

WHAT TO DO WHEN ASKED TO SPEAK FOR FREE

For many speakers looking to earn a living from their craft, being asked to speak for free is a tricky subject. Here are a few tips to set boundaries when it comes to speaking for free.

1 **Ask, “Is there a speaker budget?”**

This question is perfect and legitimate without sounding unprofessional. Do not stop asking it. However, ask that simple question and stop. Put the ball in their court to answer why or why not. A speaker's knowledge and time are valuable, and asking someone to speak for free, especially to travel to do so, is a big ask.

2 **Set a number of free talks you'll give**

Decide how many free presentations you will do a year and let people know when you've exceeded your “free presentations” number. This number can range anywhere from 0 to infinity, but having a number makes it easier to refuse a company if you ever feel reluctant to speak at an event for free.

3 **Compile all of your free speaking engagements into one**

Instead of traveling all over and giving up your evenings, speakers could opt to travel once a year for a large crowd of all of the companies who reached out for a free speaking engagement. Ask the hosts to do all the coordination, sell tickets, and/or seek a sponsor.

4 **Weave a free speech into a family vacation**

For speakers who enjoy traveling, one option is to turn a presentation away from home into family or solo vacation time. For speakers asked to travel, maybe the accommodations and travel (along with that of a family) could be covered by the event as well.

