

ENGAGE AND INSPIRE:

THE PROVEN PROCESS BEHIND
EXCEPTIONAL **EOS®** SPEAKERS

SPEAKER GUIDE EBOOK

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INTRODUCTION

It's a familiar setting that occurs every day all over the world: rows of chairs, probably in a windowless hotel conference room. A stage up front, with a screen and projector. An audience shifting in their seats and staring at their phones, waiting for the session to begin. Can you picture it?

What happens next in the room has the power to change the world.

As speakers, what we say and do can create a ripple effect of change that we may never see. Maybe one person makes an adjustment in their business that allows them to accelerate hiring and change the lives of those new employees. Another finds new inspiration and decides not to sell the company. We may never know the positive change created by our words, but we have the potential to do so much good when we step up to the microphone.

But first, we must be ready.

Regardless of where you are in your speaking journey, there is always room to learn and grow. This short ebook is a compilation of our best speaking guidance to help you shine on any EOS stage or wherever your speaking takes you. It is a value-add to YOU, our speaker, for sharing your time and expertise with our audiences.

Whatever your topic or format, we all owe it to the audience to make the most of their time and attention, providing unique insights and actionable takeaways that spark change. Let's get started!

SECTION 1: PREPARATION

STRUCTURING YOUR TALK

OPEN WITH IMPACT

You only have one chance to make a first impression. Open your talk with something that packs an emotional punch and hooks the audience. It should set the stage for what you will be teaching. Examples are things like a personal story, a shocking statistic, or a bold statement.

When people learn something new and exciting, dopamine is released in their brains, and they are more likely to retain the information. Begin your presentation with an immediate hit of interesting content, and the audience will stick with you.

PRO TIP: What's NOT compelling is opening with "My name is _____, and I'm the CEO of _____." Your room host will introduce you at the beginning of your session; you do not need to repeat it or share a list of your credentials. Focus on creating intrigue and curiosity instead. If you are in a speaking situation where there is no one to introduce you, work your self-introduction in, after you've made your opening statement.

USE A STRUCTURE

Your talk should follow a central theme, the main point you want your audience to leave with. From there, the "rule of three" is an effective framework for your talk that increases the likelihood of audience retention and creates a "journey" for them to follow.

To create this framework for your talk, identify the main theme, and three concepts that support that theme. Give the audience a road map of what they are going to learn, and how you will progress through the pillars. Clearly call out your main learning points as you go, and include stories that directly support your key points.

Start with a rough outline and revisit it several times. Take time to refine your ideas and ask others for their input.

EXAMPLE: We are going to learn how to effectively onboard new employees.

1. First, we're going to talk about how to set the right tone in the recruitment process.
2. Then we'll explore how to build a memorable first week.
3. Finally, we'll map out how to involve the entire company in onboarding.

PRO TIP: The “rule of threes” is a great way to structure all kinds of content. It's a powerful concept in writing and communication that increases the retention of information. When in doubt - break it into three parts.

MAKE THE TAKEAWAYS POP

Your audience is ready to learn from you! Make this easier on them by clearly identifying your main points and key takeaways throughout your presentation. Near the end of the presentation, offer a clear recap of the points you have covered. That will be the slide when all the cell phones go up to take a picture!

CLOSE WITH IMPACT

A powerful “close” brings the journey of your talk to a satisfying end for the audience. It can be a story that packs an emotional punch and supports your main point, or even reiterates the number-one point you want them to retain. Just don't just trail off when you reach the end of your presentation – put as much effort into planning the end of your talk as the beginning. This is what the audience will remember most!

COMPLEMENTARY SLIDES

When used correctly, slides are a powerful tool to aid your presentation and help the audience process what you're saying. However, poorly designed slides lead to audience frustration and distract from your message. Let's get this right!

SLIDE DESIGN – LESS IS MORE

You need to hear this: Your audience cannot read and listen to you at the same time. When you show a slide full of text, their focus shifts to reading and they miss what you're saying. Let's do better than generic slides of bullet points!

Even if you need some visual cues to stay on track, there are better alternatives to blocks of text, such as:

- Keeping it to one concept (or even just one word!) per slide
- Progressing one bullet point at a time into the slide so the audience stays with you
- Sharing a full-size photo that illustrates each point

If sharing a block of text is absolutely unavoidable, pause your speaking to allow the audience time to read.

PRO TIP: “If you hear information, you are likely to remember 10% of that information three days later. Add a picture and your recall rate will soar to 65%.” – Talk Like TED

Generally, aim for fewer than 10 words per slide, and in a font that is at least 30 points, so the entire room can read it. Remove any unnecessary graphic details that distract the audience, like page numbers or tiny QR codes. Keep your slides as clean as possible.

GREAT RESOURCES: Watch [Death by PowerPoint video by David JP Phillips](#) and [Brené Brown’s famous TED talk](#). Pay attention to Brené’s minimalist use of slides.

Remember, your presentation will be projected onto a screen in a room with lights. Make sure the font size and design aspects ensure your slide is readable from the back of a large room. We’ll close with “Less is More.”



FUN FACT

The most viewed **TED talk, by Sir Ken Robinson**, did not use slides at all!

OTHER ENGAGEMENT TOOLS

Researchers have identified 18 minutes as the point where the brain builds a cognitive backlog of too many ideas, leading to fatigue, distraction, and frustration. The longer you talk, the more you are asking your audience to process and remember.

Providing “soft breaks” at regular intervals allows for rest and engagement, reducing the likelihood of a fatigued audience scrolling their social media feeds.

USING VIDEOS

Video clips can be a great tool to engage the audience. However, they also increase the risk of a technical challenge in your speech.

If you are using a video, it's important that:

- You alert event organizers that your room needs speakers for sound
- You download the actual video into your presentation, not just an online link that could fail. ([Here's how](#))
- You own the content, or have permission to use it in a presentation. ([See EOS's requirements on ownership](#))
- You test the presentation in your room before your speech, as if you were delivering it to an audience.
- You're prepared to move on quickly if the video doesn't play.



“Your number one task as a speaker is to transfer into your listeners’ minds an extraordinary gift—a strange and beautiful object that we call an idea.”

— *Chris Anderson, Curator of TED Talks*

USING POLLS

Using a polling tool is another great way to bring your audience into the presentation, but you need to be **highly competent with technology** and ensure it will work at the key moment.

If you are using a polling tool:

- Relentlessly test and retest the platform before your speech, including in the session room where you will present.
- Start by sharing a very simple poll that lets the audience get familiar with the technology.
- Be sure the event is providing free access to WiFi, and that your attendees have received information on how to log in to WiFi, in advance.

If you are presenting and the polling technology fails, don't waste time trying to get it to work. It should be a “nice to have” in your presentation, so you can keep going with your content and not disrupt the learning experience.

Remember, technology isn't required to pull data from your audience. Having audience members raise their hands, stand up, or other visual cues can achieve the same results, without creating the risk of a technology failure.

PAUSING FOR QUESTIONS

Pausing regularly for questions provides a nice break in the presentation to let the audience get involved. However, it also creates the risk of a vocal audience member taking up time.

You can mitigate this with a few simple facilitation techniques, like specifying how many questions you will take, or how much time you will spend on questions.

A few simple best practices:

- Inform your audience, in advance, how you would like to take questions. Do you prefer attendees ask them as you move through the presentation? Or do you want them to hold questions until the end?
- In larger rooms, make sure the person asking the question uses a microphone. If this is not possible, be sure to repeat their question so the entire room hears it. This is especially important if you are being recorded or have an online audience.
- Always thank the participant for their question, using their name.
- Asking the room what they think allows more people to get engaged, and you can share your perspective after others share theirs.



SMALL-GROUP DISCUSSIONS

Many speakers break up their presentations with quick audience discussions in pairs or small groups. This creates attendee connections and helps them to process information for greater retention. It's a great way to get your room engaged, but here are a few things to keep in mind:

- Provide clear instructions for what you want them to do or discuss and in what timeframe. Post those instructions up on a slide.
- Explain what you'll do when time is up, and ask for their cooperation in returning their attention to you.
- Don't "release" them into conversation until you are completely done with your instructions. The room will get loud very quickly.
- Use facilitation techniques to bring their focus back to you. The use of a screen timer is helpful, or raise your hand and keep saying, "If you can hear me, raise your hand."

THE JOURNEY OF PREPARATION

BUILDING A PLAN AND TIMELINE

Even if your talk is months away, your presentation will benefit from spaced development. Create a personal timeline that incorporates when your presentation is due to event organizers. After you submit it, you'll still have time to practice, but after you submit your materials, continue to practice. Once materials are submitted, you likely will **NOT be able to make any changes**. This is because of the advance production time necessary to load content into our AV system and your other information into our apps and websites.



"The brain remembers the emotional components of an experience better than any other aspect."

— John Medina, Author of *Brain Rules*

PRACTICE. PRACTICE. PRACTICE.

Find at least one chance to do a complete dry run of your presentation with an audience similar to your attendees. If that's not possible, record your presentation and share it with people whose feedback you trust. They will see things you missed. You owe it to your audience to work out the kinks in advance.

BE SOCIAL

Post your enthusiasm about your upcoming talk on social media. Highlight one key insight or takeaway to create interest. Express what excites you most about speaking to the audience. Tag people you know are attending. This will engage your followers and generate buzz around your session. (Inquire about media assets for your event.)



“...people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.”

— *Maya Angelou*

ON-SITE REHEARSAL

No one wants to jump into a speech from a place of panic and stress, right? Avoid a last-minute train wreck with a simple rehearsal and review.

- Test out all the components of your presentation, including slides, clicker, videos, music, and polls.
- If you're relying on WiFi (which is risky), test it relentlessly!
- Meet the person introducing you and discuss ways you might need support. Make sure they have your introduction ready.
- Make sure your presentation's title slide matches what attendees see in the agenda or app.

SPEAKING AND REFERRAL BUSINESS

By focusing on **telling rather than selling**, you offer your audience valuable insights and practical tools they can use immediately. This approach enhances their experience and positions you as a trusted expert, making them more likely to seek out your services in the future. Remember, the key is adding value and leaving your audience with actionable takeaways demonstrating your expertise and genuine interest in their success.

ADDRESS PAIN POINTS UP FRONT

Acknowledge the specific pain points your audience is experiencing. Addressing these issues head-on immediately captures their attention and establishes relevance. This sets the stage for the rest of your presentation and shows that you understand their struggles.



SHARE YOUR EXPERTISE AND INSIGHTS

Begin by offering a glimpse of your extensive knowledge in your field. Speak passionately about your experiences, research, or the unique perspective you bring. When you tell compelling stories or share interesting case studies, you demonstrate credibility and build trust with your audience.

Instead of promoting your offerings, share insights your audience can relate to and learn from. Offer a fresh perspective on a common challenge or reveal an industry trend that's on the horizon. This positions you as a thought leader who understands your audience's real-world issues.



“If you can't explain it simply, you don't know it well enough.”

— *Albert Einstein*

SHARE ACTIONABLE MODELS AND TOOLS

One of the best ways to add value is by immediately providing actionable models, tools, or frameworks that attendees can use. Whether it's a new way of thinking about a problem, a tool for improving efficiency, or a model for strategic planning, giving your audience something tangible and practical will leave a lasting impression.

Ensure your session includes a takeaway that attendees can apply in their work or lives. This could be a worksheet, a checklist, or a summary of key points. A valuable takeaway reinforces your message and provides a tangible reminder of your session, making it more likely that your audience will implement what they've learned.

ENGAGE WITH AUTHENTICITY AND CURIOSITY

Audiences quickly sense when someone is disingenuous. Engage with authenticity, showing genuine interest in their needs and questions. When you connect on a human level, your audience is more likely to respond positively to your message and remember you favorably.

You create curiosity by sharing just enough to intrigue your audience without giving everything away. This can lead to further engagement, such as follow-up questions, additional research, or even contacting you afterward. Curiosity is a powerful tool that can naturally lead to deeper connections and opportunities.

ENCOURAGE INTERACTION

Facilitate interaction through Q&A sessions, discussions, or interactive activities. This will make your presentation more engaging and allow you to address specific concerns and demonstrate your expertise dynamically.



WHAT WON'T WORK

Audience feedback clearly reflects that no one appreciates or trusts speakers directly selling from the stage. They stop engaging with the speaker or even leave the room to find another session. Pursuing a hard sales approach will only alienate your audience and ensure you are not invited back to speak.

SECTION 2: YOUR PRESENTATION

The moment has finally arrived! If you're feeling a little jumpy, the [Box Breathing Technique](#) is recognized for calming the nervous system and steadying the voice.

AVOIDABLE SPEAKER PITFALLS

Even the most experienced speakers have undermined their presentations with these easily avoided mistakes. Don't distract from your message by alienating your audience.



SHOW RESPECT: Always address your audience with respect and professionalism. Acknowledge their time and attention, and avoid making assumptions about their background or beliefs. Consider diverse perspectives to create an inclusive environment.



PROFANITY- READ THE ROOM: Swearing can alienate or offend audience members, distract from your content, and undermine your credibility. Choose your words carefully to keep the focus on your message.



STEER CLEAR OF POLITICS AND POLARIZING COMMENTS: Refrain from discussing political views or making polarizing statements that could divide your audience. The audience has chosen to be in your room because of your expertise around your content. Diving into controversial opinions detracts from your message and undermines their decision to be in your room.



BE MINDFUL OF STEREOTYPES: Avoid perpetuating stereotypes related to race, gender, or diversity, even if meant in jest. Use inclusive language and examples that respect all individuals. Ensure your content promotes understanding and avoids reinforcing biases. **When in doubt, leave it out.**



CONTENT ADVISORY: In the extremely rare instance you plan to share a personal story or example that may be sensitive or triggering for some audience members, please provide a heads-up before sharing this information. Something as simple as "I'm going to share a story about ___ that some may find sensitive. Please take care of your well-being and feel free to step out or take a break if needed. I want to be sure to maintain a supportive environment for everyone."

OWNING YOUR ROOM

As the speaker, the audience is looking to you to manage their overall experience during your session.

YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES AS SPEAKER

- Greet people warmly for your presentation.
- Start on time and **END ON TIME!** If the audience is highly engaged and wants to continue the conversation, invite them to connect with you offline or during a meal. There is likely another session immediately after yours, and running long is disrespectful to speakers after you.
- Make sure the entire audience can hear you, regardless of where they are sitting or how big the room is.
- If you have a Room Host, lean on them for anything you can't resolve, like a loud door banging or a freezing temperature.
- Manage questions and facilitate effectively. Keep control and attention of the room.

As speaker, your role is to command the room. If something goes wrong, take responsibility. Ask questions, issue clear instructions, seek assistance as needed, and smoothly transition back to your presentation. The needs of the audience always come first.

PRO TIP: During your dry-run practice sessions, ask trusted colleagues to listen for any unintentional bias or comments you made that could hinder your success.

YOUR SPEAKER PRESENCE

Nonverbal communication greatly impacts how an audience processes information. Most studies agree that 70% to 90% of communication is nonverbal. As a speaker, this means that **WHAT** you say is important, but **HOW** you say it is critical. If your appearance, gestures, and body language don't align with your words, your audience will have difficulty trusting you.



“Nothing great has ever been achieved without enthusiasm.”

— *Ralph Waldo Emerson*

YOUR ATTIRE

As a speaker, you are a trusted subject matter expert. Your overall appearance should reinforce that sentiment of authority and trust. Dressing slightly better than the audience shows respect without setting you too far apart or looking inappropriate. If your audience is in “business casual” (most events are), aim for the more “business” side of that, looking professional and well-put-together.

Some speakers opt to wear clothing that reflects their business brand. While that may visually reinforce your brand with the audience, it may also create the perception that you are on stage to sell your services and erode trust. Be careful with over-branding yourself.

Finally, most events provide speakers with a wireless microphone, which clips near your chin and is anchored by a battery pack at your waist. Plan to wear clothing that accommodates your microphone (note that some dresses have no place to clip the battery, or big jewelry can hit the microphone).

PRO TIP: When you practice your speech, practice exactly as you intend to deliver it, standing up and moving around. Get feedback on how your delivery style helped or hindered your message.

BODY LANGUAGE

However you feel internally, reflect an air of relaxed confidence from the beginning, as you enter your session room and taking the stage. Many speakers inadvertently undermine their message through nervous movements, such as swaying from side to side, fidgeting with clothing or hair, or crossing their arms.

Moving around on stage and having eye contact with many people both help the audience feel included. Be mindful of not pacing too much or of standing where you block the projection screen or where audience members can't see you.

SPEECH AND GESTURES

Most conversations take place at a rate of 190 words per minute. The best professional speakers slow that pace down slightly, but not dramatically. Be mindful of how you speak in everyday conversation, and then how your pace changes when you present. Your audience should feel like they are in a conversation with you, not being “talked at” from the stage.

Don't be afraid to use your hands in a natural way, especially at key moments of your speech. Hands that dangle below the waist convey a lack of confidence and energy. Energetic and confident movement inside your “power sphere” shows the audience you believe in what you're saying, and they will too.

RESOURCE: Check out Colin Powell's natural gestures and confident body language use in his TED Talk, [Kids Need Structure](#).

SUMMARY

Being selected as a speaker is a profound honor that reflects the trust and respect of your audience and the event organizers. They place their confidence in you to deliver an engaging and valuable message. This responsibility requires significant time and effort to ensure your time on stage is impactful. By respecting your audience and acknowledging the privilege of speaking to them, you commit to offering your best delivery. Your commitment to excellence not only enhances the experience for those who have chosen to listen but will undoubtedly lead to future opportunities on new stages.



RESOURCES

There are countless books and videos available on public speaking. Here is a small collection we recommend.

[Book: Talk Like TED, by Carmine Gallo](#)

[Book: The Presentation Secrets of Steve Jobs, by Carmine Gallow](#)

[Book: TED Talks: The Official TED Guide to Public Speaking, by Chris Anderson](#)

[TED Talk: How to Avoid Death, by PowerPoint, by David JP Phillips](#)

[TED Talk: My Stroke of Insight, by Jill Bolte Taylor](#)

[TED Talk: Kids Need Structure, by Colin Powell](#)

[TED Talk: The Power of Vulnerability, by Brené Brown](#)

[YouTube: Simon Sinek on the Art of Public Speaking](#)

THANK YOU

Thank you for taking the time to read this e-book. And more importantly, for your dedication to making this event a success. Your passion, commitment to excellence, and the unique insights you bring make this event truly special. We are deeply grateful for all that you are contributing. Please stay in touch with us—we are here to support your success at this event.



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