

So... You Think You'd Like to Start Speaking Professionally: A Quick Start Guide to Starting Your Speaking Business

By Mary McKay



Michael, a 59 year-old divisional vice president with one of the largest and most renowned financial service providers in the world, is working harder and longer hours than ever before in his career. He travels extensively, is heavily scheduled, and earns an annual salary over \$500K.

Michael finds himself at what is most probably his professional peak. He is heavily and well invested, fully insured, able to fund college educations for his children, and is in relatively good health, albeit for stress-related minor health challenges. Barely making time for his favorite pastime of golf, he longs for a way to share his expertise without the management responsibilities that comes with his job. His company takes full advantage of his expertise and his natural talent to train others in the company. Occasionally, he's asked to speak to his professional association.

Michael and I spent some time talking recently at a gathering of friends. Discussing ideas in which he could utilize his knowledge base in new and stimulating ways - including interviewing his favorite authors about their philosophies of success, building practices, and then producing a series of CDs based on those interviews. He left the gathering feeling more confident that he could have another career path.

If you're a top producer in a commissioned sales business such as insurance or real estate, a corporate leader who's ready to challenge yourself beyond the bounds of your organization, or an entrepreneur leading the field, take

these six (6) steps to help you think more seriously about making a transition to professional speaking:

Identify your core competencies. What are the things that you do that have taken you to the top of your profession either in your geographical area or in your organization nationwide? Write a list and make it as long as you can. You can edit it later.

Create a list of facts about yourself that have distinguished your expertise and brought recognition to you and your organization.

Compose a list of the major turning points in your life. What experiences did you have that are unique to you and that helped you form who you are today? Being able to tell stories about yourself, your early childhood experiences, handling crises, overcoming obstacles - those are defining experiences to which you can refer in building your signature speech.

Write a unique selling proposition about yourself. Make it two sentences, which say in short, "I am.... I do."

Identify your target market. What organization, either a company or an association, boot camp or public rally with multiple speakers, would benefit from your expertise? When you read about current events in trade journals, magazines and newspapers think about how your expertise could create solutions for those organizations.

Begin to formulate your signature speech. Imagine that you have 45 minutes to teach others what you know. What would be the most important elements to cover? What principles have served you over the years? Oprah Winfrey has a special page in every *O* magazine entitled, "What I Know for Sure". What do you know for sure?

Going through the process of answering these questions is fun and productive. You may be among the new breed of speakers that comes from passion and purpose, for which professional speaking is a natural evolution.

Mary McKay is a booking strategist for speakers, experts, leaders, top producers and cultural heroes who want to secure paid speaking engagements. She systematizes the booking process to uniquely position the speaker, optimize the appearance, generate referrals and enable more revenue potential through product sales.

Visit www.gettingpaidtospeak.com or call 949-429-6646.

Masters of Duplication



- **Full Service Audio & Video Production and Packaging**
- **Project Planning & Consulting**
- **Consistent Quality**
- **Competitive Pricing**
- **Small quantities are no problem**
- **Fast Turn-around**
- **Count on us! Call us with your next great idea**
- **We accept VISA, MasterCard, & American Express**

Cassette Works

Audio & Video Duplication

Call or Write for Free Services Kit
125 N. Aspan Ave., Azusa CA 91702
1-800-423-TAPE