



# Workplace Guide to Hire and Screen Speakers



# Guide to: Hire and Screen Speakers

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Today, more than ever, companies want to make sure the talent they bring into their organization are meeting their expectations. The problem is that, sometimes these expectations are not set out in advance. WSN wants to give you a format to use to help you ask the right questions to ensure you get the right talent to match your needs. Whether you are bringing someone into your organization for a free talk or a paid talk, here are a few tips to improve outcomes at future events:

**Set Clear Expectations Up Front:** In order to get things off on the right foot, it is critical that you are clear in what you expect from the speaker and what the speaker is expecting from you. The clearer you are with respect to what you want, the easier it will be for the speaker to meet your specific training needs.

**Create Written Terms for Action:** Creating a written agreement as to the terms involved in the training requirements removes the guess work for all involved. Not only will you become clear about what you want, it will ensure accountability for all parties. In this written agreement include timelines and deadlines for information you require. The more clarity you provide the easier it is for speakers to meet your needs.

**List Details for Implementation:** Great action comes from great pre planning. Create an event planning form and include a plan for what is required on the day of the event. List the tools and technology required and what needs to be set up in advance. Too many events go off the rails because of miscommunication regarding technical or logistical details. Ensure you have an IT resource person on hand to help with set up. It can take the stress out of the last minute glitches that surface.

**Screening Training Talent:** Today there are multiple ways to be able to view talent you select for workplace training. The most effective screening process involves: asking for testimonials, viewing speaker web site and e-credibility, asking respected colleagues for their thoughts, viewing or asking for feedback on WSN networking linkedin group, asking for a video preview of their work, or attending a WSN “Speed Talk Luncheon” to screen experts live. WSN provides these screening tools on one site to save you time.

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**Inquire about Professional Associations:** Depending on the topic and purpose of the training, you may find it of huge value to inquire as to the speaker's investment in professional associations or networks. How do they contribute to the improving and supporting the future learning of the industry? Leaders who are invested in professional networks are usually more aligned with ongoing improvement in their area of expertise. This is an additional credibility factor worth noting.

**Create a Promotional Template:** Many leaders do their due diligence in planning for the right speakers to match their learning outcomes, but forget to promote their events to get people excited. Having an e-mail event template to track and build momentum is critical for increasing attendance rates. WSN can help you set up e-marketing systems to track who in the company is opening your e-mails and who is not. This allows you to actively reach out and remove barriers to participation.

Before you send out your promotional materials, share it with the presenter involved. Not only will it ensure that all information is properly communicated but also, the experts may have tips for you to increase your engagement rate.

The key to promotion is timing. Give your team enough advanced notice (and multiple reminders about the event) so that they can book training sessions into their calendars. Better yet, set a consistent training schedule so your team puts it into their calendar in advance. Much like an upcoming holiday, the anticipation of great things to come gets people talking. The better the buildup, the better attendee rates you will get.

**Who Is In The Audience:** One size does not fit all. Employee groups are becoming more diverse (both through age and culture). Letting the presenter know the makeup of the audience in advance will help them streamline presentation style. What works best for your employee group: lecture style presentation and formal handouts, or a video or hands on experience? The more the presenter knows, the better they can serve you.

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**System in Place to Evaluate Performance:** Whether you use a simple feedback form or a more detailed evaluation tool, create a system to track what speakers are doing that you like and dislike. Did they meet outcomes as established? Did you do your part to communicate your organizational needs in advance? Investing the time to determine the elements of the presentations you value and gathering testimonials at each planned event are important. Not only will you have documentation when you do plan next year's training sessions, you will have documentation to effectively pitch the value of a speaker for future training sessions. Share results with the speaker so they can build on their performance too!

**Experts Pitching Employees:** It happens that some speakers will end their presentation with a sales pitch. Companies and employees really do not like to feel sold to at the end of their training session. However, for experts who are giving your company training time for free, they want to know they can plant seeds to build awareness about their resources. Clarity is everything when it comes to speaker promotions and company boundaries. As a company who is bringing in the talent, make it easy for the expert to be able to share their contact information in a follow up format. Set an expectation with your presenter to share their follow up process and related documents by distributing in advance. You can then give a thumbs up or down. Speakers and learning professionals want to engage your teams for mutually beneficial returns. Make it easy for them by sharing your best practices and create a win win for all.

**Use Google Searches To Help You:** In learning more about a presenter, try googling their name and find out what surfaces. Although it is only be a small piece of data you can access, it may be just the right information you need to support your investment in training.

**Costs/Payment Arrangements:** It is very important to clarify upfront what the financial arrangements will be in hiring talent for workplace training. What are the costs and expectations and do they fit within your budget? If you have a standard format you use in the process of negotiating fees, make this known to the speakers in advance. This can speed up the proposal process.

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**Customization of Information:** It is important to ask the presenter whether they are open to customizing some of the content to support your organizational training needs. For example, there may be new policies or procedures you are implementing and you want to ensure these are reinforced through a session on customer service. A good speaker will be able to add your key content into the mix to support your objectives.

**What Kind of Speaker Do You Want:** There are a variety of speakers on the market today. Know what you want in advance. Is it a humourist to lift spirits, a king of content, or an inspirational leader to shift your team to new levels of success? Events have different purposes. Be clear with you speaker what you are looking for and ask if they can meet that need.

**Issues and Challenges in Workplace:** When you are inviting a speaker into the workplace, debrief them in advance of issues or controversies that may surface. If they know what some of these trigger issues are, they can better respond to and redirect the energy of attendees.

**Share Your End in Mind Plan:** A great way to plan your training is to think about what you want to have happen after the presenter has completed the session (proposed outcomes). This will allow you and the presenter to determine if and what actions steps are part of the process.

**Try Before You Buy:** To evaluate new speakers who may provide your company with innovative content, ask if they have a try before you buy offer. Bring them in to for a test run and see if there is an opportunity for you to invest in them in the future. Many amazing speakers offer a sample of their gifts so that you can preview their expertise.

**Screen By Staying in The Know:** The best way to keep your company in touch with leading-edge resources is to sign up for informational sites like WSN news. You will get updates regarding speaker profiles and new topics you can access to match with your organizational needs. This is a time saving tool to make your job easier.

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**Plan Training With Many Eyes:** Getting more stakeholders involved in the decision making process may help in getting more buy in from your employees. WSN allows companies to add on multiple site users, to browse presenter options and make it easier to get more eyes involved in the process.

**Cancellation Policy:** On occasion a company or a presenter may have to cancel their booking. Be clear as to what notification is required and if there is a plan “B”. Include terms of cancellation for both parties in your agreement.

**Speaker Contact Overload:** Many company leaders, who plan training, are often inundated with calls from a range of speaker experts and training companies on a regular basis. Whether you’re are in the middle of a project when these companies call to pitch their services, or you do not have an immediate need for their resources, suggest they register on the WSN database so you can access them in the future. This will help you to reduce the number of callers you deal with and will allow you to find these experts in one central database when you need them. This is a simple way to keep resources, past and present, accessible for your training needs.

**Assign a Go To Person:** We all know best laid plans can have a few hiccups. To create effective communication on the day of the event, assign a go to person to welcome and assist the speaker. Make sure the go to person and the speaker are introduced, and exchange cell/office numbers in advance so they can connect if need be.

**Share Your Successes With Other Companies:** When you find quality talent, share the news with other colleagues and professionals who plan training. Today we often choose to buy services through a referral from someone we trust. We encourage our WSN members to share their experiences through our linked group and through events we host monthly. The more we share, the better life gets for everyone.

[If you have questions or want more help in finding the right talent for your training, let us know.](#)

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