

MONETIZE
YOUR MESSAGE

THE ULTIMATE GUIDE TO DECIDE WHEN TO SPEAK FOR FREE OR FEE



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When Should I Speak for Free?

Speakers face an age-old dilemma: **How do I decide when I should speak for free?**

I've been there. 🙋

My first speaking gig was a luncheon keynote for a local nonprofit back in 2014.

They paid me in chicken, asparagus tips and key lime pie.

A few speeches later, I received a Starbucks gift card. I remember leaving the Hyatt ballroom thinking...



But once I figured out that speakers actually got paid to speak, it was...



A Language Shift

First, let's shift our language.

Speakers don't speak for free, they "waive their investment level".

I encouraged you to evict the term "fee" from your vocabulary. "Fee" screams "transactional". "Investment level" evokes value exchange.

Second, I understand that you want to get paid.

I get it. I have five kids and I am a full-time speaker. The maths must make sense or my kids won't go to college.

(Just kidding...maybe 😏)

There are times, however when it makes sense to waive your investment level.

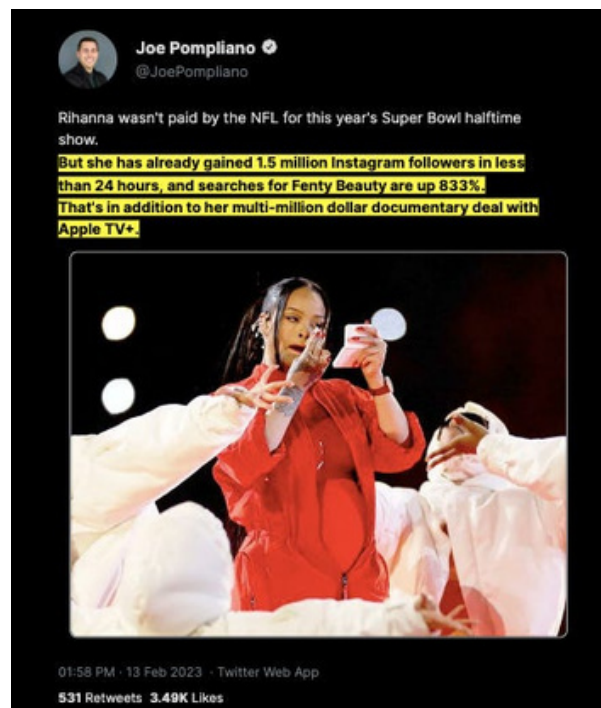
A Masterclass (Courtesy of Robyn Rihanna Fenty)

Did you get the trivia question right?

"When Should I Speak for Free?" Rihanna Has an Answer for Speakers in the Struggle. 😏

Here's some trivia for you: How much did Rihanna get paid to perform in Super Bowl LVII?

Well, here's the answer:



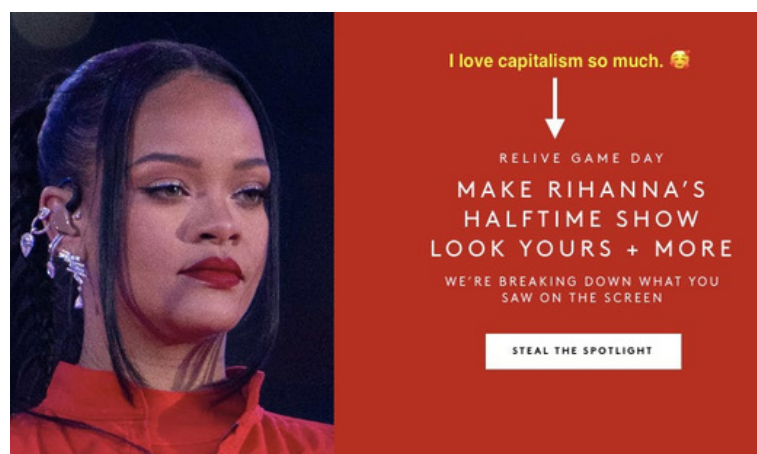
Click here for the full tweet, courtesy of Joe Pompliano



Yep.... you read that right.

Rihanna didn't get paid in dollars, but her brand exposure multiplied as soon as *she took the stage.*1

And she wasted no time capitalizing on the attention.



Via Fenty

Rihanna is playing the long game. Direct deposit from Roger Goodell's office be damned.

Here are three situations when you should waive your investment level.

3 Situations When You Should Waive Your Investment Level

1. Just Getting Started

I don't know how else to put this: If you're just starting out, speak whenever and wherever you can, even if they pay you in lumps of coal.

Get the reps.

And more importantly get the collateral (referrals, pics, videos and social media love).

With the collateral, we'll create more attention and get you paid sooner.

2. Pivoting into a Different Audience or Vertical

I'm coaching a speaker who has spent the past five years speaking in the sports industry.

But, he realized something: **Sports teams are cheap.**

I can attest to this fact, because I've worked for five sports brands. All of them paid submarket rates for speakers.

Why?

Because sports teams leverage their brands to drive value (Translation: Save money.)

Today, this speaker is repositioning himself in the marketing industry.

While he has already landed paid gigs in marketing, he's accepting unpaid opportunities so that he can: **a) test his new material, b) build brand awareness and c) cement new relationships.**

If you are (or find yourself) in a similar pivot point, strongly consider accelerating your brand awareness by waiving your investment level.

3. Believing in the Mission

I donate four talks each year.

Once a quarter I waive my investment level for organizations that are advancing marginalized communities.

Setting this annual cap on donated talks does two things:

1. It helps me to filter unpaid opportunities
2. It provides consistent language to use when declining invitations
3. It keeps me honest 😊

THE MIC DROP 🎤

In short, we all love moolah.



I get it.

But, speaking is *a long game*.

And this is why the vision of your impact has to go beyond the check size.

Be strategic.

Be patient.

And build your business brick by brick.

Take the Stage.

Get Paid.

Buy Your Freedom.