

## SPECIAL REPORT

### Maximize Your Speaker Investment by Setting Your Professional Presenters Up for Success!

In this Special Report, SPEAK!'s ([FranchiseSpeakers.com](http://FranchiseSpeakers.com)) Chief Match Maker, Katrina Mitchell and Troy Hazard, CSP, internationally recognized keynote speaker and franchise authority, collaborate about some simple things franchisors can do to facilitate the best speaker impact possible for a fantastic franchise convention experience.

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#### WE SPLIT SOME GREAT IDEAS UP INTO THREE KEY AREAS COVERING:

1. The **pre-program preparation** that best enables your franchise convention speaker to fully customize their session and meet your desired learning outcomes.
2. How to **create and maintain a fabulously high, very fun and full-on engaged energy** for the conference overall and for you keynote investment specifically.
3. **Why invest in the right stage set, microphone, sound or stage lighting?** Often times, when looking at each line-item of a franchise convention, franchisors will see stage-set, AV, and lighting as unnecessary expenses. Au contraire we say! Why invest \$15,000 (or more!) in professional outside talent to WOW! your franchisees and not make it possible for them to really show off their presentation for maximum impact by being “penny wise, pound foolish”? It’s a common mistake we often see. And sadly, it often drastically affects the overall results that the speaker can deliver – through no fault of the speakers!

#### STEP ONE: HELP YOUR PRESENTERS PREPARE

How can a franchisor help maximize their investment in a professional presenter? First, help your presenter dive in and get to know all about your franchise system. The right pre-program preparation will enable your speaker to fully customize their session and meet your desired learning outcomes.

## HERE ARE THREE TIPS TO GET THE CUSTOMIZED CONTENT OFF ON THE RIGHT TRACK

### **1. Be Willing to Be Vulnerable!**

Help your speaker understand what is really going on within your franchise system. If the speaker understands your current challenges, the issues you are facing, and what the future looks like, the greater the connection they can make with your franchisees. In other words, the more vulnerable you are, the better the "game day" outcome.

### **2. Your Pre-program Questionnaire Gives Your Presenter a Head Start!**

The more information the speaker has going into the pre-program calls, the deeper they can go on the call with your leadership team and the more customized and connected the speaker can make their presentation when it's time to engage your franchisees. Pre-program questionnaires help the speaker understand things like your culture, key terminology, sensitive issues, and franchise system history. This helps your speaker understand the evolution of your business.

### **3. Connect Your Speaker to Your Franchisees in Advance!**

Give your speaker an opportunity to connect with a selection of your franchisees as one of their pre-program research resources. When putting this list together, Troy suggests a three-tier selection of a top performer, a mid-level performer, and a low-level performer. He calls this list "The Good the Bad and the Ugly". This enables him to craft his session to hit the middle and ensures that it's relevant to everyone in the room.

## **STEP TWO: MAXIMIZE THE ENERGY IN THE ROOM**

Great franchise convention energy does not just happen. It's intentionally created and carefully choreographed. Maximize your franchise speaker investment by strategically building the energy in the room so that your speaker can spend their valuable time educating, inspiring and igniting your franchisees. When your keynote speaker takes the platform and launches their presentation into a room that is already energized, your results will be extraordinary!

## HERE ARE FOUR TIPS ON HOW TO CREATE AMAZING ENERGY IN THE ROOM BEFORE YOUR KEYNOTE SPEAKER EVEN TAKES THE PLATFORM:

### 1. The Element of Anticipation!

Even before a single person comes into the room, you can build the energy. Have high-energy music revving them up behind closed doors. Open the doors at one time and let everyone rush in at once. Create some anticipation of something fun and unexpected about to happen. The contrasting approach, and what we see most commonly in franchise conventions? Allowing attendees to trickle in, no music, no video—no excitement. Now your speaker will need to spend the first 5 minutes of their session building excitement and engagement instead of delivering the meaningful content you hired them to bring to your franchisees.

### 2. Music Matters!

Choose music that is relevant to your convention theme, your culture, and your company history—something that energizes the group and really creates a connection. Don't rely on your AV tech. He doesn't know the culture of your franchise system and you might end up with acid jazz!

### 3. Seating Matters!

The wrong seating can either build your convention energy or deflate it like a released balloon. Sometimes your venue can have more seats than your attendee head count—allowing guests to spread out creates a huge dissipation of the collective energy.

#### Here's our list of 'Don'ts' when organizing your seating:

- Don't allow your attendees to spread out throughout the room—especially if the room is set for a much larger number of possible guests than you have franchisees attending.
- Don't have your first row too far away from the stage. Most professional speakers want the first row of audience members 6 feet from the edge of the platform. A good speaker wants to create connection and rapport with the audience, not be separated from them by an unnecessary chasm of bad ballroom carpeting!
- Don't have extra chairs if you don't need them. Have the hotel/venue staff create a few stacks of chairs in the back that your staff can add if needed. The goal is to create an energetic 'epicenter' in the room not dilute it.

## Here's our list of 'Do's':

- Rope off all the seats in the back of the room and direct your franchisees to the fill the front first. Give them a prize. Hide a gift certificate to have their convention hotel room comped under one of the chairs in the first 3 rows. Make it fun and get them excited to be up front and engaged.
- Use your home office staff as energetic ushers and brand cheerleaders. Line your staff up down the isles from the few doors you are opening in unison. Have them high-five the franchisees, chant your brand name or your convention theme. Make it fun!
- Set the stage 6 feet from the edge of the platform, connecting your audience to your speaker. Your attendees will be more engaged and your speaker will be able to connect with your franchisees more authentically. You'll be glad you did!

## 4. The Introduction is CRITICAL!

Often overlooked and regularly discounted, your speaker's intro is actually a critical element in setting your speaker up for success. Having someone deliver a well written, short and engaging introduction with energy and flair, helps the audience understand why they should even be listening to your speaker. The introduction pumps your speaker up to create a real WOW! for your franchisees for the next hour.

NOT having the speaker properly introduced by a third party forces the speaker to weave in their own resume to establish credibility and rapport with the audience. And sometimes this can backfire on the speaker and they seemingly come across from a place of ego, not a place of service.

A short, punchy intro delivered with enthusiasm and energy allows your speaker to take the stage and dive straight into the story, grabbing your audience from the start.

## STEP THREE: CRITICAL LOGISTICS DETAILS

Finally, let's look at the 5 key elements of the physical set-up and their value in maximizing your franchise speaker investment.

As a franchise system grows, and their events are transitioning from a home-grown family affair into a more polished and professional convention experience, the AV quote can be a little shocking. I know it certainly was for me when I created my first professional event for more than 100 guests.

When one of our pros runs into a problem on site, it's often related to one of these 5 key areas and is a result of some cost-cutting efforts on the part of the franchisor. Troy has a great saying, "Less muffins, more microphones". What he means by that is to find a way to stretch your dollars in some other area. If you are investing \$10,000, \$15,000 or even \$20,000 in your professional speakers, saving \$500 or even \$1,000 on AV and hindering the speaker's ability to deliver the very best possible experience for your franchisees just doesn't make sense.

## HERE'S THE LOW-DOWN ON THE FIVE KEY AREAS OF SET-UP:

### 1. Sound

Make sure you have a second mic on the platform - a wireless handheld with fresh batteries serves three key purposes. If something goes sideways with the speaker's lavalier mic, they can easily grab a handheld and never miss a beat. A second wireless mic can also be used by the person introducing your speaker and create a seamless transition from introducer to speaker. And if you need another reason to invest in a second mic, here's a great one. Pros will often want to engage the audience and with a second handheld on the platform, they can quickly jump into the audience for some fun, on-the-spot interaction. Again, don't look at it as another expense, look at investing in a second mic as worthwhile insurance in creating a great experience for your franchisees.

We can't leave the discussion on 'sound' for your franchise convention without talking about the importance of sound checks. Great speakers will always want to check the sound in the room far enough in advance of their presentation to make any corrections needed to ensure a fabulous session is delivered. Sound checks are also critical to any professional speaker's success. Beware of the speaker who says they don't need a sound check—maybe they don't really care about ensuring a successful outcome.

## 2. Lighting

Don't just rely on that house lighting—invest in stage lighting and kick it up a notch! This is another area we often see franchisors economizing on. Not having the right stage lighting can create a less than ideal audience experience. There are several reasons to invest in the right lighting.

- You want everyone in your audience to be able to clearly see the speaker's expressions – all of them - including all the subtle, micro-expressions that a speaker might use to put some oomph behind their messages.
- House lighting is often weak and hazy and especially in older venues, it's not possible to see the speaker clearly from the back of the room. You've just made a big investment in your speaker, give them the opportunity to really shine – literally and figuratively!
- Turn the lights UP! A good professional speaker is working hard to create an energetic connection with your group. They are watching for reactions from the audience and will adapt their presentation on the fly based on what they are seeing. If the lighting is dark and hazy, your speaker can't 'read the room' and that connection can easily be broken.

## 3. Room Temperature

Think 'calm, cool and collected'. One of the worst things that a franchisor can do is raise the temp when someone complains that it's too cold. Cooler temps keeps attendees on their toes and keeps them more engaged. In addition, by the time the room fills up, the temp will go up and it can take a long time to get it back down again. Our suggestion is to set the temperature and leave it. Let your franchisees know to bring layers, the rooms will be set on the cool side. In fact, one of our favorite, long-time clients includes multiple reminders that the ballrooms will be on the cool side in their registration and convention confirmation packets. "Bring Layers!" is suggested over and over again so there are no surprises.

## 4. Stage Set

Keeping the stage clear of barriers that will impede the speaker's movements is also an important consideration. Most professional speakers are 'walkers and talkers' and will ideally want a clear space to move around the stage.

If you need a podium for any other presenters, and it can't be 'struck' (taken down or moved) before your professional presenter begins, we suggest it be placed 6 feet back and to one side. This allows your speaker to move to both sides of the platform easily. The ideal scenario is to get it out of the way and give your speaker all the room they need to ROCK IT!

Where you position your stairs also makes a big difference in how quickly your speaker can create an on-the-spot interaction with your audience. Stairs positioned off the front of the platform makes it possible for your speaker to engage quickly and get back on the stage in a seamless flow. If the stairs are on the side only, your speaker may not want to risk allowing the energy to drop by having to walk all the way around to get to an attendee they are engaging with. Stairs off the front of the platform keep the flow going.

## 5. Visibility

Seems pretty basic but we've seen this problem arise before and so thought it worth mentioning. Make sure that everyone can clearly see the presenter. We've had professional franchise speakers show up at a surprising number of events where the room had pillars set throughout (often this occurs in older venues). If this is the case, the seating needs to be adjusted so that every seat has a clear line of sight to the speaker.

While we are on visibility, let's chat about IMAG. The term IMAG is a short for "image magnification" and is industry lingo for AV professionals. It refers to large-scale theatrical or concert video projection to enable audience members seated at great distance from the stage to see details of the performer's body language and facial expressions that could not be seen with the unaided eye. Think IFA general sessions. We suggest IMAG for any group over 300. And here's another plus to investing in IMAG...since your AV crew is in place and shooting for IMAG, you can also easily arrange to have the content recorded for your internal use after the event (with the speaker's permission of course.)

## SHARE YOUR GREAT IDEAS!

We are compiling a list of TIPS for maximizing your speaker investment, so if you are reading this and have some great ideas to share, please [send them over](#). We'll compile a master list and share it back with you!

## ABOUT SPEAK!



Katrina Mitchell, Chief Match Maker & CEO of SPEAK!, got her start in franchising as a successful franchisee. Her experience attending energizing and educational (and some not so energizing and educational) franchise conventions led Katrina to create SPEAK!, a unique speakers bureau focused exclusively on the needs of the franchise industry. SPEAK!'s brand promise is to make sure the speaker selection process is FUN, EASY & STRESS FREE and our client satisfaction ratings are consistently off the charts. If you are looking for captivating keynote speakers, tactical breakout trainers, humorous and engaging emcees, or the right entertainer to take your awards banquet to the next level, give us a call. We'd love to hear from you!

**720-304-3710 or [Katrina@FranchiseSpeakers.com](mailto:Katrina@FranchiseSpeakers.com)**

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