



# WAYS TO BREAK INTO THE SPEAKING INDUSTRY

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# 5 WAYS TO BREAK INTO THE SPEAKING GAME

You don't need a TED Talk or a Toastmasters trophy to break into the speaking game. In fact, to get started you don't even need a website.

All you need is commitment and persistence. Don't let the experts fool you. Here are five strategies that helped me turn a "speak for free" side hustle into a 6-digit annual revenue stream.

## #1 - Tell People That You Speak

Sounds too basic? I'm sure you're thinking, "I thought this PDF was going to give me the secret sauce 🤫."

When it comes to the speaking industry, this is the secret sauce.

Trust me. This is the starting point of your speaking career. The first thing you must do is tell people that you speak. And what's key is not to wait until you are a six-digit speaker.

Back in 2014, when I left the professional football world and transitioned into speaking, I became a relentless self-promoter. If I met a person at a happy hour or in an airport, I found some way to let them know that I was a keynote speaker.

And let me be clear about something: This is before I had any gigs.

I can hear some of you thinking, "I can't promote myself."

That's negative self-talk. We're not going to play that game. We're here to win.

**Homework: Over the next seven days, tell three people that you're speaking.**

## #2 - Define Your Zone of Expertise (ZOE)

First, let me just say that we are not going to over complicate this process. People get stuck when they overthink the process. Let's keep it simple.

What sandboxes have you played in during your professional career?

Nonprofits?

Sales?

Marketing?

Leadership?

Communications?

Entrepreneurship?

These sandboxes provide an anchor for us to carve your ZOE. Don't worry, any category you choose will be crowded. That's the nature of our business. We'll help you stand out from the crowd later, but for now, let's really focus on what we can control.

Most people don't have resumés anymore (that's so 1990's). Instead, let's scroll through your LinkedIn profile (having a LinkedIn profile is non-negotiable for a speaker).

Look at each work entry. What are your sandboxes? Write them down.



*Homework: Scroll through your LinkedIn profile and identify your sandboxes. Then circle the ones that light you up. What are the areas that you would enjoy speaking about?*

### #3 Unearth Your Stories of Significance (SOS)

Let me let you in on a secret: Event planners aren't hiring you for expertise.

Well, that's not entirely true, they are looking for some level of competence. But what's most important is that you shift the mindset of their organization. They want someone who will tell compelling narratives, elevate the energy in the room and leave their audience inspired to tackle their biggest challenge.

This means you have to **connect**. And this is the formula for connection:

#### **Share Show → Shift**

So, we're going to unearth the episodes from your personal and professional lives that will move an audience.

What are the five personal events that had the greatest impact on your life.

The death of a parent?

Switching majors?

Moving to a new city?

Take some time to write each one down (your initial list will probably be longer than five). Then circle the five experiences that you think would have the most impact.

Next, do the exact same exercise for your professional career. What are the five professional events that had the greatest impact on your life?

Getting passed up for a promotion?

Getting fired?

Opening an office in a new city?

Here's the final step: Look at your ten experiences and ask yourself: What are the underlying themes here and what am I most passionate about. We're building your speaking arsenal brick-by-brick with this exercise. Don't skip the work!

*Homework: Create a list of SOS's from your personal and professional lives. Let the list sit for 24 hours. Now, come back to the lists and circle the top three (in each category). We will leverage these stories inside of your keynote.*

### #4 - Craft the Title of Your Talk

Now, one of the first things you're going to hear when you start telling people that you speak is this: **So, what do you talk about?**

Here's the formula for your answer.

Review your ZOE and SOS. What themes emerge?

Resilience?

Decision-making?  
Leadership?  
Team-building?

From that theme, think of a title that would prompt a listener to say, “Tell me more.”

Here are a couple of examples:

### **Leadership is a Contact Sport**

#### **Stay In The Deep End**

I have to be perfectly honest, it took me years to hone in on these titles. I played with a lot of variations before I settled on these two titles. So, take a deep breath and don’t put too much pressure on yourself. You’ve got this.

*Homework: It’s time to play with words! Go back to your ZOE and SOS. What words jump out? If you could encapsulate your ideal speech in eight words or less, what would it sound like?*

## **#5 - Ask Your Circle for Opportunities**

We have all heard the saying, “Closed mouths don’t get fed.”

Well, here’s another one for you: “Closed mouths don’t get gigs.”👁️👁️

At this point in your career, you’ve built a reputation.

You may be an attorney, teacher, consultant, or social media influencer. People know you for what you have done. Now, we have to shift their thinking. We want them to think of you as a speaker.

All of us have that one friend who sells life insurance. She sends 100 emails a day to her circle. She’s trying to sell life insurance to the barista at Starbucks.

She’s always selling.

This is the part of the story where you have to sell yourself. Even before you have the reps, you must make the “ask”. Notice this step is different than #1 - Tell People That You Speak. That’s a marketing move. Now we are shifting to sales.

Don’t worry, you’re going to pitch your services for free (fret not, we’ll get you paid soon) because care about one thing: Getting Reps.

Reps beget reps....

Homework: You have a lot of people in your circle but only a few in your corner. Ask five of them if there’s an opportunity to speak at their company, nonprofit, church or backyard barbeque. 🍷 The venue doesn’t matter. We’re chasing reps.

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It’s go time!

There are people who need to hear your message. Don’t deprive them of the opportunity to learn from you.

You’re ready for this.

# THE 10-MINUTE POST SPEECH DEBRIEF

You did it! You landed the speech, you delighted the event planner. And you crushed it on stage!

Now what?

Are you serious about converting this side hustle into a business? Well, good business owners take three critical steps after they make important business moves:

- 1. Assess
- 2. Adapt
- 3. Advance

Most moonlighters never employ the discipline necessary to take their speaking business to the next level. They rush between gigs and focus on volume instead of quality.

**Don't be most moonlighters.**

This is the MYM proven post-speech debrief that will enable you to continue crafting a killer keynote.

<b>Step 1: Assess</b> (Questions to ask yourself)
What went well?
What didn't go well?
What immediate feedback did you receive from audience members?

**Step 2: Adapt** (Questions to ask yourself)

What's one thing your speech missed that would have taken your message to the next level? (Think about regrets or "I wish I had" thoughts that you had as soon as you left the stage.)

What's one thing that moved the crowd during your talk? (Was it a joke? A story? A particular PPT slide? Again, be specific.)

**Step 3: Advance** Let's be brutally honest with ourselves. The longer we wait, the less likely it is that we will make a change.

What is one thing that you will change about your keynote? (Tighter closing? More impactful introduction?) Commit to either going to your PowerPoint or speech script and making the change right now. Trust us. Do it now or the breakthrough will be lost forever.

THE SPEAKER'S STARTER KIT:

# 3 EMAIL COPY SCRIPTS THAT WILL GET YOU PAID

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# 3 EMAIL COPY SCRIPTS THAT WILL GET YOU PAID

Before we share the email copy that will land you more speaking gigs, let's discuss the prep required before you send that first message.

Sending emails into the abyss won't get you on stage.

Follow this proven playbook (don't skip any steps) and watch your speaking career take off.

Let's go. 🚀

## Part 1: The Strategy

### 1. Do Your Research

We've worked with 100's of speakers who have failed to take this initial step.

First, you must identify your target audience and then identify the events they attend.

Then (and only then) you can start looking for conferences and events that fit this profile.

This is where good ol' Google will be your best friend. Let's be clear, this first step is time-consuming and cumbersome (and you could pay thousands of dollars) for an automated service, but as you get started, it will benefit you to take ownership of the initial stages.

### 2. Reach Out to the Right People

When doing your research, identifying the right decision-makers is also important, i.e., ***you'll want to identify the person responsible for booking speakers for each event.*** This way, you can ensure your email gets in front of the right person.

You can use LinkedIn to find the correct decision-maker. LinkedIn shows what people work in different companies and their roles.

Here is the play-by-play process that we use at MYM to identify decision-makers:

- Find the company that organizes the conference
- Use a search engine to find this company's website. Look for employee information there.
- Find the company on LinkedIn: usually, they have a list of employees on their pages
- From the information obtained, try to figure out who is responsible for the conference
- Use the email lookup tool Hunter to find any email addresses you haven't yet found
- Make sure to verify email addresses
- Write a standard email, create personalized versions, and go!

### 3. Hook Them With the Subject Line (And Don't Let Go 😊)

Research shows that **the first seven (7) words of your subject line** are absolutely critical to positive conversion.

Most recipients will decide to open or ignore your message based solely on your subject line.

Make sure they are clear, concise, and engaging.



Moreover, your subject line should be relevant to the recipient and make them want to learn more about what you have to say. If your subject line is boring or confusing, the chances are good that your email will be ignored.



Let's take a look at some good and bad subject lines:

Good subject lines 👍:

1. 45-Minute Keynote to Jumpstart {{name of conference}}
2. This Keynote Will Increase Registrations for {{name of conference}} by 20%
3. The Leadership Keynote Tailored for {{name of conference}}

Bad subject lines 🙄:

1. Hello, I'm looking for speaking opportunities
2. I want to speak at your event
3. This is my proposal for a talk

Avoid using generic phrases like "I want to speak" or "please read."

Instead, be specific and confident with your language.

#### 4. Make the 1st Sentence Count

After doing your research, build a Google Sheet with the following columns:

1. Name of Event
2. Date of Event
3. Location
4. Contact Name
5. Contact Email
6. Contact Date #1
7. Contact Date #2
8. Contact Date #3

**[Note: Most unsuccessful would-be speakers that we've worked with skip this step. And that's why their calendars are empty. ]**

An email opener is essential because it's your opportunity to make an excellent first impression.

It's the first thing the recipient will see, so you want to ensure it's strong and relevant. If you can capture their attention with your opener, they'll be more likely to look at the rest of your content. Your email should be addressed to the event organizer by name.

This shows that you've taken the time to research the recipient and makes your email seem more personal.

Write a personalized email opener that will grab the recipient's attention. Explain why you're the right fit for their event.

[And skip the desperation. Don't mention how *badly* you want to be the speaker. Always operate from a position of leverage.]

## 5. Keep Them Reading

Now that you have the recipient's attention, your goal is to convince the event organizer that you're the speaker that they need.

To do this, you'll need to highlight your relevant experience and qualifications. Then, explain why you're the perfect person for the event. Use specific examples to illustrate your points.

- For instance, if you're a sales expert, talk about how you helped your company increase its sales by 25% last year.
- If you're a leadership speaker, talk about the companies you've worked with and/or the positions you've held.
- If you just spoke to an impressive group, you can mention the audience and attendee number.

## 5ish. Share a Video of You Speaking (If you have it)

Another great way to increase your open and response rate is by embedding a video of you speaking into the text of the email.

Event planners love social proof.

**Now, let us be very clear: if you don't have this speaker clip yet, don't worry. Send the damn email anyway.**

## 6. Make It Easy

When offering to connect for a follow-up conversation, **make it easy for your recipient**. Offer to speak with them for **15 or 20 minutes** instead of 30 minutes or an hour. Assume your recipient is busy (because they are) so create a low-lift opportunity for them to connect with you.

## 7. Include Your Damn Contact Info

Don't roll your eyes. This is a common mistake that I see from many speakers.

Here's something to remember: Always assume your email will get forwarded to someone you don't know. If that person wants to pick up the phone and call you, they should be able to do so easily. Therefore, put your phone number somewhere in the signature.

## Part 2: The Copy

Hopefully, you didn't miss all of the gems we dropped above in Part 1. 🙌

If you skipped it...put it in reverse and take 5 minutes to read it.

Forgive us if this comes off as too stern, but we see too many would-be speakers skip corners and then wonder why their career stalls.

It's because they didn't do the work.

Okay, now...let's see some of this strategy from Part 1 in action.

### **There are three types of emails: Cold, Warm and Hot**

- Cold Emails - You don't know the recipient and the recipient doesn't know you
- Warm Emails - You are one degree of separation from the recipient
- Hot Emails - You know the recipient, or you know the recipient knows you 😊

Below, we provide the copy template (with an example) for each category.

### **Let's go get paid!**

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#### **COLD EMAIL TEMPLATE**

***Subject Line: [Brief & Catchy Description of Your Talk]***

***[First Name],***

***[Greeting - Show a little personality here]. [Qualifications].***

***[Connect the Audience/Theme to Your Speech].***

***[Offer to Connect].***

***[Salutation],***

***[Speaker's Full Name]***

***[Speaker's Contact Info]***

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#### **COLD EMAIL EXAMPLE**

**Subject Line: A 45-Minute Resilience Keynote to Jumpstart MCCON**

Jessica,

I hope you had a wonderful weekend. I'm a former management consultant who speaks to companies and associations on resilience. I understand how busy Q4 must be for you, so I'll make this brief.

After reviewing the website and noticing your theme of "Transformational Leadership", I am convinced that my resilience keynote will strike a chord with the MCCON audience. In my talk, I translate experiences from my 15 years as a consultant into a resilience framework for professionals.

Please let me know when you are available for a 15-minute conversation to discuss ways that I may add value to the conference.

Sincerely,

Sarah E. Jensen  
www.sarahjensen.com  
(617) 308-6945

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### **WARM EMAIL TEMPLATE\***

**\*Note the difference in tone of this warm email. This message should sound like a conversation between friends.**

***Subject Line: [Warm Connection Reference + Warm Brief & Catchy Description of Your Talk]***

***[First Name],***

***[Greeting - Show a little personality here]. [Warm Connection Reference].***

***[Connect the Audience/Theme to Your Speech].***

***[Offer to Connect].***

***[Salutation],***

***[Speaker's Full Name]***

***[Speaker's Contact Info]***

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### **WARM EMAIL EXAMPLE**

**Subject Line: Reaching out on the Reco of Todd Jensen**

Josh,

I hope you had a wonderful weekend. A mutual friend - Todd Jensen - recommended that I reach out to you. I survived three years as a college roommate of Todd's and count him as a dear friend.

For the past ten years, I have held various leadership positions with two marketing firms. Now, I'm helping marketers infuse empathy into their professional DNA.

I understand how busy Q4 must be for you, so I'll make this brief.

After reviewing your conference's website and noticing your theme of "Marketing from the Heart", I am convinced that my 45-minute empathy keynote will strike a chord with your members. In my talk, I translate experiences from my decade in the industry into an empathy framework for marketers.

Please let me know when you are available for a 15-minute conversation to discuss ways that I may add value to the conference.

Sincerely,

Darius F. Manning  
www.dariusfmanning.com  
(617) 308-6925

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## HOT EMAIL TEMPLATE\*

**\*Note the difference in tone of this warm email. This message should sound like a convo between friends.**

***Subject Line: [Hot Connection Reference]***

***[First Name],***

***[Greeting - Show a little personality here]. [Hot Connection Reference].***

***[Show You've Thought About How You Will Add Value].***

***[Make a Firm Offer to Connect].***

***[Salutation],***

***[Speaker's Full Name]***

***[Speaker's Contact Info]***

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## HOT EMAIL EXAMPLE

**Subject Line: Loved Meeting You at Influncr Conference**

Katy,

I hope you made it back to Denver safely.

What an incredible conference!

I know you're probably still unpacking from the trip (or maybe it's just me!), so I'll make this brief.

I'd love to talk with you more about the upcoming Q1 Sales Kickoff that we discussed. On the plane, I generated a few ideas for keynotes that I know would resonate with your team.

When are you free to jump on a 15-minute call (I'll spare you the Zoom!) this week?

Sincerely,

Jedidiah H. Washington

[www.jedwashington.com](http://www.jedwashington.com)

(617) 308-6105

## Conclusion

In closing, we leave you with three points.

First, **let your personality glow in your email.** The goal is to stand out (just enough) to get a conversation.

Second, **these emails won't send themselves.** This is mind-numbing work, but if you believe in your message and want to get booked, use this playbook.



And finally, **you've got this!**

Don't overwhelm yourself. Pick a 50-minute block to do your research. Then pick another 50-minute block to send five emails.

Then congratulate yourself and do it again.

And again.

And again.

Let's get booked!

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