



## **Seven Steps to Up Your Speaking Game**

I am constantly trying to stay on top of my game as a public speaker. Since many of my speaking bookings were canceled due to the coronavirus, I have been using this time to catch up on some speaking books, further improve my offerings, and pivot to doing more online training. Here are seven tips I revisited going through these books. It will be a great reminder for the pro and an excellent starting point for the novice speaker.

What follows will help you whether you are doing internal presentations or speaking on the Big Stage.

1. Be an expert who speaks – I remember the time my son asked me if I was a “motivational speaker”. I told if I wasn’t, I wouldn’t be speaking for long. We somehow have this idea that you’re either somebody who is a motivational speaker or somebody who speaks on substance. The fact is, to be an excellent presenter, you must be an expert who can produce motivating information. It’s really not an either/or. In my experience, most executives, members, attendees, etc. want substance over motivation.

If you are hired to be a motivational speaker, to pump the place up, then make sure that that is your expertise!

2. Get good at telling stories- as the saying goes “facts tell, and stories sell”. Sometimes you can introduce your topic with a story to get instant engagement. Other times you use stories to emphasize a point you are making. You can also bring people into your stories. “Imagine you woke up, turned on the news, and the first thing you heard was....”
3. Write, write, write – as I am doing now. Speaking is about getting your ideas into the marketplace. You can precede your work on the platform with well-written blogposts, articles, guides, checklists, and other forms of writing. The point is to do it consistently. One thing I have found helpful is to write in chunks and then allocate the content out over weeks.
4. Video, video, video – there are under one-minute videos, under five-minute videos, and then those videos that go as long as you care to record. Each has its place. Video can be shot on your iPhone, a recording of a Zoom meeting, or in a studio. Anytime you are shooting a video, make sure there is good light and audio. Keep a steady hand and make sure it is well framed. You could even hire somebody to spruce up your videos like I did with [this one](#).
5. Stay in your lane – of all the advice given to speakers, this is, perhaps, the hardest one for me to follow. I love speaking on numerous subjects but also understand that to be a high paid and sought out speaker, I have to “stay in my lane” and pick out just a handful of topics within a narrow subject range. For example, while I am very capable to speak on legal matters or human resources, I prefer to stay focused on the power of stories and emotional intelligence, and how those apply to leadership and sales.
6. The power of humor, exercises, and creativity - whether you are presenting for a handful of teammates or keynote in front of thousands of people, everyone wants to be entertained. Strategically placed humor and exercises can bring your presentation to life. Then step back and ask what you can do to be more creative. For example, I like using numerous props in my workshops and keynotes. I love doing creative exercises that engage people in the learning.
7. Speak whenever and however you can. There is no substitute for practice and experience. Just get out there and speak. Toastmasters is a great place to start. The more you speak, the better you will get at it!

Having been a professional speaker for over 20 years, I have great familiarity with the above, yet I revisit them regularly. That’s because my goal is to not just be an average speaker but a great one. Which technique or strategies can you use to up your speaking game?