



# How to Get the Best From Your Presenter

By Darlene Lyons

Most speakers and presenters will “give you their best” *most* of the time...that is their job. However, if you’d prefer to *guarantee* that your speakers give you their best *all the time*, without a doubt, simply follow these nine rules:

## 1. Stay in Contact

Follow-up your initial welcome letter with continuous correspondence and phone calls. Communicate to your presenters how important they are to you. You’ll want to assure them that their room reservations have been made, their ground transportation has been taken care of, you’ll want to tell them who their contact person is upon arrival as well as who has been assigned as their host while at your convention site. You’ll need to extend invitations to social functions, request photos and program descriptions for your program guides and ask for a written introduction for use by your MC. Finally, you’ll want to do one final check of each speaker’s audio/visual requirements to make sure you’ve got everything correct.

## 2. Mailing List

Include your speakers and presenters on any meeting or convention mailing list. This way you’ll be sure they receive all of the promotional materials that are sent out before your convention or event. Adding them to other of your organization’s mailing lists, such as annual reports, newsletters, brochures and organizational magazines may also prove helpful in assisting them while they tailor and personalize their presentation to fit your audience’s needs.

## 3. Pre-Event Telephone Conversations

It is imperative that presenters and meeting planners talk with each other at least two weeks before the engagement. During the phone visit, you must reiterate your excitement about the presenter appearing at your event. It is important, too, that you take a few minutes to answer any questions the presenter might have and let the presenter know what is expected. Also, it is a good idea to use this as an opportunity to reconfirm arrival time and airport pickup arrangements, and discuss audio/visual and technical requirements if you need to.

## 4. A/V and Technical Requirements

You must remember to check your presenter’s technical needs *prior* to signing the contract. Upon signing the facility contract, we recommend that you order both, verbally and in writing, the appropriate audio/visual and other technical equipment. Make sure you receive confirmation in writing. Also, be sure to reconfirm your order no later than one week prior to the event and again the day before.

Once the A/V and the technical needs are set up in the meeting room, don’t assume they work. *Personally* test them, no later than one hour and again ten minutes, before the presentation.

## 5. Presenter’s Hotel Room

It is usually best to reserve the presenter’s room as soon as your contract is signed. The location of the presenter’s room is very important. Most presenters prefer their rooms to be located as close as possible to the meeting room. This ensures easy access to forgotten items and last minute

details. Get your presenter pre-registered. That way you can simply hand the presenter his/her room key upon arrival. Guarantee the room for possible late arrival and request that the hotel forward a written confirmation to both you and the presenter.

Should the presenter's program be scheduled for late morning or afternoon, be sure to arrange for a "late checkout." Most hotels are very accommodating. If you are paying for the presenter's room and meals, be sure the hotel knows to automatically post those charges directly to your organization's account. This speeds up checkout for your presenter and helps to avoid unnecessary paperwork and billing.

## **6. Welcome Gift**

Make your presenters feel important and special by having a small welcome basket of fruit or a small platter of cheese and crackers waiting in the presenter's room upon his/her arrival. Any one of the following would be acceptable: a small box of chocolates, an ice bucket with spring water or a bag full of healthy snacks. Add a personalized handwritten note. Small thoughtful gestures such as this make all the difference in the world.

## **7. Social Functions and Meals**

Extend an invitation to each presenter to join you for social functions and meals. Be very specific about where and when these functions will be taking place. Offer to personally meet them at a specific place and time. You can also arrange to have someone on your staff act as his/her escort. Even celebrities and seemingly extroverted speakers and entertainers are sometimes uncomfortable walking into a social setting full of strangers. Do all you can to host and entertain your presenters, but be sure to do it in such a way that he/she may easily decline if he/she wants to.

## **8. Assign a Personal Attendant**

A speaker's life while out on the speaking circuit is not at all glamorous. It can be tough, tiring and lonely. A little TLC is always very much appreciated and goes a long way to endearing a

presenter to you and your organization. Your caring gestures will make your presenters feel special. Since you probably won't have the time (considering all of your other responsibilities), assign someone else to do it. The presenter's personal attendant will represent you as their personal escort and host during their entire stay at your event.

Make sure all of your presenters' convention packets and nametags are ready to hand to them. The host should be able to explain the meeting agenda, tell them about what's already happened and what's coming up and invite them to the social functions. The personal attendant needs to provide names, room numbers and cell phone numbers of persons they can get in touch with if needed.

Your presenter's host should be available to provide a tour and introduce them to leaders and other key people with whom they might be working. Also, make sure they check out the meeting room and test the A/V equipment.

## **9. Go Over Every Detail!**

Don't take any detail for granted. Never assume that just because you ordered something, it's automatically going to be there. Always reconfirm everything. Personally check that the speaker's reservation has been confirmed and that the hotel has a room waiting for your guest. Reconfirm all details such as airport pick-up and A/V requirements. Make use of the checklists BASB has available for you! You'll be so thankful you have them...they'll save you many headaches and much work!

~Written by Darlene Lyons. © 2004

**Darlene is President of Broker Agent Speakers Bureau (BASB), the nation's leading real estate speakers' bureau. For more helpful information, visit [www.BrokerAgentSpeakers.com](http://www.BrokerAgentSpeakers.com). Darlene also owns and operates EzEvents, the #1 real estate event management company in the country. Visit [www.EzEvents.net](http://www.EzEvents.net).**