

# 4 Steps to Hiring the Perfect Speaker



There are many great speakers out there, but not everyone is perfect for your specific event. If you are considering hiring Dawn to speak at your event, you can be assured she is a professional who is dedicated to her craft and to the betterment of the entire speaking industry. For that reason she wants you to have information about her to help you determine if she is the best fit for your event.

## 1. Establish the date, location and budget for your event

The very first consideration is speaker availability. Once you have established your event date, contact us right away to ensure Dawn is available. If you have your heart set on having Dawn, then contact us before the dates are set in stone and we can work together to select dates that fit both schedules.

There are many factors that impact the amount of money you'll pay for your speaker. The more experienced the speaker, the higher the fee. Travel is also a large factor, especially if a long plane ride is required. Many speakers are willing to travel economy class but may request business class for long-haul flights. Be sure to find out in advance how you'll be charged for accommodations, meals and any other out-of-pocket expenses.

If you feel compelled to ask the speaker to reduce their fees, remember you're not paying for a few minutes on a stage.... you're paying for a lifetime of experience that makes them able to speak for a few minutes on a stage. If you wouldn't want to take a cut in pay, perhaps your speaker shouldn't be asked to either.

## 2. Decide what type of presentation you would like

When you know what type of presentation you're looking for it becomes much easier to find the perfect speaker. If you need an after dinner motivational comedian, select someone who specializes in that. If you need a conference opening keynote, select someone energetic who can inspire the audience into action. If you need a seminar or breakout session leader, find someone who has fabulous content and can relate well to the audience. Here are some details you should know about the presentation in order to improve your chances of finding the best speaker for your event:

- 📄 What is your theme? Presenters, such as Dawn, can incorporate the theme of your event into their presentation and even sometimes into their presentation title.
- 📄 What is your desired outcome? Do you want your audience to be entertained and energized, informed about the latest and greatest, or educated so they learn about a new topic?
- 📄 What are your behavioural objectives? In other words, what do you want the audience to DO differently at the end of the presentation? If you have these types of expectations, it is critical you know this when you book Dawn to ensure she can meet your expectations.
- 📄 What are the audience demographics? All speakers need to know their audience and some speakers have a specialty. Some of Dawn's programs, for example, are designed specifically for women leaders. All speakers use stories and it's critical they choose the ones that the audience can best relate to. Audience age, background and education are all important factors to consider when matching up the perfect speaker.

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## 3. Decide the level of expertise you would like the speaker to have

Anyone can call himself or herself a speaker so it's important to know what level of speaker you are looking for. Dawn doesn't have a PhD in the topic she speaks on, so how do you know that she knows what she's talking about? Testimonial letters are a good first step, and live references can also be very helpful.

If your speaker has any published materials, chances are pretty good that they have something to say. Speakers are often willing to send materials to you at no cost when they know you are seriously considering them for an engagement. Often in these materials you will find out what the author's personal experience is with the topic.

In addition to writing books and articles, Dawn has developed her own leadership theory. This is another sign that your speaker has some original thinking and isn't just regurgitating something they heard or read. To develop something original you must have a deep understanding of your topic, as well as knowing related current and past thinking. That means research, and lots of it.

Often people, who are an expert in a field, stick to one field. They may also have a well-defined niche when it comes to their area of expertise. Dawn, for example, works with women leaders, even though men can also use her methods and expertise.

The National Speakers Association and the Canadian Association of Professional Speakers have accreditations that speakers can earn. If the speaker you're considering has any of these designations, you can rest assured they have extensive experience as a speaker and they are a very safe bet.



## 4. Select a speaker who is easy to work with

Well, you ask, how do you know if a speaker is easy to work with unless you've worked with them before? That's a great point, and there are some things that can help you predict if they understand that your job is a challenging one. You want a speaker that will work with you and make your life easier, and not a Prima Donna!

Like many other speakers, Dawn understands that a lot is riding on selecting the best speaker for the event. You can also believe that a truly professional speaker also wants to make sure that your event is the right fit for them. Here's a checklist that might help you out.

-  Website: Does the speaker have a website that makes it easy for people to access information about them and their topic? Do they have additional information available for download? Does their website do a good job of selling them so that when potential audience members visit the site they feel motivated to attend the session?
-  Pre-event audit: Does the speaker have a process for getting information from attendees so they can tailor their presentation to the specific needs of the people who will actually be sitting in the chairs. Does the speaker spend the time with the event organizers to ensure they have a clear understanding of the desired outcomes?
-  Flexibility: Is the speaker flexible when it comes to helping you make the program work? If they work with an Engagement Agreement, does it cover what it needs to cover while still allowing for some flexibility?
-  Versatility: Is the speaker versatile enough to provide services in different formats? Dawn, for example, can deliver keynotes, breakouts and question/answer sessions. She has experience as a panel participant and can work with your executive team to help with strategic planning based on her area of expertise.