

Speakers are special people

Telephone ringing.

Hello. Is Mrs. Smith in please?

This is she.

Yes. This is Mr. Jones from the ABC Agricultural Society. We have a meeting coming up and we would like you to speak to our group on the topic of time management. Would you be available? Well, perhaps. When is your meeting? Tomorrow night.

Has this ever happened to you? Or are you a Mr. Jones type?

Guest speakers are a special resource for any group or organization because they are willing to share, with your group, their skills, knowledge, talent, experience and more importantly, their time. That's why it is important to be considerate by providing all the answers and assistance possible to make their job enjoyable and rewarding. Time wisely spent with the speaker before the presentation will ensure a more accurate and informative message is delivered to the listener.

Whether you give a speaker 24 hours, 24 days or 24 weeks notice, and whether they speak for free, for a reduced rate or cost the group several hundred dollars, they should all be treated the same.

Use the following checklist to share and prepare the necessary details with the speaker.

- * Has a formal (verbal or written) invitation been made?
- * Have you received a confirmation of their acceptance?
- * Has the speaker been notified of allotted time? (30 minutes versus two hours)
- What type of presentation is expected? ie. keynote speaker, workshop, seminar, panel, group discussion, question and answer etc.
- * Are there fees/financial arrangements to be made?
- * Have you provided the speaker with the name and objectives of your organization?
- * Does the speaker know the purpose of the meeting?

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- * Does the speaker know the date, time, location, and number of people attending?
- * Have you reviewed the topic to be discussed by the speaker?
- * Have you sent the speaker a meeting agenda or at least what will be happening before and after their session?
- * Have you identified for the speaker any specific issues, strengths or problems of the group?
- * Have you asked the speaker for suggestions and ideas?
- * Does the speaker have any special requirements? ie. transportation, directions, desired room set-up, audio-visual equipment.
- * Have you asked the speaker for any photographs and background information to use for an introduction and publicity?
- * Is someone greeting the speaker upon arrival?

- * Is someone thanking the speaker?
- * Have you sent a written thank you within 10 days of the event?

For more tips on how to introduce and thank a guest speaker, see Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food fact-sheet 87-009, So You've Been Asked to Speak.

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