

Sales Leads: How to Generate Quality Sales Leads Through Public Speaking

by Alan Rigg

Delivering speeches, seminars, and webinars (online seminars) is a terrific way to generate large quantities of quality sales leads. Why is public speaking such an effective lead-generating vehicle? Here are a few reasons:

- Speaking allows you to deliver your message to **multiple potential prospects at once**.
- A well-constructed speech, seminar, or webinar can establish you as an expert in your field and increase your **credibility** with prospects.
- Every speech has the potential to **reach far beyond the original audience**. If you deliver a compelling message, there is no telling how many times it will be repeated to others by your audience members.

What should you speak about?

Look for topics that are of particular interest to your target prospects. You can offer new approaches for solving especially troubling business problems. You can educate your prospects on compelling new technologies, or other concepts that will help them professionally or personally. You can discuss real-life case studies and share stories about how you (or your company) helped specific customers improve their businesses. Whatever topic you choose must **relevant and important** to your target audience.

How should you construct your speech?

Constructing an effective lead-generating speech requires walking a fine line. You want to provide your audience with **truly valuable information**. However, you also want to **motivate them to contact you** for additional information. As a result, you have to make sure you don't provide so much information that your audience can solve their problems all by themselves.

This is not a big issue if you are speaking to generate leads for a **product**, as the audience members will likely need to purchase the product to completely solve the problems you discuss. Where giving away too much information becomes a real issue is when you sell **services**. If you share all of your knowledge about how to solve specific problems, why will your audience members need to come back to you?

To avoid this undesirable outcome, follow these seven steps to constructing an effective lead-generating speech:

1. Open with an **"attention grabber"**. This can be a truly startling fact or an emotionally compelling story that relates to one or more of the key points that you will address in your speech.
2. Give the audience a brief **outline** of the **key points** you will be covering in your speech.
3. Describe the **problem or problems** your speech is intended to help your audience solve.
4. Describe **the impact of each problem** as **graphically** as you can. Engage your audience's emotions by asking them to describe how a problem has affected them personally or professionally. Another alternative is for you to tell compelling, real-life "problem impact" stories that describe how (current and past) customers were affected by specific problems.
5. Relieve the tension you have built up in the audience by letting them know the problems **can** be solved. However, **DON'T tell them EVERYTHING they need to know to solve them!** Provide a brief outline of the solution. That way the audience will need to come to you for more details.
6. Use glowing **word pictures** to help the audience visualize how wonderful their lives will be when the problems have been eliminated.
7. Close by **revisiting the key points** from your presentation and giving the audience a "call to action".

IMPORTANT NOTE: Be very careful about **selling** from the stage. Audiences become disenchanted very quickly if they feel a speech is nothing more than a thinly disguised sales pitch. You must deliver truly valuable insights and information to your audiences to reward them for taking time out of their busy schedules to attend your speeches.

What "call to action" should you deliver at the end of your speech?

It is perfectly appropriate to include a gentle "call to action" at the end of your speech. Consider closing with a statement such as:

"If you would like to explore the possibility of applying the concepts that were discussed during today's presentation in your company, please give me your business card before you leave."

Here are some other effective calls to action:

- Include a "please contact me" checkbox on a presentation evaluation form that you give to each audience member.
- Give them a form they can use to request a free special report and/or subscribe to a free newsletter.
- Invite the audience to visit your company's website to download a free special report and/or subscribe to a free newsletter. **NOTE:** Make sure you require them to provide their **name and e-mail address** in order to receive the free value-added information!

How should you prepare for your speech?

Preparing for seminars and speeches is a lot of work. Here are some of the key steps:

- Prepare your presentation materials, write scripts, and practice them to the point where you can deliver your presentation smoothly and convincingly **without** having to rely on your notes too much. If you don't have much speaking experience, you may want to join a local Toastmasters chapter. They do a good job of teaching platform and presentation skills.
- Secure a facility for your speech and make arrangements for any necessary audio/visual equipment.
- If you are going to serve refreshments, make arrangements for the refreshments.
- Develop and implement a plan for attracting an audience. This might include sending direct mail or e-mails, making phone calls, and contacting trade, professional and social associations and organizations.

What can you do to maximize your return on investment?

If you are going to invest the time and effort required to deliver a first-class speech, you should also develop a plan for maximizing your return on your investment. This could include the following activities:

- Give each audience member an evaluation form they can use to provide feedback and request additional information.
- Provide handouts that include presentation highlights and your contact information.
- Hold a drawing for some type of small prize (books, sample products, etc.) to encourage attendees to give you business cards and/or hand in completed evaluation forms.
- Block time during the day or two following your presentation to make phone calls to audience members. When you make the calls, **ask for feedback** and **offer an opportunity to ask questions** that might not have been answered during the event. Also **ask for referrals** to people they know who might be interested in your presentation topic. These referrals may become immediate prospects. At minimum they should be added to your invitation list for future events.

Delivering properly designed speeches, seminars, and webinars (online seminars) is a terrific way to generate large quantities of quality sales leads. If you follow the instructions provided in this article, you should see a satisfying increase in the number, size, and quality of leads in your sales opportunity pipeline!