The Professional Speaker’s Imperative: Bringing Value to Today’s Global and Tech-Savvy Marketplace

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white paper: noun

1. A commentary to educate readers about an issue or issues to help them implement specific solutions

2. An authoritative report that addresses specific issues or problems and how to solve them

3. Originates from the term “white book,” an official publication of a national government and the paper it is printed on
As the 2010-11 president of the National Speakers Association (NSA-US), I commissioned this white paper to address the changing nature of the speaking profession. Once the domain of the keynoter, the "speaking profession" now encompasses all those who share their expertise and inspiration with an audience through the spoken word, either face-to-face or virtually.

Whether you are a keynoter, trainer, facilitator, consultant or coach, the world of professional speaking has changed—including the way people hire speakers, the value speakers bring to the table, and the way speakers deliver on that value.

I asked seven thought leaders in diverse disciplines to contemplate the past, assess current trends and resulting implications, and create a path for the future of the speaking profession. Each of these respected speakers brought a specific area of expertise to the table, and looked into their rearview mirror and crystal ball as best they could. I am indebted to the depth and breadth of their perspectives, which were whittled down into a manageable number of pages.

I hope you find this paper of value for making better business decisions. As a professional speaker, your task is not about creating a single speech. It is much more than a speech. Your clients need the solutions you bring to the table in a variety of formats that all hinge on the spoken word.

Kristin Arnold, MBA, CPF, CMC, CSP
2010-11 President, National Speakers Association
This white paper fulfills several objectives. It will:

- Expand your knowledge about the history and growth of professional speaking.
- Enhance your understanding of today's speaking industry.
- Examine different ways that professional speakers can provide value to their audiences and clients.

This paper will serve as a useful tool to:

- Assist current and future professionals, who derive a significant portion of their income from the spoken word, to understand the many facets of professional speaking.
- Encourage all stakeholders in the meetings industry to gain a greater appreciation of the field of professional speaking.
- Suggest how the speaking industry might evolve to remain relevant in these changing times.

This paper also provides a framework for professional speakers and clients to:

- See how they fit into a professional speaking association.
- Connect with the speaking profession.
- Share their expertise to deliver greater value to others.

These areas are addressed in past, present and future perspectives.
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1. History and Growth of Professional Speaking

“Professional speaking” has probably existed in one form or another since 40,000 B.C., when human beings first evolved throat muscles capable of “voice sounds.”

Before the written word, stories transmitted history and events. Storytellers were revered for their vast knowledge and ability to teach by using narratives, poems, songs, fables and epics.

Every society that has existed has contained a strong storytelling component. Stories have been used for entertainment, teaching, and passing on historical information and wisdom.

Societies in West Africa, for example, relayed their own history in the form of stories and epics. Their tribal leader, also called a griot (pronounced gri-oh), carried out this important role. A griot memorized the history of his clan/tribe so that its traditions would be remembered and repeated from generation to generation. At various times, griots also served as historians, entertainers, genealogists, messengers, advisers to nobility, and praise singers.

According to Paul Oliver in his book, "Savannah Syncopators," “Though [the griot] has to know many traditional songs without error, he must also have the ability to extemporize on current events, chance incidents and the passing scene. His wit can be devastating and his knowledge of local history formidable.”

The roots of the speaking profession can be traced to the Greek and Roman sophists, orators and lecturers, and then to a nomadic group of entertainers, often called gypsies, who traveled throughout Europe and the Middle East to perform for various townsfolk. These early professional speakers also used their vocal expertise for gossip, satire or political commentary.

From here, there is a rich history of bards (poets), troubadours (singers), court jesters (jokesters), jongleurs (minstrels), narrateurs (oral historians), tub-thumpers (peripatetic preachers), and even snake oil salesmen (salespeople attempting to persuade the public to purchase their wares via a “slick” and dramatic presentation often devoid of factual basis).

Professional speaking traces its earliest roots to these storytelling traditions and the corresponding ways of presenting the spoken word. These speaking roots run deep and are many and varied. Speakers can trace a significant portion of their profession’s past to these early storytellers and speakers.

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Early “Professional Speakers”
2. The Evolution of Professional Speaking

From ancient griots, who gathered around tribal fires, to sophists, who earned a living by regaling audiences in the amphitheaters in Roman times, to today’s humorists, politicians, commentators and actors, a basic human need is satisfied by engagement and education through the spoken word. It has continued to evolve and can be found throughout the speaking profession’s rich history.

It is part of the great tradition of professional speakers that presentations and speeches have impacted human events and literally changed the course of history. Consider these examples:

- Russell Herman Conwell, a professional speaker in the 1800s, toured the nation making a presentation based upon his signature story, “Acres of Diamonds.” His fees founded Temple University in Philadelphia.
- Celebrated author Mark Twain traveled the world giving his “little talks” in cities large and small.
- Franklin D. Roosevelt, the 32nd president of the United States and the only president elected to more than two terms, is remembered for his famous words: “The only thing we have to fear is fear itself.”
- Sir Winston Churchill is remembered for his famous speeches during World War II, and these famous words: “Never, never, never, never give in.”
- Kenneth McFarland, Ph.D., the “Dean of Professional Speaking,” spent many decades traveling the globe inspiring thousands of people in a powerful and unique manner.
- Martin Luther King Jr.’s quote, “I have a dream,” was a driving force in the push for racial equality in the 1950s and 1960s.
- In John F. Kennedy’s inaugural address, he provided one of his most famous quotes: “Ask not what your country can do for you—ask what you can do for your country.”

Members of the National Speakers Association continue to follow a similar path, as these two larger-than-life figures illustrate:

- In his Southern drawl, Zig Ziglar, CPAE, who was born in a small town in Mississippi, traveled the world motivating and inspiring audiences. His best-selling book, See You At The Top, teaches people how to get what they want out of life.
- America’s 40th president, Ronald Reagan, Honorary CPAE, was a professional speaker and actor who found his way into politics. He implored his Soviet counterpart, Mikhail Gorbachev, to “Tear down this wall!”

This same impact occurs every day on a smaller scale: when a keynoter inspires an audience to action, when a facilitator illuminates an idea in a program, when a consultant sparks a concept at a session, or when a trainer influences behavior during a seminar. This is all part of the growing and changing world of professional speaking.
3. Breadth and Depth of Today's Speaking Industry

Over the past 40 years, the speaking profession has focused mainly on speakers who were known for their ability to deliver a keynote speech. In more recent years, however, the needs and wants of the meetings industry and the field of education have expanded and changed, and so has the definition of a professional speaker.

Speaking no longer is the sole domain of the uni-message keynoter. The profession now encompasses a wide variety of experts who address a multitude of topics, and are compensated for their expertise and ability to profoundly blend their subject matter with the art of presentation.

Today’s professional speakers deliver expertise-driven content and insights that offer opportunities for individual and organizational advancement, while simultaneously serving as role models who inspire, encourage and empower audiences.

A speaker might be a retired corporate executive who conveys a customized message on organizational growth and development to a senior team of Fortune 500 executives; or an expert who is an experienced practitioner from an area of extraordinary specialization who expounds on a new breakthrough or advanced scientific discovery; or a motivational humorist who spins hilarious yarns that offer insights into the human condition.

In the contemporary world of meetings, a professional speaker could be:

• A keynoter, trainer, facilitator, consultant or other professional who shares his expertise via the spoken word and who derives income in this manner.

• A lifelong student or learner who is committed to advancing his knowledge about a field of expertise and becoming a significant resource for existing and prospective clients.

• An entrepreneur who is actively engaged in advancing the art and science of communicating expertise via the spoken word, and has a personal and professional commitment that extends beyond a solitary individual business to the industry as a whole.

• A professional performer who has blended his expertise of artistry, music, humor, poetry or movement with content, created a message and became a professional speaker to uplift, enlighten and entertain audiences.

Modern-day speakers communicate to myriad audiences, not only face-to-face, but also electronically and virtually. They take advantage of an ever-increasing array of delivery systems within the meetings industry to convey information, train, motivate and entertain geographically dispersed audiences.

While market fluctuations will impact immediate economic return of business, the speaking profession is based on a firm foundation that transcends the technology of the moment. The basic human need to connect with others, learn and grow is unchanging. Even though the delivery systems may change, the desire and demand for individuals who speak professionally basically will remain unaltered.
4. Today’s Professional Speakers

Given the multiple facets of the speaking profession, it is nearly impossible to define exactly (inclusively or exclusively) who is a professional speaker or to pinpoint the specific elements that make a professional speaker.

Using the National Speakers Association’s four competencies (Expertise, Eloquence, Enterprise and Ethics) as a framework, the definition of a professional speaker can be further refined as someone who delivers expertise eloquently through the spoken word (either face-to-face or virtually), is compensated for the presentation, has a viable business enterprise, and adheres to the ethics of the profession.

A professional speaker must master the following four competencies:

- Expertise (message): Become and remain an expert on a specific topic area; know how to research it; target those who would benefit from it; and structure a message for delivery, both live and through various media, such as video and text.

- Eloquence (delivery): Deliver a compelling speech; know how to set the stage for delivery; master the role of a speaker; relate to the audience and setting; implement the appropriate technology; and be proficient at translating knowledge into action.

- Enterprise (business): Know how to market and sell speaking services and how to build, manage and sustain a successful and viable speaking “practice.”

- Ethics (professional practices): Know the standard practices of the industry and follow the Code of Behavior acceptable to the culture of speaking. For professional speakers, Ethics entails knowing the various roles and players within the industry, and how protocols and ethics work for all of the stakeholders within the meetings industry. Unfortunately, one unethical speaker can taint the reputation of the whole speaking industry and make the task more difficult for even the most ethical speakers.

To look an audience in the eye, to stand openly before it, to be fully accountable in the moment, to provide expertise, to tell stories that reinforce the content and eloquently expound on ideas is, indeed, a very powerful experience. It carries an enormous responsibility to openly display integrity in both one’s message and behavior.

In the changing world of speaking with its vast number of professional speakers, the four competencies will have a slightly different emphasis for individual professionals. A speaker who is missing one or more of these essential competencies, however, will probably not fit into the definition of a professional speaker.

### Professional Speaker versus Practitioners

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*Based on pre-determined curriculum.
5. Other Practitioners Who Speak

The following guidelines distinguish professional speakers from others who use speaking as a tool or technique:

- A professional who has Expertise and Ethics, but a low emphasis on Eloquence and Enterprise, might be a professor, a consultant or a corporate executive. This individual would be welcomed into the speaking profession if these last two competencies were developed.

- A person with Eloquence, Ethics and Enterprise who lacks significant Expertise might be a trainer who teaches someone else's concepts. This person would advance as a professional speaker by becoming a source of original material and knowledge.

- A person who has Expertise, Eloquence and Ethics, but lacks the drive for individual Enterprise, is probably a hobbyist who enjoys speaking and would be welcomed into the profession if he wants to learn about the business aspects of speaking.

- An individual who has Expertise, Eloquence and Enterprise, but lacks the drive for individual Ethics, would be compared to charlatans of an earlier time and would not be welcomed to the profession.

- A professional who has Eloquence and Enterprise, but miniscule Expertise and a lack of regard for Ethics, would be regarded as a "slick talker," who is capable of cruel deception. This person also would not be welcomed into the profession.

Although professional speakers are unique, other groups of individuals also speak professionally, and derive all or part of their livelihood from using the spoken word. Here are some guidelines for determining the tipping point between practitioners and professionals:

- Actors may provide speeches (Eloquence), but their words (Expertise) belong to a writer or playwright. On a personal level, the actor performing a role may be nothing like the character uttering the words.

- Political figures may provide Eloquence in oration. Meeting the Ethical requirements for a role in government, however, requires the subjugation of personal Enterprise, as individual profit should not be the goal in this endeavor. It links with the political arena, not the profession of speaking.

- Broadcast journalists conveying the news adhere to standards of journalism to communicate “just the facts” and display objectivity regarding issues. They are employed by another Enterprise and are traditionally compensated by salary.

- Comedians’ jokes may have an underlying meaning or message, but their primary goal is to make people laugh. There is a clear distinction between humorists and comedians. A humorist creates a funny story to convey the speaker’s message. A comedian’s role is simply to entertain; not make a point. Comedians usually belong to a professional association that supports their specific craft; for example, ACTRA (Alliance of Canadian Cinema, Television and Radio Artists) or the National Association of Comedians.

- Many preachers, rabbis, ministers and imams are eloquent presenters who help audiences build their faith in a specific belief system. Unlike professional speakers, these men and women of faith are not focused on Enterprise for personal gain.

- Teachers speak to captive audiences every day in the classroom, but follow a predetermined curriculum provided by an educational institution. They typically belong to their own educational association.

The speaking profession draws upon these various roles, and speakers often end up as a unique combination of teacher, preacher and entertainer. Although some individuals in each of these disciplines may ultimately end up in the speaking profession, they would not qualify under the banner of “professional speaker” until they have solidly achieved the criteria of the four “E” competencies.
6. Putting the “Profession” in Speaking

In its simplest form, a profession is a group of people in a learned occupation who are willing to abide by specific rules of conduct when practicing their vocation.

In the classical sense, there were three learned professions or occupations: medicine, law and divinity. Today, there are many professions (e.g., engineering, nursing, dentistry, psychology, architecture, accounting), and each is controlled by varying degrees of rules and regulations.

Researchers have proposed that the following characteristics should be in place to meet a standard definition of a “profession”:

• There is a body of specialized knowledge associated with the profession.
• The preparation for the profession includes education and training in how to apply that knowledge.
• The profession has high standards that are maintained by its members.
• Members of the profession possess special knowledge and skills that are derived from research, education and training at a high level.
• Members of the profession are willing to use specialized knowledge and skills in the interest of others.
• Members adhere to generally accepted ethical standards.
• The practitioners of a profession are compensated for the delivery of their services.

For all professions:

• There is an organization or association that brings its members together under some form of professional society. In the United States, professional speakers may join the National Speakers Association. There are now speakers associations around the world, which fall under the banner of the Global Speakers Federation (GSF). For a list of associations that belong to the GSF, see page 18.
• Members must master and demonstrate a set of competencies, regardless of their specialization. Members of the National Speakers Association must master four competencies: Expertise, Eloquence, Enterprise and Ethics.
• Members must abide by a Code of Ethics, and there is a process for those who fail to do so. Members of the National Speakers Association must abide by their Code of Ethics, and there is a process for dealing with unethical behavior.

Some elements are not as clear cut for all professions, but for the most part:

• Members take a fairly standard path to gain membership into that profession. The speaking profession differs because there are many different paths leading to it.
• Members usually begin at an early stage and progress through a curricular and certifying process. Speaking typically tends to capture its members at many different stages of life.
• There is a pre-professional curriculum for screening and qualifying individuals, an admissions process, a professional curriculum, certification examinations, advanced training and yearly continuing education requirements. Speaking has many, but not all of these elements.

In most professions, there has been a movement from a generalist to a specialist point of practice. Speaking has seen a comparable movement from the generalized trainer, break-out speaker and keynote speaker to the more specialized speaker. This trend is expected to continue.

Thus, a profession (and, by extension, what is required to become a professional) typically involves a specialized knowledge base, some type of educational or training program, a certification process, a self-governing and self-policing authority, and some type of commitment to public service.
7. Audiences and Clients of Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow

Like professional speakers, today's audiences and clients have evolved over time.

The clients of yesterday were usually a gathering of like-minded people at the general session of a conference or convention or as part of an organization's luncheon or banquet. The speeches they heard frequently were centered on the personality of the presenter—combined with a motivational message, inspiration and humor—that would move audiences with powerful and thought-provoking content and charismatic delivery.

Today's audiences and clients have been exposed to a greater variety of multimedia, including the Internet, cable TV, webinars and distance learning. They have more access to information than ever before, and can readily access statistics, facts, theories, best practices and other information that used to be an expert's domain. As a result, they typically are more tech savvy, more sophisticated, more skeptical, more bombarded by hype and not easily "wowed."

To keep in step with the explosive information age, it is imperative that all professional speakers are committed to lifelong learning and not just delivering a summary of good ideas with some stories tossed in for good measure.

Shifting demographic populations is another phenomenon that significantly impacts the speaking profession. Today's audiences are composed of more diverse constituencies from a multitude of nations. The increasing diversification of populations, management teams, private equity groups and shareholders will continue to expand with each passing year.

With global access to websites, speakers do not need to speak in another country to be "international." For example, website visitors on the other side of the world can read speech transcripts focused on local politics. In fact, speakers can "Google" their names to see if one of their published articles has been translated into Japanese or Chinese. (Often, they are not even aware that it happened.) Speakers are becoming increasingly involved with global clients, and can ask a language translation firm to translate their articles or presentations into the language of existing or prospective international clients.

Non-profit and trade associations are shifting from regional to national and from national to international entities. As a result, the individuals who have influence over buyers also have been shifting and are moving targets for many speakers. This has an impact on topic selection, the composition of the program committee, the length of the buying cycle and payment terms.

Speakers are delivering presentations to audiences face-to-face, virtually or as a hybrid of the two. With online conferences, web-based seminars, self-directed learning modules, and a wide variety of instructional formats with the ever-increasing possibilities delivered by constantly changing technical capabilities, the platform is evolving upon which professional speakers deliver their words of expertise. Increasingly, there will be in-house or core people gathering in the conference room, while geographically dispersed stakeholders will be linked into it—or will replay a download later.

Virtual technology and webinars are additional distribution methods, not replacements for face-to-face meetings. These tools, which link people virtually, may encourage varied groups to connect in person.
Newer generations attending conferences and workshops do not want to sit and be programmed all day long. They want more time for unstructured networking and interaction. There will be roundtable sessions where the topics of discussion are selected by the people in the room and are not pre-determined by a committee. Additionally, social media enables networking to begin before participants even arrive at the meeting and continue after the meeting adjourns. Furthermore, the Internet extends networking beyond those who attend the meeting.

Not all trends affecting the speaking profession are technology based. With increasing environmental awareness, speakers will need to be more cognizant about expending resources to produce learning guides, handouts, and take-away materials. As “green” meetings become the norm, the days of leaving a conference with an overstuffed three-ring binder may soon be history.

8. Implications for Professional Speakers

These trends are shaping the speaking profession, the meetings industry and education in general, and the implications for tomorrow’s professional speakers are enormous.

Audiences will be demanding more original thought. There is a plethora of information, but a scarcity of wisdom. Clients will “rent the brains” of professional speakers, not just schedule a speech or a program to fill a slot on a convention program. It will become increasingly important for speakers to be on the path of a “learned journey.”

More time will need to be spent on primary research to discover new information, new insights and different perspectives not readily found by merely surfing the Internet. Specialization will become even more important to tomorrow’s speakers; for example, becoming a specialist in an industry, developing a type of expertise, or introducing a new technology or process.

People often comment that there is no “new material” to be written and presented about leadership, management, change, customer service and other standard topics. There is a constant need, however, to develop deeper material that can be delivered in exciting new ways. For example, a general speech or article about parenting skills can trend into a more specific topic, such as “Advice for Parents of Pre-teens with Autism.” The information can be conveyed face-to-face, virtually or as a hybrid of the two. Regardless of the delivery mechanism, speakers who view themselves as “stewards” for relevant, specialized target audiences will become even more important.
9. The Use of Technology

For a speaker’s message to reach future audiences, it can be delivered as a live platform presentation, an eBook, a podcast available on iTunes, a videoconference, a Skype, or an application on a client’s iPad. Rapidly advancing technologies impact everyone in the speaking industry.

So, how should speakers react? Some speakers may shut down and refuse to learn new technologies. Other speakers may become obsessed with technology, investing countless hours and dollars to be cutting edge. Some will assert that speakers who refuse to jump aboard the technology bandwagon will no longer be relevant.

The answer is not so cut-and-dried. It will become increasingly important for speakers to gauge if their audiences are early, moderate or late adopters of the latest communication technology. Forcing Twitter tweets on an audience of nursing home residents may not be such a great idea. And it is probably a mistake not to use short video with a group of entrepreneurs of rapidly growing companies. Some audiences and clients prefer to have scheduled phone or Skype appointments, while others prefer to exchange frequent text messages.

It does not make sense to assume that every speaker needs the same approach to social media, websites, or live, print and electronic presentations. In fact, as the world becomes more high tech, it may be important for speakers to be more high touch.

10. The Value Is in the Solution

The primary reason a professional speaker is sought out and hired is to satisfy a need or solve a problem, such as learning a specific skill; adopting a healthier mindset for thinking about products, services, issues and challenges facing an organization; assisting an organization in growing internal or external relationships; or even enhancing the value of a meeting by providing a more enjoyable experience with group participation and a sprinkling of humor.

The more focused speakers are on presenting solutions, the more clients will value their services. The following are some ways speakers can convey value to their clients before, during and after their presentations.

**Before the Meeting:**

- Assess the culture, skills and abilities of their audiences or organizations
  - Conduct interviews (face-to-face, telephone, video)
  - Facilitate focus groups (face-to-face, conference calls, video conferencing)
  - Design and analyze surveys (questionnaires, polls, web-based assessments)
  - Benchmark against others
  - Research and review strategic documents

- Advise meeting planners about meeting and speaking logistics
  - Review process flow to enhance the learning effect
  - Recommend alternative points of view and ideas
  - Suggest room layout
  - Advise audio-visual support
  - Encourage diversity of opinion and representation
• Connect with other speakers (internal and external)
  – Review process flow
  – Ensure content consistency
  – Prevent duplication of messages
  – Encourage or coach other presenters and introducers

• Meet with client leadership and stakeholders
  – Facilitate the development of the overall implementation plan
  – Ensure commitment and buy-in of program

• Assess technologies to ensure optimum delivery formats
  – Check for compatibilities
  – Arrange backup and plan for contingencies

• Start a virtual conversation
  – Post blogs to connect with the audience
  – Set up social media (e.g., Facebook “Fan” page or Twitter “Hashtag”)  
  – Create a community networking site (e.g., through Ning)

• Coach leader(s) and meeting planners before the speaker’s presentation
  – Provide checklist of recommended actions
  – Facilitate discussion among the leadership team to solidify objectives and key messages

**During the Meeting:**

• Provide a presentation that inspires employees
  – Deliver a message that aligns with the organization’s needs

• Provide a training or breakout session in new skills, models and tools
  – Create and set up on-site instruction
  – Develop teleseminars
  – Provide webinars
  – Design Learning Management Systems (LMS)
  – Create a website sign-in with auto-responder follow-up
  – Provide web community portals

• Moderate or participate in a panel discussion
  – Facilitate lively discussion with outcomes

• Facilitate a roundtable discussion among peers or diverse stakeholder groups
  – Facilitate lively discussion with outcomes

• Consult leader(s) on various paths to take and/or consider
  – Provide cost/benefit analysis to the various options

• Moderate or participate in the event
  – Coordinate the content and flow across all presentations
After the Meeting:

- Facilitate the leadership team to create meaningful plans of action
  - Send follow-up information
  - Respond to requests for additional resource material
  - Provide clarity on the best way to use information within the organization
- Assist clients in implementing these plans
  - Create auto-responder series to “drip” information to attendees on a consistent basis
  - Create a learning portal for attendees to tap into your expertise
- Coach individuals through implementation
  - Call meeting team
  - Provide online, telephone or on-site support
- Provide online follow-up resources
  - Assist with implementation of plans
  - Send a summary for use in company newsletter
  - Conduct a follow-up on teleconference or webinar
  - Post relevant information on a designated website
  - Create a blog or chat board
  - Create a simple web-based survey to assess behavior change
  - Recommend resources to plan for next event

Ongoing Services:

- Create or provide learning tools and systems to continue or enhance the value of the meeting
- Participate in company meetings
- Become an expert spokesperson for the organization
- Provide additional services, such as assessments, customized training, retreats and special events
- Mentor specific people within the organization
- Serve as an ongoing adviser or consultant to the organization

Business guru Peter Drucker once said that the point of any business is to serve a customer. Professional speaking is no different. Speakers are bound together by dedication to improve the condition of their customers, whether they are individuals, companies, not-for-profit organizations or any gathering of people whom they serve.

Professional speakers help companies advance their strategies and make their visions become reality. They inform, persuade and convince individuals to take action, and even help people see how they can make their dreams come true.

It is the spirit of service that ultimately can raise an occupation to the level of a profession. Professional speakers are bound by this spirit of service and hold that aspiration to serve as a standard of the profession.
11. Conclusions

These trends and resulting implications signify a huge cultural shift from speakers’ emphases on selling speaking dates, perfecting “the speech,” or refining a new technology to attaining a deeper knowledge and wisdom of their clients’ needs, wants and aspirations. Successful speakers ensure that they bring new perspectives, insights and solutions to their clients and prospects.

The future holds more technology and even more choices. Many speakers may need to invest in better equipment, accept help from more tech-savvy people, and hire assistants to implement technologies for repurposing their message. Speakers should resist the temptation to become too attached to any single, specific technology because delivery mechanisms must be tailored to an audience’s needs and preferences. Speakers also run the risk of losing sight of the importance of formulating messages to be conveyed and cultivating client relationships.

Increased access to online information, limited time and budget constraints are serious challenges for large associations and organizations. Some speakers simply will focus on associations in the same manner they always have, while others will abandon them because the decision-making process will feel too cumbersome, difficult or hopeless. Other speakers will survive the changes by investing the time and effort to adapt to what each association or organization needs.

With more speaking messages available at no cost or low cost over the Internet, bringing professional speakers in as a resource becomes a bigger decision than the simple transaction of scheduling a speech, workshop, meeting or coaching session. As a result, economic buyers within an organization will have a higher level of authority.

Selecting a speaker is becoming less about a single performance and more about the adoption of a set of ideas, a philosophy, an approach, a methodology and a way of thinking. It is not surprising that more decisions about significant speaking tours involve corporate executive teams, multinational entities and sponsorship groups overseeing social responsibility strategies.

But it always comes back to the message.

Professional speakers—keynoters, trainers, facilitators and consultants—deliver valuable messages. Their primary mission is to deliver content and inspiration through the spoken word face-to-face or virtually.
12. Recommendations and Next Steps

If you are a professional speaker (or you would like to add one or more of the competencies to your current speaking), you should:

- Become a member of a professional speaking association and work toward obtaining the appropriate certifications and credentials.
- Continually research new concepts, content and delivery methods to raise the reach and standards of the speaking profession.
- Work at advancing the profession of speaking locally and globally, if possible.

If you are a client who needs to hire a speaker, you should:

- Consider hiring a professional speaker who belongs to a professional speaking association and has achieved the necessary qualifications and credentials to be a member of such an association.
- Ask the professional speaker what other services he has to offer, in addition to the speech or presentation.
- Maximize your return by using the professional speaker’s other areas of expertise before, during and after the presentation.

If you are a professional speaking association, you should:

- Be the place where the primary emphases are on education and helping members achieve the necessary certifications and qualifications of the industry.
- Focus on the use and value of the spoken word, various speaking delivery methods, and being on the leading edge of the speaking profession.
- Proactively explore how to provide the best value members.

If you are interested in learning more about the profession of speaking and speakers associations around the world, please contact them at:

USA (NSA)
National Speakers Association
www.nnaspeaker.org

Canada (CAPS)
Canadian Association of Professional Speakers
www.canadianspeakers.org

Australia (NSAA)
National Speakers Association of Australia
www.nationalspeakers.asn.au

New Zealand (NSANZ)
National Speakers Association of New Zealand
www.nationalspeakers.org.nz

U.K. (PSA)
Professional Speaking Association of the United Kingdom
www.professionalspeakers.org

Singapore (APSS)
Asia Professional Speakers—Singapore
www.asiaspeakers.org

Malaysia (MAPS)
Malaysian Association of Professional Speakers
www.maps.org

Southern Africa (PSASA)
Professional Speakers Association of Southern Africa
www.psasouthernafrica.co.za

Germany (GSA)
German Speakers Association
www.germanspeakers.org

Holland (PSA Holland)
Professional Speakers Association of Holland
www.psaholland.org

USA (NSA)
National Speakers Association
www.nnaspeaker.org

Canada (CAPS)
Canadian Association of Professional Speakers
www.canadianspeakers.org

Australia (NSAA)
National Speakers Association of Australia
www.nationalspeakers.asn.au

New Zealand (NSANZ)
National Speakers Association of New Zealand
www.nationalspeakers.org.nz

U.K. (PSA)
Professional Speaking Association of the United Kingdom
www.professionalspeakers.org

Singapore (APSS)
Asia Professional Speakers—Singapore
www.asiaspeakers.org

Malaysia (MAPS)
Malaysian Association of Professional Speakers
www.maps.org

Southern Africa (PSASA)
Professional Speakers Association of Southern Africa
www.psasouthernafrica.co.za

Germany (GSA)
German Speakers Association
www.germanspeakers.org

Holland (PSA Holland)
Professional Speakers Association of Holland
www.psaholland.org
13. About the Authors

Aldonna R. Ambler, CMC, CSP
Recipient of two dozen national and statewide “entrepreneur of the year” awards, Aldonna’s businesses (speaking, opportunity analysis and planning, financing, executive development, advocacy, and peer-to-peer talk show) are designed to ignite accelerated growth with sustained profitability® for midsize companies. She has delivered more than 1,200 speeches in 49 states and 33 countries with 50 corporate sponsors. Known as the Growth Strategist™, most of her clients are on the published lists of the fastest-growing privately held companies.

Joe Calloway, CSP, CPAE
Joe is a business performance expert who helps companies advance their strategies. He is a founding partner in Engage Consulting Group, and the author of a number of business books, including the best-selling Becoming A Category of One.

Jim Cathcart, CSP, CPAE
With over 34 years of professional speaking around the world, Jim is one of the best-known and most award-winning motivational speakers in the business. He has delivered more than 2,700 presentations to audiences in all 50 U.S. states, most Canadian provinces, and countries from Scotland to Singapore. Jim created the original Professional Competencies model on which NSA has built its education programs.

Scott McKain, CSP, CPAE
A full-time professional speaker since 1982, Scott is co-founder and principal of the Value Added Institute, author of three best-selling business books, and the former vice chairman of the board of a publicly traded company. He played the villain in a movie that film critic Roger Ebert named as one of the “Fifty Greatest Films Ever Made.” Scott was one of 10 “Hoosier Heroes” selected from 7,000 nominees in his state for his commitment to education and philanthropy.

John B. Molidor, Ph.D., DHL (Hon.)
As a Professor of Psychiatry and a Community Assistant Dean at Michigan State University’s College of Human Medicine, John has a long-standing interest in how the brain functions, especially when interacting with and presenting in front of others. John serves on the NSA Board of Directors and is the individual responsible for developing and implementing the current four “E” Professional Competencies of NSA: Expertise, Eloquence, Enterprise and Ethics.

Joseph Sherren, CSP, HoF
An internationally acclaimed speaker, trainer, author and coach, Joe has delighted audiences with lively, thought-provoking, interactive, no-nonsense presentations for more than 25 years. He believes that people are responsible for creating a better life for themselves, and companies have an obligation to maintain a constructive, healthy work environment for staff. He is past president of the Canadian Association of Professional Speakers (CAPS) and the Global Speakers Federation (GSF). He also was inducted into the Canadian Speakers Hall of Fame.

Susan Sweeney, CSP, HoF
Susan is a best-selling author of eight Internet and social media marketing books, an internationally recognized Internet marketing and e-business expert, a partner in an award-winning Web development and Internet marketing business, and a chartered accountant. Susan has delivered keynotes, workshops and Internet marketing boot camps to audiences on four continents.