

Speakers Bureau/Agency Terms & Definitions

Agent: Person in a speakers bureau/agency that acts on behalf of the seller (speaker) or on behalf of the buyer (customer).

Autograph Table: Traditionally, this is the table where a speaker autographs books after a speaking engagement. Many speakers, however, use the term “autograph table” to also mean the table at the back of the room—the one from which they sell their products.

Back-of-Room Sales: The act and process of selling books, tapes, and other products at the back of the room, usually immediately after a speech.

Bio: A slang term for biography.

Biographical Sheet: A profile, one-sheet or a short document that lists a speaker’s major credits and gives a brief history of his or her career. A biographical sheet is *not* a job resume or a vital. To remain true to its singular limit, a biographical sheet should be no longer than one page.

Black-and-White: A black-and-white photograph of a speaker, sometimes referred to as a “B&W.”

Book: To schedule a date for a speaking engagement.

Booking: The act of being engaged to speak, as in “I have had 150 paid *bookings* this year.”

Breakout Sessions: Small group sessions, within the meeting, formed to discuss specific subjects.

Brochure: Advertising piece describing and promoting the advantages of a particular speaker, group of speakers or speakers bureau.

Brokering: Bureau with customer who wants a speaker goes to an agent representing an exclusive speaker, to buy said speaker. Commission is determined by the exclusive agent.

Bureau: A booking or sales company that sells the services of multiple speakers. Bureaus are much like travel agencies.

Bureau Listing: See “Listing.”

Buyer: The person or group representative who signs the contract and pays for the speaker.

Canned: A slang term for a standard “off the shelf” speech or presentation. Often, the term “canned” is used in a negative context to refer to material that a speaker uses too often, without changes, in presentations.

Celebrity Speaker: A speaker who is booked for his/her name value.

Client: (also see Customer) A speaker is the client of an agent who is paid to represent him/her.

Coach: Individual who helps develop presentation skills.

Co-brokering: Where two or more bureaus/agencies work together to book a speaker to a client.

Community Service Bureaus: Sometimes called public service bureaus, these are speakers bureaus that send speakers into the community for little or no fee. The speakers educate the public on a particular topic or issue and promote the host company’s interest.

Concurrent Sessions: Sessions scheduled at the same time.

Consultant: Professional who provides counsel and assistance to a client on specific assignments.

Contract: Legal document defining responsibilities for all parties concerned.

Curriculum Vita: Often referred to as a “vita.” A vita is very similar to a resume. It highlights a speaker’s education and key jobs held. A speaker in the academic community usually uses a curriculum vita.

Customer: (also see Client) Whoever is paying for a speaker’s services. A company or association is the customer when they buy a speaking engagement.

Dais: (Pronounced day-iss.) Raised platform on which the head table is placed.

Date: The day set for a definite booking or engagement.

Date Clear: Formal permission to approve a date that is being tentatively held for a booking.

Demo: Audio or video demonstration tapes. Demos often are used to promote a speaker’s services or speeches to meeting planners.

Direct: When a meeting planner calls the speaker direct, rather than going through an agent, bureau, or manager.

Emcee: The master of ceremonies at a banquet or similar event. Sometimes spelled M.C.

Engagement: Used as a noun to describe a set booking or date when a buyer has secured the services of, or employed, a speaker.

Exclusive: When the speaker has signed an agreement with an agent to handle *all* speaking engagements. Bureaus may or may not then “broker” with the exclusive agent to obtain the speaker for their client. The exclusive agent works out a commission split.

Exclusive Bureau/Agency: Based on conditions of the contract, between the speaker and the bureau/agency, the speaker may also accept engagements directly.

Exclusive Right to Sell: The speaker's bureau/agency having the contract, with speaker, is the sole and exclusive representative of the speaker.

Expenses: All contracted out-of-pocket business costs incurred while the speaker travels to and from client events. These normally include airfare, taxi-fare, car rental costs, lodging, gratuities, special phone calls having to do with the event, meals, and last-minute presentational materials. Expenses charged to the client should not include anything of personal nature –i.e. movies, alcohol.

Fee: The money paid by the meeting planner-buyer to the bureau or speaker per contract, exclusive of expenses.

Firm Offer: A speaking engagement that is definitely confirmed as in, “I’ve got a *firm* offer for Baltimore on that date.” A firm offer is one that becomes contractually binding upon acceptance of the offer by the third party.

Flyer: A one-sheet piece of printed advertising. These are often produced and distributed to help promote a speaker’s product or services.

General Session: A meeting open to all those in attendance at a convention.

Gig: A slang term meaning an engagement or booking.

Glossy: A black-and-white or color photograph printed on glossy paper, used to promote the speaker. See “black and white.”

Gross: The total fee the buyer is charged for a booking, including agents' fees, but excluding speaker expenses (air and ground transportation, tips, hotels, and meals.) Bureau commissions are not paid on expenses.

Handout: Informative or educational material given to the audience at the speaker's presentation. Handouts often are in flyer form. The term, however, refers to any material that is handed out to the audience.

Head Table: Seating location for honored guests and/or meeting presenters.

Holding Room: A room backstage where speakers wait to go on. Any room used for this purpose is called the "holding room."

Honorarium: Payment made for services. See "Fee."

IASB: International Association of Speakers Bureaus

In-House: An audience composed only of employees of the same company.

Inside Marketer: Sales rep: employee of speaker.

Intro: A slang term for an introduction.

Introduction: A carefully written opener about the speaker, which is delivered by the introducer at the beginning of a speech. A good introduction gives some ideas of the speaker's credits, achievements, and honors and also answers the question: "Why this speaker, on this date, for this audience?"

Keynote: The main speech at a meeting or the speech in one of the featured spots at an event. The keynote sets the tone of a convention and carries out the theme. The keynote usually is connected with prime time, such as a meal function, or delivered to open or close an event, or given to the entire convention in the main room.

Lavaliere microphone: Portable microphone that hooks around neck or is clipped to clothing. Also known as a necklace, lapel, or pendant microphone.

Lectern: A stand upon which a speaker may rest notes or books. May be standing, which rests on the floor, or tabletop.

Listing: The speaker grants the right to a speakers bureau/agency to list the speaker as available.

M.C.: Master of Ceremonies; person who presides over the program.

Management Company: Organization that provides functions for a speaker including, but not limited to: maintaining calendar, scheduling travel, and assisting in marketing.

Manager: A person hired to manage a speaker's or entertainer's business and/or personal affairs. The job of manager may include marketing the speaker's services for more bookings or performing public relations work for the speaker.

Market Exclusivity: When the speaker limits the speakers bureau/agency to offering the speaker's services to a particular market or markets.

Meeting Planner: A person who is in charge of all planning of a meeting. Meeting planners handle logistics, meals, hotel arrangements, room-sets, travel schedules, and often the hiring of speakers.

Mike: A slang term for microphone. Many types of mikes are employed by speakers, including hand-held mikes with long cords, stationary mikes, clip-ons, and hands-free mikes.

N.S.A.: National Speakers Association.

Net fee: The amount of the fee the speaker will actually receive for a booking after agency or bureau fees and before expenses.

On-Site: An on-site location is a convention center, hotel, or other event site.

One-Sheet: See also flyer.

Orator: Someone who speaks eloquently in public.

Overhead Projector: Equipment, which projects an image on a screen by passing light through a transparent slide or other transparency.

PA System: Public address system.

Packager: Organizes speakers demo tapes, press kits, etc. for fee.

Panel: Discussion with a moderator and two or more participants.

Platform: Raised horizontal surface, stage, or flooring.

Plenary Sessions: General assembly for all participants.

Plug: An advertisement, not in the form of a formal ad, but usually a mention—either written or in a publication or given verbally from the platform to help promote a product, service, or individual.

Podium: Speaker's platform.

Pre-sales: Items such as books, tapes, videos, etc. sold to client in advance of meeting versus items sold in back of room after event.

Press Kit: Also known as a PR Kit. A collection of publicity items that includes: 1) Pertinent data on the speaker such as bio, flyer, photo, testimonials, and articles. The property, such as photos, descriptions of public space areas, local entertainment, etc. 2) Information relative to a sponsor's products or services.

Product(s): Products are items, which compliment the speaker's topic and are available for sale. A speaker's books, audio cassette albums, video tapes, workbooks, posters, and other products may be sold by contract in large quantity to a client in advance for all attendees, or sold at the back of the room at an autograph table.

Production Company: A company that presents special effects and theatrical acts. This type of company may contract to put on an entire convention or only parts of one. They sometimes hire speakers as part of their contract.

Professional Speaker: A speaker who is *paid* a fee for performances, by a company, association, or college.

Program Exclusivity: When the speaker limits the speakers bureau/agency to offering just certain programs that the speaker presents.

Projector: An apparatus for projecting a picture on a screen. Whether the device is an overhead, slide projector, or a film projector, it is usually referred to as simply a projector.

Public Seminar: A seminar that is open to the public. Tickets are sold to individuals.

Public Speaker: Someone who speaks in public. Often, a public speaker is not paid for his or her appearances and delivers a political speech or a speech that promotes a particular cause, company, or organization.

Q & A: The question-and-answer session that follows a panel presentation or speech.

Referral: When someone, particularly a satisfied client, suggests or recommends services to other buyers.

Regional Exclusivity: A speakers bureau's/agency's exclusivity is limited to a particular region or territory.

Repeat Engagement or Booking: When a speaker does a second or subsequent booking for the same client.

Releasing a Date: Letting go of a date that was tentatively held for a booking.

Risers: Platforms of varying heights used together to create a stage.

Seminar: Lecture and dialogue allowing participants to share experiences in a particular field under the guidance of an expert discussion leader.

Seminar Leader: The teacher or expert who instructs the seminar's attendees.

Site: Area, property or specific facility to be used for a meeting.

Speaker (Trainer/Consultant): The presenter of programs, products and services.

Special Events Company: See "Production Company."

Speaker Groups: A group of speakers with varying areas of expertise, who team up to share leads and marketing expenses.

Spin-Off: Bookings that occur because someone in the audience wants to hire the speaker for their meeting.

Stage: The portion of an auditorium or room that has been structured into a formal area for productions or presentations.

Tailoring: When a speaker adjusts his or her material to the particular needs of an audience.

Technical Writer: Someone hired by a speaker to prepare scripts, workbooks, audios, videos, or articles on contract.

Tentative hold: An action that indicates interest by a prospective client to schedule a speaker. Speaker typically will call a first hold before accepting a second hold's offer.

Testimonial: A letter of recommendation from a former buyer or organization that is familiar with a speaker's work.

Trade Out: An exchange or barter of services and/or products for part or all of a speaker's fee.

Trainer: Instructor of techniques or skills on a specific subject.

Venue: The site of the meeting or event.

Workshops: An educational, classroom-type session in which handouts and workbooks are often used. A workshop may last from one hour to many days.