

FROM TOASTMASTER TO PAID SPEAKER

SEVEN INSIGHTS THAT WILL
SAVE YOU TIME AND HELP YOU
GET PAID TO SPEAK



women
in
data

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There is no 'Master List' of speaking opportunities

Many Toastmasters think that there's a master list full of juicy, well-paid speaking opportunities just waiting for anyone who completes Competent Communicator or its Pathways equivalent. Well, I'm sorry to be the bearer of bad news, but that list? It simply doesn't exist, which means that...



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If you want to have a speaking business, you need to search for speaking opportunities

Much of the work for both new and seasoned speakers is finding opportunities, whether that's done through networking, online research, buying lists, or other means. Many speakers hire researchers to do this work for them, or they use online tools to make the process more efficient.

My free guide, *27 Places to Find Speaking Opportunities* - downloadable [here](#) - has some suggestions, especially for new speakers who need to get some gigs under their belts before they start charging a fee, but it is, by no means, an exhaustive list of links.

Use Toastmasters meetings to try out your material, but make sure you also speak outside of Toastmasters as soon as you can

Toastmasters is fantastic; there are SO many opportunities to speak and so many clubs. Use it as a resource for getting valuable feedback on your content and delivery. For example, I once developed a presentation on Persuasion and Influence that I tried out for the first time during a Club Officer Training session. It was well-received, and I now use it with paying clients.

AND you must also speak in front of non-Toastmaster audiences as much as you can. If you're already speaking regularly every week or month at Toastmasters, this might unknowingly quench your thirst for speaking anywhere else, resulting in you being less motivated to find external opportunities and slowing down your progress towards paid speaking. So mix up your audiences by aiming to speak at both Toastmasters and beyond.



Are there opportunities for you to deliver presentations at your work or for a voluntary organisation? What about company or industry conferences where you could step forward and do some speaking as a representative of your employer or department? Don't overlook these opportunities. It's a great way to build a reputation and become known as a speaker. You may well be offered more opportunities once your colleagues and managers see how much you love to speak and that you can do a good job at it.

If you speak on behalf of your employer, it's unlikely you'll be paid for it, BUT, it's still a good idea to build up a reputation as soon as you can. You might eventually want to go solo as a consultant or industry expert, where you could use speaking both for income and as a way to find new clients.

In addition, ask yourself if everyone you know even realises you want to become a paid speaker. Maybe they're aware of unpaid or paid opportunities they could share with you, or could put in a good word for you at their organisation.



The world doesn't need more motivational speakers; it needs transformational problem solvers



Simply being a motivational speaker will no longer cut it, especially if you want to get paid. It's been a tumultuous year for the world, and organisations are looking for speakers who can solve problems. Maybe they need someone who'll inspire behavioural changes among their staff, or someone who can educate them on upcoming industry changes or transfer new skills to their teams.

Simply saying you're a motivational speaker who can speak to any audience (even if you can) isn't going to help you get booked. In fact, you'll be on the fast track to being overlooked. The competition is stiff. How many other motivational speakers are out there, just waiting to be booked by your prospects and leads?

Tens of thousands.

You may well include motivational messages when you speak. However, please don't think that simply saying 'I'm a motivational speaker' will attract a rush of event organisers asking you to present at their next event. Which leads me to my next point...

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As soon as you can, differentiate yourself

One of the toughest decisions many new speakers have to make is figuring out who you want to speak to. This includes, for example, selecting an industry such as Tech, or focusing on a job function, such as sales people. You'll also need to select a speaking topic and craft a message.

It can feel like you're cutting off so many opportunities, but, ultimately, it will serve you well. It will help you stand out, help you focus on what content to include in your speeches, and get you known much more quickly. You'll be so much more memorable as the Real Estate Sales Speaker, or the Tech Inclusion Speaker, or similar.



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Select industries and organisations that are willing and able to pay you

If you want to be paid to speak, make sure you select the right industries, organisations and audiences. For example, Tech or Financial Services may well have deep pockets for funding a speaker, whereas Hospitality, which recently took a huge hit due to the pandemic, will likely not be able to pay you much right now.

If you'd like to speak about selling products and services, then a group of stay-at-home mums might have less disposable income than mid-career working women who'd like to earn promotions. By no means am I saying that money should be your only driver in terms of which audience to focus on, BUT if you'd like to make a living from speaking, these are things you need to think about. Maybe select two or three target audiences and use the funds from those that pay to enable you to speak for free to those that don't pay.

Bonus Point 1 – Start gathering assets now!

Whenever you speak, think about what you can gather from the opportunity that will help you move forward on your paid-to-speak journey.

Early on, you'll want footage and testimonials to populate your website, helping to convince potential bookers that you're worth taking a chance on for their event. You'll also want to find a way to obtain referrals from those who book you. Additionally, every time you speak, plan on doing such a good job that it generates another speaking opportunity from an enthusiastic audience member who wants you to speak at their organisation. This is a great reason to speak for free. It can definitely lead to paid opportunities.

Now is an EXCELLENT time to start gathering speaking assets and get booked for speaking opportunities. Yes, the world is virtual, but there's no reason why you can't create a virtual showreel of what you've done so far, even if you just use clips from your Toastmaster speeches.

Bonus Point 2 – Virtual speaking is an enormous opportunity

The world is so much smaller at the moment, and you can speak to audiences anywhere. For a number of years, I'd been wanting to speak to U.S. audiences, in part because it's a bigger market with more opportunities and higher fees, but visa requirements and travel expenses were prohibitive. Those requirements disappeared when speaking went virtual, and, now, around 50% of my clients are based in the U.S. Even after face-to-face speaking becomes the norm again, which will probably be in 2022 at this rate, many events will remain hybrid, with a mix of virtual and in-person speakers. Hopefully, I'm now well-positioned to continue growing the U.S. side of my speaking business, especially since I'm more than happy to continue speaking virtually.

Where would YOU like to speak? The Middle East, Africa, Europe, Asia? Right now, the world is your oyster!



ARE YOU READY TO GET PAID TO SPEAK?

At some point in the near future, I may run a group coaching programme, or mastermind group for Toastmasters who'd like to get paid to speak. If you might be interested, please register here so I can keep you posted:



MORE ABOUT SHOLA

Shola Kaye, DTM, is the author of two books and a keynote speaker on Empathy at Work, Inclusive Leadership and Communication. She also runs programmes on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion for organisations in the UK, Europe and the USA. Her clients include The UN, HSBC and News UK. She started her Toastmasters journey in November of 2015.

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