

Speaking to Grow Your Business Part III: Marketing Tips to Fill the Room

There are several low/no cost ways to begin speaking. I would begin speaking for free – I did and it was a great way to build my database quickly. Here are my 4 favorite tips for building your reputation and becoming slightly famous with speaking.

Tip #1: Offer a class related to your business at your local community college and/or adult education center. There are two great advantages to this tip. One is that teaching a class can feel less scary than being a “presenter.” Chances are that you are passionate about the services or products you offer. When that’s true, it’s easy to create a class/workshop to share what you know with others. For an hour to an hour and a half class, decide on 3 main points you want the audience to know about. Think of some stories or examples related to each of the 3 points and write those down. Finally, create some kind of interaction that can be done around each point (for example, share their experience with the person next to them for 5-10 minutes, or ask for examples from the audience that are shared with everyone, or have them do a written exercise).

A 2nd advantage of this tip is that these organizations print the catalog and have large lists of folks who receive them. Check out other presenter’s listings, particularly those who have several classes listed, or who are regularly brought back to teach. Follow the format they use to describe your class. It’s typically about 3 sentences followed by 3 learning objectives (what you will get when you take this class) and a short 2-3 line bio. You’ll need to remember that these folks need to hear from you early. If you want to present in the fall, you need to contact them in the spring. They have a several month lead time in order to publish their catalogs.

Tip #2: Contact local networking and service groups to let them know you are available for speaking. Get online and research the groups in your area. Create a list of 2-3 topics with learning objectives, along with your bio, and send it to all the groups you can find within the distance you’re willing to drive to speak.

For example, this fall I will be speaking at a chapter of the National Association of Women Business Owners (NAWBO), at a Volunteer Center and at a Rotary Club meeting. I don’t charge for any of these, but I do ALWAYS collect the contact information, including email as well as postal addresses, of almost everyone in the room. You can do this by offering to email them a special report you’ve written in exchange for their information or you can hold a drawing for a book or one of the products you sell to those who give you their contact information. Don’t forget to get testimonials! Again, spring is a good time to contact these folks. Their program officers are usually setting up a calendar of speakers for the following September through August.

Tip #3: Offer to give a seminar at your spiritual home or local library. These organizations have plenty of experience in promoting activities to their members. In the case of spiritual communities, it is common to share the workshop proceeds if there is a fee; however, you can also sell your books/products “back of the room” and make as much, if not more, from these sales as from the workshop fees.

Tip #4: Get some free publicity. Most newspapers and radio stations have a “calendar” or “weekly section” that will list your workshop at no charge. Craigslist is another great place to post your workshop at no cost. Appearing on radio talk shows to discuss your program builds great interest in your topic. Start to develop a network of contacts within your business and media communities. Write and submit press releases about your workshops (that’s the topic for another article!).

About the Author:

Ann Ronan, Ph.D. is an author, speaker, certified career coach and self employment expert, and vision generator.

Ann delivers smart, simple ways for people to acknowledge what they love to do and do more of it. Her articles, products, and books have motivated and inspired readers in numerous print and online publications. She regularly leads coaching programs, tele-seminars and live retreats, bringing the message to audiences internationally that living a passion-based life will bring prosperity and success.

She was recently selected from a nationwide search to be featured in Discover Your Inner Strength. The book features best-selling authors Stephen R. Covey (Seven Habits of Highly Effective People), Brian Tracy (Million Dollar Habits), and Ken Blanchard (One Minute Manager).