

## Expert Q & A - Promote Your Business Through Speaking Opportunities

 April 9, 2008 By Mary White

Are you looking for a unique way to promote your small business? According to Lori Zetlin and Jeanne Tee, Managing Partners of [S3- Strategic Speaker Services](#), Inc., one of the best ways to build credibility and visibility is through cultivating speaking opportunities that allow business owners and executives to reach the most desirable audiences.

### **1. Why is giving speeches beneficial to small business owners?**

One speech can reach an enormous and valuable target audience of clients, prospects, employees, media, business partners and analysts. The reach a speech has is certainly worth a lot more than the time it takes to deliver it. Speaking opportunities offer an important platform that small business owners can benefit from, including: brand building, executive visibility (establishing the speaker as an expert or the authority on the presentation topic); product/service promotion; thought leadership; and lead generation. As the audience has self selected to attend the conference and the small business owners' speech, the speaker has a captive audience of listener's that are intent on gaining knowledge and expertise.

### **2. How does participating in speaking opportunities help boost one's credibility?**

Speakers are perceived as thought leaders, visionaries and the expert or the authority on the presentation topic, therefore speaking engagements establish one's credibility by:

- Increasing awareness of a company's executives and consistent key messages
- Introducing targeted audiences to the speaker and their business
- Penetrates NEW venues and audiences
- Obtaining new clients and business opportunities by causing individuals in the audience to approach the speaker after their presentation and ask for the speaker's help
- Building strategic alliances and partnerships
- Creating brand awareness — getting the word out about the business and products/services and creating enthusiastic allies and fans
- Gathering competitive intelligence

- Ability to build additional marketing and public relations activities around speaking opportunities such as, client visits in the city the speech is being given, meetings with prospects, the media, analysts, recruiting, product launch

### **3. What advice do you have for small business owners who would like to get started trying to incorporate public speaking into their marketing strategy?**

In an increasingly crowded marketplace, a strategic and well-managed speakers bureau program can help a company reach the right audience with the right messages. But, small business owners have to invest the necessary time, money, and executive mindshare to realize the benefits – just as they do when establishing PR or advertising campaigns.

Another piece of advice is for small business owners to obtain advice from experts. It is critical that they dedicate an experienced professional or team, internal or external, to manage all aspects of the program – from abstract development and executive relations to logistics and follow up. And they should be ready to invest significant time and energy in doing it right by following up regularly on submissions, and speaking frequently with conference organizers to build relationships that increase their chances of placement.

There are firms who specialize in executive visibility with a complete focus on researching, submitting and obtaining speaking opportunities for business of all sizes. An executive visibility program is a targeted, cost-effective way to get company executives and evangelists in front of the key audiences they need to reach including press, partners, prospects, customers and analysts. A good speakers bureau focuses on gaining visibility for small businesses, and possesses the knowledge, relationships and time it takes to place executives at venues where they are perceived as thought leaders and can reach their important targeted audience.

If there is one thing a speakers bureau truly understands, it's the amount of time it takes to research, submit and then confirm the right speaking opportunities for their clients. They know how to position executives and subject matter experts from companies of all sizes as senior leaders and champions of ideas, that advance growth objectives, and that resonate with the national and trade media.

### **4. What types of organizations utilize the services of business owners as public speakers?**

All types of organizations! There are companies across the globe that create conferences geared toward overall leadership and innovation topics all the way down to specific industries and sectors. The beauty of using a speakers bureau is that they can leverage their relationships with organizations, associations, economic clubs, business publications, industry publications, think tanks, and universities to find and confirm the best speaking opportunities that will attract the audiences any business should be reaching.