



I'm Excited to Share with You the Foreword, Introduction & Tip #1 From My New Book "How to Build a Profitable Speaking Business."

Foreword

*Wendy Lipton-Dibner, MA
President and CEO, Professional Impact, Inc.*

I had just stepped off the stage when event coordinator Audrey Hagen slid her arm through mine and yelled into my ear, *"Let's get you to the back of the room. There's a big crowd waiting for you!"*

As the tech removed my mic, Audrey grabbed my bag and escorted me out from behind the curtain where hundreds of people were still on their feet, whooping and applauding.

While Audrey shepherded me through the crowd, I locked eyes with men and women whose dreams had led them to this space. I could actually feel their hearts pounding with excitement.

When we finally arrived at the back of the ballroom, I saw why Audrey had been so anxious to get me there. Three long lines had formed in record time, filled with people of all ages.

Everyone stood patiently, happily chatting with new friends as they waited to hand in the 3-part form that would assure their seat at my upcoming live event.

As Audrey's team processed the forms, I stood to the side speaking with each person, answering their questions, and sharing hugs.

This continued through lunch and when the audience returned to take their seats, we moved into the hallway out of respect for the next speaker. Moving the table didn't change a thing. They just kept coming - all afternoon and throughout the two days that followed.

On Day 2 of the event, Audrey walked me to one of the sponsored booths to introduce me to a man who would become a trusted vendor for (and sponsor of) my business and a treasured friend. More than a decade later, Bret and I are still connected - now here together with you.

At the end of the weekend, Audrey handed me copies of the forms that had been turned in. I was profoundly honored (and frankly shocked) by the result: 78 percent of attendees had registered to attend my live event!

The event promoter gave me a big hug and invited me to come back for his next event. As I walked away, I overheard him telling another speaker he'd "*discovered*" me and that I had become, "*an overnight success.*"

I couldn't help but smile. I'd been a professional speaker for over three decades.

I'd spoken at well-over 1,000 events - professional conferences in every industry from healthcare to haircare; private corporate and non-profit events; and in-house trainings around the globe.

I'd had the privilege of speaking in massive arenas and intimate venues, the honor of receiving countless standing ovations, and the joy of meeting tens of thousands of people along the way.

And yes, I'd been well-compensated for my speaking, receiving five- and six-figure checks and invitations for many other opportunities after each speech.

My bestselling books had been sponsored by major corporations, and one of my books had become required reading at medical and dental colleges.

Most importantly, the walls of my office were filled with thank-you notes from conference attendees, coaching clients, and readers.

Yes, I was a 30-year, overnight success.

The thing is, over all that time not one promoter had asked me to sell my products or services at their events. In fact, it was expressly forbidden in every speaking contract I signed.

Granted, I had long ago learned how to plant ethical seeds that would lead professional audiences to purchase my books or hire me as an in-house trainer or consultant, but not once had I overtly sold anything on a stage.

In fact, this was the first time I'd been invited to speak at an event where the promoter *expected* me to sell on the stage *and* give him a percentage of my sales.

I had entered an entirely different world where "success" was measured by transactions, and I wasn't sure I liked it.

You see over my entire career I had never focused on what I would *get* from speaking. It was always about what I would *give*.

→ I'd never had a dream to be a multi-million-dollar speaker (although I was).

→ I'd never had a vision that I would travel the world as speaker (although I did).

→ And never in my wildest imagination did I think I'd be walking through airports where people stopped me to sign their copy of one of my books (although that happened a lot).

The simple truth is I've always had only one business goal: to make a measurable impact in people's lives so *they* in turn would go on to make an impact on every life they touched.

To this day, I tell my audiences the most important truth of business success is:

When you *Focus On Impact*® the money will come.

I've proven that time and again. Yet while focusing on impact is the foundation of success, it's not *all* you need to do to be successful.

You can't make your impact as a speaker if you don't get on stages, podcasts, webinars, etc.

You can't expand your impact beyond speaking unless you create products and services people will buy and use and love and then tell all their friends to buy and use and love.

You can't live the lifestyle you want to live until you have enough money to hire people to do all the things that need to be done so you're free to get the most out of every day.

The simple truth is:

**If you want your impact to be profoundly felt
you need to build a business that is
strategically and operationally designed to enable you to
make the impact you were born to bring the world.**

This isn't hard to do, but it can take forever if you try to do it on your own. Frankly, life is far too short for that nonsense.

That's why I'm excited Bret has written this book.

Bret has taken decades of on-the-ground experience and culled it down into the critical things we need to do to thrive as speakers.

He has simplified profitability for speakers into 21 tips – each of which is gold.

You can read this book in less than an hour, but when you're done the secret is to *go back and read it again – slowly*. Look carefully at each tip and decide how that fits for your unique impact!

This book is a golden checklist for making money as a speaker – an actual **treasure trove of tips you can use to get paid for your impact**.

Of course, at some point you'll want to go deeper with step-by-step, how-to information, and Bret has listed some great resources (including his own courses) that you can use to get there.

The key is: don't waste time and money trying to figure this out on your own.

Because somewhere out there is a community of people who are waiting for your impact to appear. Please don't make them wait.

Follow Bret's tips and get your impact out to the people who need you.

Do it now - because life is far too short to settle for less than you truly want – in your business or your life.

To your impact!

Wendy Lipton-Dibner

Introduction

The speaking industry is a fascinating one, with thousands upon thousands of men and women, young and old, of all nationalities and ethnicities calling themselves a speaker. If you are reading this then you either consider yourself to be, or wish to be, one of that unique breed we call a speaker.

We've all heard the old line that the number one fear of most people is public speaking. Even more than death. If you have that fear any Internet search will uncover a wealth of resources aimed at helping people overcome the fear of public speaking. If you're one of those that needs that confidence boost then by all means you should pursue those resources.

We also see a wealth of resources online focused on getting you speaking gigs. Whether you're a keynote (fee) speaker or a back-of-the-room seller (free) speaker, or both, the overall success of your speaking business will largely depend upon the number of gigs you are able to land. Doesn't matter whether it's a live event, a virtual summit or a podcast. Got to get those gigs!

Whether it's through a speaker bureau, through your own relationship marketing efforts, through pay per click advertising, through social media or any other channel, getting that next speaking engagement is critical to both your short and long-term success. You certainly do need to master the art and science of landing speaking engagements.

While continual improvement of your speaking skills and getting gigs are both critical elements of achieving success as a speaker, they are just two of the many aspects of building a successful speaking business. This book will focus not just on those, but on all the aspects of building a profitable speaking business. It's not simply about trading time for dollars – it's about generating a profit that will help you lead the life you want to lead, support the causes you want to support and truly have a positive impact on the world.

In my 25+ years in the speaking industry I've been a conference attendee, I've been a speaker, I've managed the back-of-the-room sales table at nearly 150 separate events and I've founded a company that handled the production and fulfillment of the products for many of the top names in the speaking world. Eventually I shared the stage with some of those top names.

My unique behind-the-scenes perspective from the back-of-the-room and as the fulfillment partner for the top dogs has enabled me to see what works and what doesn't work in the speaking world. I've seen great successes and I've witnessed miserable failures of speakers.

I've had event promoters crying on my shoulder because they didn't understand how to work with hotels properly. I've seen speakers sell \$375,000 of product at an event and then need to refund every penny. I've witnessed scheduled speakers carted off in an ambulance and watched the panicked promoter try to figure out what to do.

Yes, this book is about helping you to build a PROFITABLE speaking business. But it's also about helping you to avoid some of the stupid things I've seen speakers do. And avoiding those mistakes will definitely lead to a more profitable and successful speaking business.

To your success!

Bret Ridgway

Tip #1 – The Back Pocket Speech

As I watched my friend and colleague being loaded onto a gurney and placed in the waiting ambulance, I glanced over at the event promoter. What I saw in his eyes literally bordered on a state of panic. Sure, he was concerned about my friend, but he was also concerned about his event.

For you see, the person being loaded into that ambulance was scheduled to be the very next speaker on the agenda. I could see the wheels turning in the promoter's brain as he struggled to come up with a solution. "What am I going to do? How am I going to fill up his 90-minute slot? How do I keep the flow of my event moving forward in a positive manner? How do I deliver on the promises I've made to my attendees?"

We've probably all witnessed it at some time or another. The unexpected disruption to an event that can create havoc for the event promoter. Maybe it's the sudden medical emergency that means the scheduled speaker can't take the stage. Or maybe it's just the no show speaker who doesn't appear for his or her scheduled time slot without warning.

While either situation is unfortunate, as a speaker at an event where something like this occurs, you need to recognize it for the opportunity that it is and to be prepared to take advantage of that opportunity.

That event promoter is looking for a solution to his problem. He doesn't want to have to tap dance for those 90 minutes (or however long a speaking slot is at that conference) to fill the hole in his agenda. Here is an opportunity for you to come to their rescue and help him keep the event moving forward in a positive manner.

How? By having what I call the "back pocket" speech. The back pocket speech is a 2nd talk you are prepared to deliver on a moment's notice to an audience. Of course, it should be related to the primary focus of the event. Ideally, I also think it should be a content only presentation.

You can provide the event promoter a solution to his problem by offering to take that now open speaking slot and deliver some great content to his attendees. How does it benefit you?

#1 You'll have the gratitude of the event promoter and when they plan future events you'll be top of mind for their speaker list as they put those future events together.

#2 You'll have more face time with the attendees. Handled properly, this additional time with the audience should help you to build even better rapport and, if you're selling a product or service at the back of the room after your other presentation, increase those back of the room sales.

#3 It gives you another opportunity to deliver that secondary presentation and get even more comfortable with it should you need to deliver it at another conference.

**Building a Profitable Speaking Business is About
Being Prepared to Seize Opportunities
When They Present Themselves**

Building a profitable speaking business is about being prepared to seize those opportunities when they present themselves. Your back pocket speech should be a standard part of your speaker's toolkit. Maybe you'll never need it. But, don't be the one kicking yourself when that opportunity comes up and you aren't prepared to take advantage of it because you don't have a back pocket speech prepared.



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