

# Making speeches that net new leads

Public speaking can be a great way to establish yourself as an expert and generate new leads, or it can be a tremendous waste of time.

You can deliver endless speeches to endless groups and walk away with nothing to show for it.

If you're looking to maximize your public speaking engagements, then you need to deliver an effective lead-generating speech that not only captivates your audience but also leaves them asking for more, experts say.

"It's really about providing education and information," says Marla Seiden, a public speaking coach and president of Seiden Communications Inc., a public relations and marketing agency in New Hyde Park.

It's not about the "hard sell," adds Seiden, noting that if you turn a speaking engagement into a sales pitch, you'll turn off your audience.



## SMALL BUSINESS

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### Choosing a topic

"You want to choose a topic that's interesting and will benefit the group," says Seiden, who offers presentation tips at [seidencommunications.com/presentationTraining.html](http://seidencommunications.com/presentationTraining.html). "Find out as much as you can about your audience."

If possible, see if you can send a questionnaire to attendees in advance asking them what they'd really like to know, she says.

"Talk to them about some kind of problem or problems they have that your company knows how to solve," says Alan Rigg, author of "How to Beat the 80/20 Rule in Selling" (Performance Press; \$19.95) and president of 80/20 Sales Performance in Scottsdale, Ariz.

Open with an "attention

grabber," he advises. This can be a startling fact or an emotionally compelling story relating to one or more of the key points you will address in your speech, explains Rigg, who offers more tips at [8020salesleader.com/public/126.cfm](http://8020salesleader.com/public/126.cfm).

Outline the key points you'll be covering in your speech and describe any problems your speech is intended to help your audience solve. Engage the group by asking them to describe how a problem has affected them personally or professionally, he notes.

Stories are a great way to engage your audience, notes Susan Trivers. The president of Speakeconomics! and Trivers Communications Group in McLean, Va., says there are types:

■ **A springboard story**, in which you relate a true story about someone who was able to overcome a problem with your help;

■ **A future story**, in which you help the audience members to imagine themselves overcom-

## Follow-up techniques

- ▶ Offer handouts (include contact information, tips, etc).
- ▶ Ask attendees to join your social networks (i.e. Facebook, Twitter).
- ▶ Provide a form they can use to request a free special report and/or subscribe to a free newsletter.

Sources: Marla Seiden; Eileen Lichtenstein; Alan Rigg; Susan Trivers

ing obstacles and accomplishing their vision or goal;

■ **A brand values story** that shows how you live the values that your brand promises, such as honesty, service, quality, etc.

The entire speech is basically a series of stories, concluding with some type of call to

action, adds Trivers.

### Call to action

This can be in the form of asking them what they'll do the next time a problem arises or even offering a handout, where they can offer feedback, get tips or sign up for your e-newsletter/articles, etc.

Just be sure to check with organizers to make sure handouts are allowed, says Eileen Lichtenstein, a professional speaker and chief executive of Balance & Power Inc., a Baldwin-based peak-performance success coaching business.

Also see if they'll provide you with their sign-in sheet, she adds, noting you can always distribute your own.

Find ways to engage with attendees, either through a question-and-answer period or by talking with attendees after your presentation, Lichtenstein suggests.

"I think when people become personally involved, they're more apt to follow up with you later on," she says.