



By
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Building on the Emotional Experience of the Brand

Linking individual brands with the brand of a convention or event

As professional speakers, we each seek to create our own brand. However, in today's marketplace, aligning everything we do with the brand of the convention or event will assist us in fulfilling the expectations of those who hire us.

A brand includes something as simple as a logo or slogan, or something more complex such as the colours, look and feel of the venue or the convention theme. The brand reflects the style or flavour of the convention. This leads us to the crux of the matter. How can speakers create a unique convention experience?

Connect Everything

What is the style? Is it conservative, contemporary, casual, leading edge? A clue might be found in who has spoken at past conventions and what their content and topics were. What did the organizers like and dislike? Try to connect that style to the presentation and materials.

Customize Introductions

Address why we are the right speakers (experts) for this audience at this time. We should ensure that the person introducing us reads our introduction as written. I have had introducers abbreviate to "Here's David!" That might have worked for Johnny Carson but it does nothing to enhance the promise of a unique experience. I have also been introduced as Dr. Saxby, and in the words of Groucho Marx, "I'm no doctor, but I do look like one." Your introduction sets the stage and mentally prepares the audience for the experience, so it is important to ensure that it gives the right impression.

Customize Content

On the June 2004 *Voices of Experience* CD, Alan Weiss, CSP, recommends that we "...modify speeches for the environment...not just for that client but for that day and that time...don't be a one-trick-pony..."

How do we connect our presentations to that environment at that particular time? Perhaps by interviewing executives and front-line workers about current challenges and asking what is important to speak about and what is taboo. We should incorporate the organization's mission, values, goals and successes, and use quotations from its people. We might even consider interviewing the competition.

Change Delivery

Thom Winninger, CSP, CPAE, states that he has changed how he creates and delivers a presentation to "...become more process oriented, rather than just ideas connected together." This means leading an audience from the problem through a logical process to an actionable outcome.

In his book *What a Great Idea*, Chic Thompson suggests that we try to capture "killer phrases"—thoughts, words or ideas that will immediately connect with the audience. Arrive early to pick up the tone of the convention, key phrases and ideas that other speakers or attendees are using. Find out who or what is on before and after you.

Reinforce the experience after the convention. I have participants write on a 3X5 index card both their e-mail address and one key idea learned that they plan to use. I summarize the ideas and send them an e-newsletter which again incorporates the brand.

Get Innovative

As speakers we have the advantage of offering an outside perspective.

One of my clients, a franchiser, is hosting an international convention this fall. He envisioned having several franchisees talk about their successes but was concerned that they were not professional speakers. When he asked for suggestions, I offered to coach the franchisees to ensure that their presentations were effective and related to the theme or brand, or alternatively to coach and moderate a panel of the franchisees.

Include the Brand

Include the brand in audiovisual materials, learning guides, products, e-newsletters and during teleclasses. You can even create an audio logo (an audio track) to promote the convention theme and your presentation.

The brand is the promise of a unique experience. If your client has invested in a brand, the stakeholders and conference attendees will identify with the experience of the brand. Consistent and repeated use of the brand in everything we do reinforces the experience and creates buy-in and loyalty for both current and future conventions. Build on the emotional experience of the brand and your next convention will be a success. **S•I**

A marketing strategist and branding expert for 25 years, David Saxby is known as a catalyst, igniting innovative thinking toward winning in today's marketplace. David is a past national board member of CAPS and can be contacted at dsaxby@sparkcommunications.com.