



## **The First Step to Booking: Branding!**

Getting booked is the obvious end goal for every speaker. But the very first step in getting booked starts *before* the networking and the sales calls! You must brand yourself in order to stand out.

Branding is essentially your image, your unique proposition. It is reflected in everything you do, say and embody. If you develop a focused and unique brand, you are part way there to attracting your target audience.

### **Here are the top 7 questions to ask yourself as you develop your brand:**

#### **1. What do I WANT to share with the world?**

It is important to start with this question - it is self awareness. Do you want to inspire? To educate? To counsel? Knowing what you want to spend your time and energy on is the first key step in building an exciting brand. Consider your actual message as well. You may have knowledge in many topic areas, but being a 'Jack of All Trades' can be interpreted as 'Master of None' to your potential clients.

#### **2. What are my areas of expertise and talent?**

Evaluate your credentials in terms of how they support your answer to question #1. Through this exercise, you'll identify areas that you need to groom in yourself.

#### **3. Who is my audience?**

Once you've determined where your core interest lies and how your credentials and skills align with that interest area, ask yourself who would be interested in your message.

#### **4. Is there a niche I can focus on?**

Perhaps your target audience is very broad, very 'tapped into' by others. Is there a way for you to hone in on a tighter audience? This group should be broad

enough so as to offer enough speaking opportunities, but narrow enough for you to stand out.

### **5. How can I build the *substance* behind my brand?**

Now is the time to really grow your credentials so that you become the undisputed 'go to' in your field. If you've chosen your audience and know your outstanding deliverables, you should do everything you can to build up your resume of experience. Articles, presentations (perhaps for free to start), media interviews, strategic volunteer board affiliations, proprietary materials that you have authored are several ways you can build that credibility.

### **6. How can I build the *style* of my chosen brand?**

Your style is how you package what you know so that it is fresh for your potential clients. Your bio should be focused and exciting. Your presentation topics should be unique and compelling. The language you use should reflect your brand. Remember, your brand goes beyond what you say and deliver. It is *how* you say it as well. People will respond to a fresh approach and packaging. Trying to deviate from the usual is important, as long as it is genuine, reflective of what you know, and not gimmicky.

### **7. How can my branding stand out?**

Your first important goal is to develop a very solid and focused core brand statement. All of the above steps lead to this concise brand development. However, it is also important to strive toward a unique brand. Show the world that you're moving one step ahead, that you're different than others in your field. What can you add to your message that will kick your content up a notch?

Carolyn Parks  
President  
Outstanding Women Speakers  
[www.outstandingwomenspeak.com](http://www.outstandingwomenspeak.com)