

Leads Mastery: From Prospecting Gloom, To Booking BOOM!

Prospecting for leads and turning those prospects into leads is a daily part of being a Booked and Paid To Speak, professional speaker. Rather than making this a daunting task, here's a few tips to get you started on making prospecting a strategic part of your business practices.

Prospect vs. Lead

Is everyone a prospect? And, is everyone a lead? That is the question. The answer, "Yes" and "No."

Prospects are potential opportunities that could turn into a lead, but until you have warmed them up from cold to warm, they are simply prospects waiting to be explored, and understood. In fact. In most cases prospects are cold, leads are warm. How so?

Prospects means you don't know if they have a need for your services as a speaker/trainer. They might, but until you begin to build the relationship by finding common ground, understanding their needs, know what their problem(s) are and how you can solve them, they are cold prospects needing to be warmed up by you asking curious and solutions driven questions.

Warm leads means you have started the relationship building process. You've created an understanding of their needs, asked qualified questions, and determined how you can best serve them and their organization with your transformative talks or workshops.

Action Item: Come up with a list of 5 questions that you can ask, any prospect to turn them from Prospect to Lead.

It's a daily practice to work and find leads

There's never been a bicep or pectoral muscle built without daily doses of exercise. Not just once a day, once a week, or even once a month. Fitness and having that body you desire is a daily practice. Sure, you use different muscles to get a well rounded physique, but the work is a consistent, intentional, daily focus. The same applies to working and finding leads for your speaking business.

One of the greatest ways to create a daily practice about unearthing prospects and lead opportunities for your business is to have a daily focused Power Hour! One hour a day, at a minimum, devoted prospecting and lead management, prospecting, and lead management. Wash, rinse, repeat. Like any other habit it takes about 21 days to get it in your bones, and once you do, you will never forget the power of making it work to find those prospects and turn them into leads that pave the way to getting Booked and Paid To Speak. One hour a day. Do you think you can carve out one hour a day to live your speaking dream?

Action Item: Schedule one hour on your calendar for the upcoming week to uncover leads.

Warm leads rule! Cold leads take time.

It's who you know, and the relationships you have that make you a professional speaker - each and every day. Sure cold leads give you something to start with, but don't overlook your personal networks - and we're not talking about just your family and friends. Think of your casual acquaintances too. Everyone you know has a connection somewhere to someone that you could be speaking to about what you do as a professional speaker. The trick is finding those connections and working them, which is much easier than working a cold lead.

Also, let's get real. Cold leads, mean cold. They need to be nurtured, and worked. People work with who they know, like, and trust so you gotta get people knowing, liking, and trusting you before they buy. That is how you turn a cold lead into a warm lead. But it takes time.

Action Item: Find at least two warm leads this week that may not be aware of your new speaking business and touch base with them. Make this a weekly action item.

You have to treat selling like a business, not a hobby.

If you are a "wanna be a professional speaker," that means you have to also be a "wanna be a sales professional," and this cannot, I repeat, cannot be a hobby. The moment you decided to turn your speaking into a money making endeavor, you became the CEO of your speaking business. That could sound scary but it's actually exciting.

If it is scary, then you might be stuck in hobby mode, or you might even have bought into too deeply the words of friends who have said, "You're such a great speaker!" No doubt, you probably are a great speaker. However, the bigger question is are you a great business person? If being in business sounds exciting, great. But being in business is more than about showing up on stage and hearing, "You're such a great speaker!" That's icing on the cake!

To be a really great speaker you have to be a really great business owner and become the CEO of your business and love doing the business as much as you love doing the stage time. It's not just a hobby, it's a business so get ready to market, sell, network, review financials, create revenue goals, and to hire people to support you...just like any other business.

Also, when selling, remember two things. Solution selling works, and the number of touches matter. This is not a one, two, three touch, your out scenario. It is also not all about you selling your system. Every touch counts, so make them count and make sure you are selling the solution to their problem that you bring.

Action Item: Make a list of things you believe make you a great business owner, and then make a separate list of what makes you a less than stellar business owner. Start tackling at least one item on the second list that would help you grow your business and get the right support now.

Embrace the "not now, but in the future" - it takes time

Few speakers hit it out of the park on their first sales call and landed on the stage, right out the gate. In fact, most professional speakers will tell you they had to embrace the power of "No!" It's hard, and none of us love the feelings of rejection. However, not every "No" is a forever "No." Most "No's" are a "Not now no." Professional speakers learn to discern and never give up. There's as much possibility in a "No" as there is in a "Maybe" or a "Yes!"

Learn to take the "No" at face value unless a prospect has absolutely said, "No, and please don't contact me again!" If you hear that, listen and act accordingly. All other "No's," find a way to reactivate or explore at a later date.

Action Item: Recommended reads - Start With No by Jim Camp and Go For No by Richard Fenton.

This is a relationship building exercise - plain and simple

If you've worked in business at all, you know it is all about relationships. In fact if you've been married, gone to grade school, high school, college, landed a job, lived as part of a family, all of those things are about building relationships. And, how you do the relationship building is a direct reflection of how you get what you want in life - regardless of work or home.

Lean into how you have built relationships in other aspects of your life and do the same with your professional speaking business. Be curious, interested, empathetic, understanding, solutions driven, honest, in your integrity, and most of all, be more about others than about yourself.

Professional Speakers who you see thriving, practice the art of relationship building as much as they practice the art of speech rehearsal. And, they also know the power of finding the connection to make the connection. That's working smarter, not harder in the relationship building world.

Action Item: Make a list of your top 10 relationships you would like to build, and set a goal to achieve this goal in the next 6 months.

There are no overnight successes

If you are looking for overnight success as a professional speaker, go back to sleep, and keep dreaming. This is a business that takes work - that's the honest truth.

Sure, you may have a speaker who got their first gig, right out the gate with ease and grace. Truth is, ease and grace were probably smoke and mirrors. There is no Houdini magic trick for escaping doing the work of doing the work as a speaker to walk closer and closer towards your success, night after night, day after day.

Yes, you will have a successful pop-up gig and then you'll get all excited and won't really be able to believe your good fortune. FANTASTIC. So slow down in that moment and think through every step you took to get to that one win. Making a standard operating procedure for getting the next gig. Spend an evening, a day, whatever it takes doing this one activity of putting the success under the microscope. That then turns into a process you use each and every day, in every way, just like going to the gym and doing a work out.

That's how you'll get to being a success, night after night, rather than placing all your bets on overnight success. And, keep your mind in the game, because it is a mind game, a numbers game and a relationship game.

Action Item: Come up with your standard operating procedure of “getting the next gig” to close deals each and every time that you speak.

If you are serious about building a speaking business and need guidance and support, click [here](#) to schedule a call and find out how The Speaker Lab can help you achieve your goals of becoming a Booked and Paid Speaker!