

Speaker Show Reel Guide

Speaker Agent's Golden Rules on Video Show Reel...

How To Use This Guide to Make, And Save, A Lot of Money

When you're first starting out as a speaker, you can do a Show Reel very well on the cheap, but as a professional speaker you should invest significantly to get a truly professional finish. If you are (or aspire to be) a \$15,000 speaker – does your show reel look like you are?!

Global speakers often spend huge sums of money to get a quality, because a couple of bookings easily cover your costs and then turn that investment into an incredibly healthy profit.

Nevertheless, the rules on CONTENT are the same whatever you spend and getting it right will ensure you don't waste your money or time, whatever you're spending.

There is a LOT you can do with a show reel – the purpose of this guide is to give you the fundamentals you need to get right before adding any further embellishments.

Critically, this topic is very subjective, and it's vital to let your personality and speaking style shine through, but there are golden rules every show reel can follow if you want to produce something that gets you booked again and again.

This is based on my 18-years' experience of booking speakers and 8 years running speaking agencies in the UK and Australia, for clients across the globe...

Why Video is The Single Most Important Tool In Your Speaker Marketing Kit

Unless a potential prospect has seen you speak live, no self-respecting speaker booker will trust you to deliver a sensational keynote to their people, on their stage, at their hugely important event without having seen you on video.

Plus, if the decision is being made by committee, you need to have a better video than the other 5 speakers they will be looking at! It really is that simple.

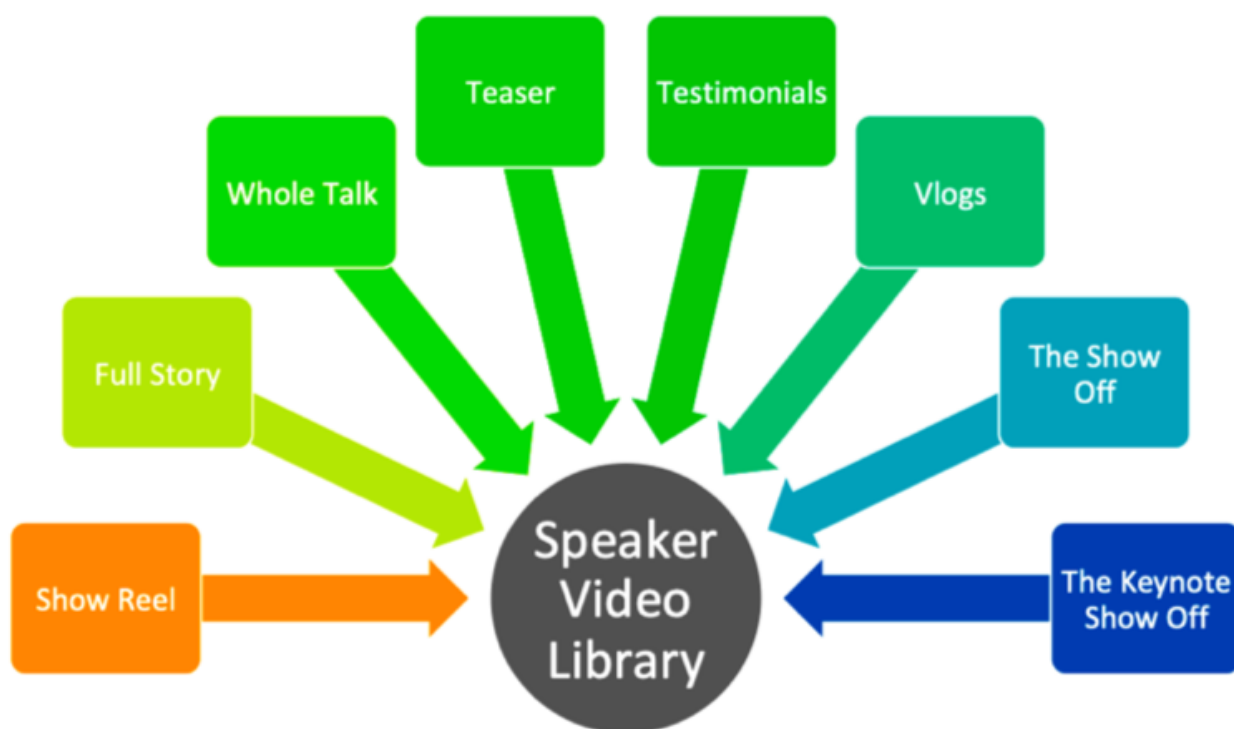
An excellent show reel gives agents, bureaus and bookers total confidence you're the perfect choice.



SPEAKER BUSINESS ACCELERATOR

Your Speaker Video Library

Before we move on, it's worth noting that the Speaker Business Accelerator shares 8 different types of video every speaker should build in their Speaker Video Library, the Show Reel being just one of them. These different videos do different things for a speaker – some grab attention, some get you on a short list, some convert a sale, some build credibility, etc...



We are concentrating here on the "Show Reel" or "Sizzle Reel" because it is the video most speakers invest in and concentrate on first.

The Purpose of a Show Reel

It's absolutely crucial to remember why you need a good Show Reel in the first place, what its true purpose is. Your Show Reel gets a speaker booker interested in learning more about you. In sales speak, it quite simply converts a suspect to a prospect. Keeping this in mind is vital to keep you focussed on the content you need to include.

#1 Focus

This is such a neglected part of putting a show reel together. One that is often left out by videographers and show reel producers who are trying to sell you a larger package with more days shooting.

Market is and exactly what pain points you solve for them – keep these front of mind when laying out the content of your show reel.

The first thing to do when planning out your show reel is to ask yourself who you are targeting.

As a speaker, you should be totally clear on your speaker business model (refer to the SBA Speaker Business Model Cheat Sheet for more info) so you'll know precisely who your target market is and exactly what pain points you solve for them – keep these front of mind when laying out the content of your show reel.

There is a huge temptation to pile in all the wonderful stuff you do, but resist it – your show reel is there to capture the attention of your ideal target client, not an exercise in personal branding (there are other videos you can make to satisfy this).

#2 Length!

How long should your show reel be? Quite simply, there is no right answer.

Some research into attention spans on social media suggests that a video needs to be under 2.37 minutes.

On the other hand, you'll get more views by having a video the length that social media algorithms over-rank it and push it to more people (for example, currently a video of 10 minutes gets favoured by LinkedIn).

Social media aside, fundamentally, people will watch a video as long as it holds their attention - we happily go to the cinema and pay to watch a film for 3 hours! So, done well, your Show Reel could be as long as you like. As an agent, I've been as captivated by a 20-minute video, and I have been stunned by a 1-minute video Show Reel.

However, as we said above, the purpose of the Show Reel is to get speaker bookers interested in you as a speaker for their next event. So the rule of thumb, remembering you might be up against a committee who are watching tens, even hundreds of videos, a 2 to 5-minute video is the norm, and my preference based on current success with clients is to the shorter end of this.

#3 Open With a Bang

While the overall length of the “perfect” Show Reel is up for debate, what is not is how long you take to get to the point. You should make an impact in the first 30 seconds MAX.

A client of mine who holds regular international conferences with multiple thousands of attendees at each specifically asks for videos that make an impact in 30 seconds or their committee will overlook it, as they have so many to go through to shortlist their speakers.

So, don’t let your videographer or editor persuade you to spend 90 seconds on avant-garde speaker lifestyle shots that “set the scene”, quickly show us you, on stage, delivering the best zingers from your content - so we know what you speak on, and how incredibly well you do it at the very start.

You want the booker to booker to instantly get excited by the prospect of having your stagecraft and personality on their stage, as well as quickly gaining insight into your content, so this is critical.

****TOP TIP – Position your lines in a show reel exactly like you position your stories in a good keynote - put your second-best line at the start and your very best one at the end. ****

#4 BIG Stage

One of the best ways to impress right at the outset is to see you speaking on stage, and the bigger the stage and audience the better – as it shows a more significant speaking experience and prowess.

We also want to see you at a proper client event – no peer membership conference videos!

Don’t have footage of you on stage? Make sure that every single time you speak, you get it recorded, each and every time you speak. Keeping fresh video at your fingertips will pay off big time.

****TOP TIP – Most larger events with proper budgets have a film crew to capture the proceedings on film. A simple way to get access to this footage is to have a clause in your speaking contract that, should the client wish to video record your presentation they must first seek your written approval. When they do, you can provide them permission in return for them providing you a free use copy of the footage to be sent to you within two weeks of the event. You can go one step further and also reserve the right to bring your own camera crew and record the talk yourself (in the case that they aren’t filming it). ****



#5 Give Them Your Greatest Hits

Many speakers can be afraid of “giving away” their best stuff, but please LET THIS GO. You need to show your value!

You need to fill your show reel with your absolute best one-liners and stories. Wow them with your own memorable catchphrases and hilarious anecdotes.

Remember, they are looking for someone to come and speak live, just like you go and see your favourite music artist live in concert, even though you know their “best of” playlist off by heart. Your show reel should be your Greatest Hits compilation.

#6 Show Your Personality

“You might have a great talk, but will you fit with our people?”

This is such an underrated part of buying speakers. It’s not just about having great content – WHAT you talk about, you also need to show your true personality on video so buyers can get a sense of WHO you are. Will their people like you?

So we need to have enough of you onstage to show this, or else a smart piece to camera – not talking about YOU, but your methodology or topic, so we get an idea of what you’re like as a person.

#7 The Great-to-Work-With Factor

Once we’ve seen that you’re brilliant on stage, have immense value to give and have infectious personality, if we can get a hint that you’re also a breeze to work with, why would we book anyone else?

A speaker booker’s nightmare is the speaker who is a TOTAL DIVA – so, throwing in a fleeting shot of you laughing with an organiser, chatting merrily to attendees or being cordial with an AV crew adds a real shine.

****TOP TIP** – Another great shot to include is audience members lining up to talk with you after an event. This shows the crowd absolutely adored your keynote and will make the booker think “now that’s how I want my people to react.” So when you have a videographer at an event, make sure you offer to give some books away after your keynote so you can get footage of them forming a queue to talk to you.

#8 Audience Interaction

This is one CRITICAL piece a lot of speakers either miss or overlook. You were on the stage when that great clip of you was recorded so you know you had 500 happy people in front of you. Unless we can see or hear them on your video, we don't! Make sure if you deliver a funny line, we hear the audience laugh, or even better see them.

****TOP TIP** – Many videographers will take the audio feed for your video from the tech desk which is connected to your lapel mic – great for getting good audio of you, but that lapel is specifically designed NOT to pick up anything else, so you won't get audience reaction in your video. Make sure your video team point a second camera (or just a mic if you're doing a one-camera shoot) into the audience to pick up that marvellous applause.

EXTRAS

Depending on your own style, a full 'show reel' can also include:

Piece to Camera

You speaking to camera on your subject shows the whites of your eyes, a deep understanding of your subject and your personality.

Media Appearances

If you have any media (particularly TV) appearances you can slot into your reel, this is a great way to very quickly establish you as a true expert on your subject and will elevate you above others speakers.

Testimonials

Testimonials from people in the audience (again real attendees, not your friends). Get the highest-ranking person in the room you can and ask them to focus on talking about:

- 1.PERFORMANCE - great delivery, funny, had a great time, etc...
- 2.IMPACT – people loved it, message hit the mark, etc...
- 3.OUTCOME - key take-away (value)

PLUS – nice things like - how easy to deal with during the whole process or ONE thing that really stood out.

NEXT STEPS...

Now you've got the basics, review your reel and see if it can be tweaked to make it more commercially-focussed. After this, you can work on things like what should come first, editing for the psychology of a booker's decision-making process and other things that make a good reel great.