

Politicians, VIP's and celebrity speakers often expect to bring their spouse, travel companion or aide with them when they travel. If other parties are involved make sure you have something in writing that outlines what the understanding is regarding lodging and food reimbursement. If you retain your speaker's services well in advance of your conference date he or she may be able to arrange other engagements close to your meeting date and location. If this happens, it could mean you save on the speakers travel expenses as this cost would then be shared.

If you would like your speaker to attend social events before or after the presentation, be sure the speaker is aware of your request well in advance. In many cases a speaker will spend the time right before his/her presentation preparing to go on the platform. Speakers are usually happy to attend extra events if given sufficient notice. Be aware, however, that some speakers prefer not to attend social events and some charge extra for any additional time spent.

Be sure to get the speaker's photograph and biographical information to ensure you have what you need for any publications (programs, brochures, newsletters). The speaker will also provide you with an appropriate introduction.

Send the speaker as much information as possible about your organization including company newsletters, annual reports and any relevant meeting bulletins. Also send the speaker copies of any material mentioning his or her presentation. Some speakers will ask to see proofs of this material before it is published.

Many speakers and seminar leaders have written books and produced cassette tapes of their programs. Create a mutual understanding about what promotion of their materials will be allowed.

Mention of products being available can be made immediately following a speaker's presentation. Attendees often benefit from material that extends the value of the presentation. If you want to make an audiotape or videotape of a presentation be sure to get signed authorization in advance.

1. Check contracts for accommodation requirements.
2. Bars, snacks and complimentary buffets.
3. Transportation – to and from the event and to and from the airport - limousines, helicopters, private planes.
4. Welcome and hospitality arrangements in place.
5. Reference material about organization supplied to speaker well in advance.
6. Outline of speech received prior to event.
7. Date given for when biography, headshot and introduction to be received.
8. Arrangements for any other person(s) traveling with the speaker.
9. Be aware of VIP's personal preferences i.e. likes golf, will attend banquet, meet and greet.

10. Send out thank you letters.
11. Gifts – either delivered to room during conference, presented following speech or sent after the event.
12. Allow time for questions from the audience following speaker's presentation.

Never hire a speaker based on celebrity status alone. A consultant who has written a best-selling book or journalist who has a high profile in the media does not necessarily have the platform skills it takes to be a dynamic opening keynote speaker. Always ask to see either a promotional video or get references from recent speaking engagements.

If you do not feel comfortable that a celebrity can hold your audiences attention on the platform, explore alternative ways of showcasing a celebrity. An interview or talk show scenario, meet and greet or question and answer session can make a good substitute or augment a short presentation.

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