **Start:** Therefore, you are to provide carefully selected information or a different interpretation that helps alter the beliefs of those you want to *start* doing and saying/promoting something different and more supportive of your objective.
* **Stop:** And, in like manner, you are to provide carefully selected information or a different interpretation that helps alter the beliefs of those you want to *stop* doing and saying/promoting those things that run counter to your objective.
* **Continue:** You are to reinforce the beliefs of those you want to *continue* doing and saying/promoting that which supports your objective.

While working to improve your ability to *get others believability* and *desirability, you* need a tool. The fastest way for any presenter to improve their performance is to solicit feedback from trusted others who will be helpful, object and safe. Using a tool like the following evaluation form can help the presenter see themselves through the eyes of others. This clarity leads the presenter to become better able to maximize their presentation skills strengths as well as to improve their flaws or lack of skill.

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Presentation Feedback Form

Presenters improve when they see themselves through the eyes of audience members. Feedback from others helps the presenter know what they are doing that is working well and is effective. It also helps them know what is not working so well and may be detracting their audience from getting the full impact of their message.

These are the **top 10 distractions** researched by Ty Boyd**\***, Speaker Hall of Fame. These 10 represent both extremes of attraction and distraction. As you observe a presenter, rate them on the scale below so they may maximize their strengths and minimize their distractions.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Distraction** | **Rating Scale – 10 is best** | **Attraction** |
|  |  |  |
| Rambling, many ahs, inappropriate pauses | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 | Easy to follow flow with few distractions |
| Speaking in monotone voice | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 | Using voice inflections to highlight points |
| Demonstrating little knowledge of subject | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 | Demonstrating much knowledge of subject |
| Showing little physical or voice energy or passion  | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 | Energetic movements and passionate about the topic |
| Using a lot of non-words (so, now, end of the day) | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 | Every word was needed and helpful |
| Poor eye contact – scanned too fast, looked down, looked at one area | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 | Scanned, stopped to focus for 10 seconds, scanned more |
| Pacing, wandering or fidgeting | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 | Stood in steady stance with movement only when it added value |
| Using profanity or questionable humor | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 | No profanity and only appropriate humor |
| Lack of preparation | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 | Evidence of full preparation |
| Poor story telling skills | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 | Can bring a story to life by how its told |

**\*** © 2007 Ty Boyd, Charlotte NC: www.tyboyd.com

Even the best speakers are sometimes guilty of falling into the deadly distraction pit. We might ramble because we haven't completely thought through what we want to say. Maybe we don't connect with enough eye contact, or our enthusiasm doesn't come through in our voice, eyes or gestures. Or, we fidget and pace due to nervousness. If you make a commitment to sharpening your tools, you will become a noticeably more effective communicator and the rewards will follow.

**Fripp on writing a script** 7/2022

**Incorporating these three techniques made the script easy for Mark to remember.**

* Think chronologically.
* Use shorter sentences or phrases.
* Consider each visual scene.

**Notice**: I recommend that you write your script with one short sentence or phrase going down the page, not across as in a paragraph. In your rehearsal, this makes it easier for you to internalize.

“After last year’s sales meeting,

my wife Tammy came in for the weekend.

We went to see David Copperfield’s magic show.

Three-quarters of the way through his performance,

Copperfield threw two dozen balls into the audience.

Tammy caught one.

David said, “If you touched a ball, please come on the stage.”

HOW YOU FORMAT SENTENCES TO MAXIMIZE IMPACT

For Those Influencers Who Persuade and Lead

You reach your audience through a series of written and/or spoken sentences or bullet points. A single sentence can be like a miniature story that starts with “stage setting,” then progresses to the recommended action, conclusion, or key point, followed by the benefit of acting on the recommendation. Each sentence draws your audience further in and becomes the steppingstone for your next sentence. A well-crafted progression of sentences enables the audience to connect with you, and to know and feel what you are communicating. Your flow of sentences guides your audience to the destination created for them – your objective for the presentation, seminar or book!

Visualize a baseball pitcher who has 2 physical motions: The wind up and the delivery. It’s pretty much the same for anyone throwing a frisbee, a rock or a bean bag – **wind up** and **delivery**.

To use this throwing analogy for writing the content of an impactful sentence,

* think of your wind up as “setting the stage,” with the who, what, when and where
* think of your delivery as the action or key point recommended as a how combined with the benefit(s) as the why

**A hypothetical situation:** NSA (National Speakers Assn.) has recently become aware that MPI (Meeting Professionals Intl.) has a new guideline for evaluating a speaker’s video. It recommends to first listen to only the audio because audio makes it easier to judge the value of the content. If the content is valuable, then they recommend viewing the video to confirm that this is the right speaker.

The following example of an impactful sentence, using the windup and delivery format, will teach NSA members how to respond successfully to this MPI trend.

***The windup -*** *Meeting Professionals Intl. (****who****) in June 2021 (****when****) at their Atlanta (****where****) conference, recommended members auditioning speaker videos listen to audio first (****what****) to evaluate the value of the content, so…****The delivery …*** *upgrading the value of your content (****how****) is an essential strategy for getting speaking engagements. (****why****)\**

**\***Not every sentence requires all six elements. Example: “at their Atlanta” was not essential. Use any of the six element only once.

**Impact is intensified** by putting the how to do it and the why it will benefit you/others at the end of the sentence where it can be accentuated - not lost within the body (stage setting) of the sentence or paragraph. Next step – say it with impact!

**Your assignment is to rewrite the following into one impactful sentence for speakers.**

The IRS issued new directives, enforced by fines and short jail sentences, for auditing personal auto use for business by instructing all IRS agents to verify the keeping of daily travel for business logs beginning with the 2021 tax year to audit independent contractors travel expenses closely and make sure professional speakers are not making up numbers without proper paperwork and receipts. 😊

**Not all sentences have to be “Impact Sentences” -- but the more the better!**

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**Template For Writing and Evaluating Content**

This is not a comprehensive template. It is a place to start.

Who is the audience for this speech or presentation? Be specific.

Value Proposition – Commercially viable content - From audience viewpoint, what is the biggest benefit(s) from hearing you? What is the $value if they are paying

**Introduction by the M. C.:**

Establishes your relevance to the work, goals, frustrations, plans, etc. of this audience

Lists your education and/or experience

Brags on you by stating info. that would be uncomfortable to say yourself

Validates you as qualified for this topic for this audience

Builds interest and anticipation to hear you

**Opening:**

Builds rapport: you are relevant, respected, and likeable

Quickly and clearly describes the focus of your presentation

Creates interest in you, your approach, your results, etc.

Establishes your knowledge & empathy for their problem or opportunity (pain or gain)

--- ***combined with*** ---

Promises your ideas solve problems & capture opportunities. A Value Proposition (VP)

**Body:**

Presents a series of points, steps, etc. that will lead the audience member from the problem to a solution - or steps that lead them from the discovery of an opportunity to its attainment. Good transitions provide a smooth flow between points

Each point is validated with rational facts, stories, examples, statistics or other data

Page 2 of 2

Some points are dramatized by an emotional story or event (usually but not always)

Each point builds upon previous points and they flow like a road map to the desired destination of solving the problem or capturing the opportunity. It is the solving or capturing that enables the audience to visualize and believe the Value Proposition (VP)

**Closing:**

Reviews the original problem or opportunity

Summarizes the key points, their sequence, and their impact

Dramatizes or illustrates how the application of the points leads to highly valued personal benefits. Proves the VP is achievable by using testimonials, data, etc.

Provides a sense of urgency to get started

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**SECTION D: BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT**

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Outline of a Value Proposition

**As you start, remember this: A well-defined and written value proposition makes a great first draft for your speech content!**

**How will your audience members benefit from hearing your message? Your value proposition describes what will be improved in their career, relationships, life, job, etc.**

**What is it about you, your material, or your presentation that makes you unique and differentiates you from other speakers/trainers on this topic?**

**Now to the speech/seminar/blog, etc. itself.**

**What 3 facts will be included in the introduction of you that gives you**

**What will you say in your opening that causes audience members to want to hear your message? What will you promise them that is worth the cost of 3 months of your coaching, a $5000 speaker fee for the message you deliver to the organization, the price of your book, attendance at your seminar, etc.?  What is your value proposition?**

**What are 3 (or more) key ideas that are in the body of your presentation that will enable your audience members to experience the improvement or personal benefit from your presentation?  This is the guts of your presentation. These 3 are the roadmap that will take your audience members from where they are in life – to – what you/they think is possible for them, or they desperately want, in the future**.

**For a simplified example of building a house: (1)Start with foundation and floor, (2) next, walls and (3) finally the roof. Does the body of your presentation have that logical sequence?**

**In your close, how will you be motivating them to action. In your summary, how will you reinforce the value of 3 months of your coaching, your $5000 speaker fee, etc.**

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**Additional thoughts for your consideration as you think of the full strategy and value proposition for your speech.**

If you struggle to answer a question, that is an indication you need to think more about it, do more research, etc.   This activity may lead you to a revision in your objective, your strategy for helping your audience, the assumptions you have made about them, etc. If that happens, it is a win for you as you will waste less time in the future. Clarify your target and your strategy!!

Your speech must help them see that they have a problem or an opportunity in their lives during your opening. You explain or promise that you will show them how to solve the problem or achieve the opportunity. You give them a tase of how happy, rich, healthy, etc.. they will be. Toni, as an example for your presentation, maybe you contrast technicolor with monochromatic color as you describe lifestyles?  Who wants to live a monochromatic life? Help audience members discover that theirs is but they didn’t realize it until Toni B opened my eyes. Now Toni has made me realize I deserve and that it is OK to want both joy and achievement in my life and Toni B has given me some great ideas about how to get there!

As you get clear on your answers to these strategy questions, they will enable you to reshape your content to have greater impact and value to audience members. And that leads to more paid presentations and that money can be used for a variety of activities important to you. (Another trip to the Himalayas?)

**After the presentation is written?**

The payoff of writing a script of your presentation is that you now transition to the presentation of it. Finding humor if appropriate. Adding research as necessary. Rehearsing your use of voice. Deciding on positioning on the stage. Lighting, and other A/V considerations. Word smithing so every word is properly placed, pronounced and fit into the right place in the sentence. Etc. etc.

Rita and I are excited to create a learning and performance improvement environment where these next 9 months see you giving birth to a fully professional and commercially viable (you can charge what you are worth!) presentation!! Or maybe more than one!

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MY VIEW OF SUCCESS AS A COMMERCIAL COMMUNICATOR

Speakers, authors, etc. succeed when they make a direct connection between their passion, their content, and their audience – target market. It is not as easy as it would seem, and the good money doesn’t flow until an accurate connection is discovered and practiced to perfection.

My goal for you as we discuss your exploration or re-exploration of this critically important connection is that over the next few months you discover full congruence between your passion, your audience and your content.

My passion for speaking, writing, etc. is to share this message and have this impact on my audience.

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My content focus description and how I will deliver it:

|  |
| --- |
|  |
|  |
|  |
|  |
|  |
|  |

My commercially viable audience(s) for my message is:

|  |
| --- |
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**NSA SPEAKER YOU STUDIO ATTENDEES**

**Comparing Your Presentation to a Product**

**I came across this information and felt it would help everyone get more clarity on the importance of understanding your unique value proposition (VP). Your VP is the benefit your content brings to a specific audience and is reflected in your speech outline.**

The following example can be quite helpful to you as it confirms that your presentation content is very similar to being a stand alone “Product!” A product like quality laundry soap provides people with clean clothes and vibrant colors. And subsequent boxes of soap provide the exact same result.

When you think of your presentation, your clients can see and experience it as a “product” that provides people and/or organizations with a benefit. And the same presentation to subsequent audiences can provide close to the same result! (Also, this is what our speaker booking agents are looking for as they evaluate you as a possible client of their agency.)

Don Thoren, CPAE

**Here is Ann Handley’s story about how this happened for her:**

There was a time, not very long ago, when Ann Handley customized every single presentation to every audience. She’d been told that meetings planners, and the audiences they serve, want customized presentations.

But in 2015, something strange happened. Ann was booked to do a fifteen-city speaking tour, and her client wanted the same speech in each city. “One speech, fifteen cities, the same audience?” Ann thought. “That sounds great! That’s way easier than customizing all fifteen speeches.” In the first city, the speech went well. The audience seemed to enjoy it. But Ann thought it could be better, so she tweaked a few things. By the fourth city, Ann had tightened up the stories, and her one-liners got punchier. By the sixth city, Ann had refined her slides and even noticed more smartphones going up to take pictures when she hit the salient lessons in each story. At a cocktail hour after her keynote at the seventh stop on tour, Ann remembers, “A group of people from a Fortune 500 tech company’s partner program came up to me at cocktail hour and said something I’d never heard anyone say before. **‘Can you give that exact same speech to our partners?’”** Ann had fielded hundreds of invitations to speak at events, but this request was different. She couldn’t remember a time when someone had asked for the exact same speech. The folks from the Fortune 500 company didn’t want a customized version of the speech she’d delivered earlier in the day; they wanted that exact same speech.

**DON’S THOUGHTS CONTINUED:**

The content of Ann’s speech was seen as a valuable product that these people wanted others in their company to hear. PLUS, obviously Ann’s professional delivery became an integral part of Ann’s Value Proposition (VP) to this client. (You notice they did not want to buy a copy of the speech to distribute among their co-

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workers.) It was the combination of great content and great delivery they wanted!!!!!

My guess is that Ann continues to customize many of her speeches but just think how much easier that is to do with this topic and its designated audience! My goal in sharing this with you is NOT to advise against customization, but to help you see the importance of a creating a speech core. A core that is solid and which gets predictable results. That is what we get paid for when delivered with excellence.!

**ADDITIONAL FOOD FOR THOUGHT**

You may remember that Neil Armstrong was the first person to walk on the moon. Afterward, every Corporation and Association paid him to speak to their people. As a speaker, Neil Armstrong initially did not possess the speaking skill to lead a group in silent prayer! 😊old joke But that didn’t stop people from hiring him to share his experience. (Thankfully, he later, with practice, became an acceptable speaker. Morale of the story for NSA members, if you haven’t walked on the moon, you better create some other valuable content!!!!!

9/20/2022



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| [The Key to a Successful Speaking Business -- or ANY Business!](https://www.linkedin.com/e/v2/pulse?e=al71-l58pxwlb-mt&lipi=urn%3Ali%3Apage%3Aemail_email_series_follow_newsletter_01%3BooNknzFBTaiZCz825rI8JQ%3D%3D&a=pulse_web_view_article_detail_new_url&midToken=AQGI_cGNc2cwxA&midSig=22YxyR72xIqqk1&ek=email_series_follow_newsletter_01&li=1&m=hero&ts=title_link&permLink=key-successful-speaking-business-any-scott-mckain) |
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| Later this week, I'll be traveling to Nashville to join other professional speakers from around the world at the [National Speakers Association](https://nsaspeaker.org) annual conference. I've attended MANY of these events over the course of my career!And again this year, I'm honored to be asked by several newer speakers to chat with them about how to build a successful speaking business. *The challenge, however, often comes when I ask them, "What do you speak about?"* The answer is frequently expressed with nebulous responses such as, "I'm a motivational speaker," "I inspire my audiences," or even "I'm changing lives." While these may be admirable goals, they leave much to be desired from a clarity standpoint!A successful speaking business -- just like any other type of business -- is built on clarity. Clarity of purpose, clarity of message, and clarity of target market. When you're clear about what you do and whom you do it for, everything else will fall into place more easily. So if you're serious about building any business that will thrive long-term, start by getting clear on your niche.One challenge I've seen in the speaking business is one that I frequently observe in many organizations that I consult with, as well: **the failure to translate how your experience or insight helps your client solve a problem.*** For example, if you've climbed Mt. Everest and you talk about your trek, your message only has value if I also seek to scale the summit.
* On the other hand, if you make your climb into a metaphor on how to overcome obstacles, work more effectively in teams, or how to break down an extraordinary goal into achievable steps – you now help your audience members solve the challenges they face, regardless of their interest in climbing mountains.

No alt text provided for this imageThe last thing I want to do is waste my time listening to someone unqualified to discuss their topic. The next to last thing I want to do is to be trapped into listening to someone deliver a message that has no application to my challenges, problems, or opportunities.Page 2 of 3By the way, in my humble opinion, there is no such thing as a "motivational speaker." If the SPEAKER was what was motivating, then everyone in the audience would be motivated -- and we know that is never the case.No alt text provided for this imageInstead, the message of the speaker can serve as the catalyst for members of the audience to raise their levels of productivity and performance. These speeches should be evaluated based upon the improvement of results, not the speaker's level of enthusiasm on the platform.*Speakers must be able to answer this question:* ***who will your message resonate with the most?*** Once you have clarity around these things, the rest of your marketing and business development efforts will be much more focused and effective.Page 3 of 3Take the time to clarify: * Your purpose
* The problems you help your clients solve
* Your story
* ...and your target market.

This effort will pay dividends in the long run -- in the speaking business and EVERY business!No alt text provided for this image |
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