

Meetings are as diverse in their purpose and structure as the speakers who are on the platform at these meetings. They can be international, national, regional. They can be internal meetings, external meetings, sales meetings, client conferences, user conferences, annual conferences or leadership retreats.

Once you have determined the purpose, theme and structure of your meeting you will have a better idea of your speaker needs. The following descriptions will help you define exactly how you utilize a speaker's services:

[Keynote Speaker](#) (**keynote - the main idea or theme**).

In public speaking the word keynote refers to the principal underlying theme of a larger idea hence the topic that a keynote speaker addresses usually relates to the reason or purpose behind a meeting.

The [keynote address](#) or keynote speech:

An opening keynote speaker is bought in to set the underlying tone and summarize the core message or most important revelation of the event.

A closing keynote speaker will be engaged to end a conference on a high note.

If an event is held over a longer period of time, it is not unusual to have a different keynote speaker for each day of the event.

General Session Speaker (Often referred to as "**Featured Keynote Speaker**")

A well chosen general session speaker can contribute a lot to a successful meeting and help to make it dynamic, productive, informative and memorable. Adding good quality audio, video, lighting, special effects, custom stage sets and theatrical scenery can also help to create an environment of energy and excitement Organize general sessions where the attendees can actively learn and take away new skills they can apply in their organizations and in their lives.

Plenary Speaker

When a speaker is referred to as a plenary speaker that person is often from within an organization, the same industry or a related industry. As opposed to a professional speaker or independent expert on a particular subject who is bought in to be a marquee keynote speaker.

Mini Plenary Sessions

These are often concurrent sessions that focus on issues important to an industry sector or a particular aspect of a practice applicable to all industries. Mini-plenary sessions are usually open to all registrants.

Breakout Session Speaker

Typically a breakout session speaker is not on the main platform. A breakout session is a more focused session that is typically one hour to 2 ½ hours in length. Often breakout sessions are offered simultaneously in different meeting rooms and attendees decide which sessions that wish to attend. A main stage keynote speaker is sometimes asked to give a breakout session that immediately follows the keynote address. This provides an opportunity for attendees to participate, interact and learn more – they do not get this opportunity when they sit and listen to a keynote address.

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