



## Tips for Innovative Meetings and Events (T.I.M.E.)

Topic: Key to Keynotes

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### Welcome

Every conference has one or maybe even two. Often meetings are jumpstarted with one. Yes...the keynote speaker.

Keynote speakers speak; the audience listens and responds. With luck and the tips from this issue of T.I.M.E., you will select an effective speaker who presents information in a way that draws the listener into the topic, so that the audience is propelled to action.

This issue of T.I.M.E. looks at what makes a successful keynote presenter. The ideas advanced here can help you select keynote speakers. Use the characteristics and ideas as an outline to question specific speakers, e.g., How will you analyze our audience? How do you create empathy?

And also use this issue to help all speakers (including yourself) be a better presenter. For none of us is spared the pleasure of making presentations! Use the tips and techniques from professional speakers to make yourself shine.

Bob Higa (847-991-7911, [www.bobhiga.com](http://www.bobhiga.com), [Bob Higa's website](#)) writes a great section in this month's newsletter on Thread of Continuity.

Sue  
[Sue Tinnish](#)

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## Hitting the Note- What Keynotes Accomplish

The information a keynote speaker provides may be:

- Inspirational
- Motivational
- Promotional
- Entertaining
- Awareness-raising by creating
  - Change management
  - Changed perspectives
  
- Educational by providing
  - Tools
  - Techniques
  - Benchmarking information
  - Historical information

A keynote address may be more general in nature, support the theme of the conference, feature a topic that will be of interest to everyone at the meeting or feature a well-known speaker who will serve as a draw.

Like other sessions of a meeting or conference, the keynote address must offer your participants a take-away - a reason to have listened.

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## Keynotes vs. Breakouts vs. Panels vs. Discussions

Can a keynote speaker serve as a breakout or seminar speaker? Can they be trainers? Can they be facilitators? And what's the difference?

Many keynote speakers have the skills to play various roles within meetings. And many speakers want to be able to wear many hats. It's their opportunity to expand their business opportunities.

It is important to differentiate what skills are necessary for various sessions.

A breakout or seminar may be more skill based, a more niche topic, and/or may have an industry slant. Typically, breakouts, while desirable to be entertaining, contain significant content. Breakout sessions typically have a training element to them. Trainers, subject matter experts (SMEs), industry experts (a type of subject matter expert) or keynote speakers can be effective breakout or seminar speakers. People select breakouts usually because of the topic - not the speaker. Breakout sessions, like training, are typically associated with learning new information or skills.

Perhaps your meeting includes a focus group or panel discussion. These are scenarios when it is desirable to have someone with facilitation skills. There is a difference between trainers, professional speakers and facilitators.

A facilitator helps a group work together to make decisions, develop plans, and then implement those plans. The facilitator makes it easy for the group to carry out its mission. An effective facilitator must differentiate between content and process.

Process is the way the group works together. Process is the HOW. Content is the actual ideas, suggestion and decisions that comes out of group discussion. Content is the WHAT. A facilitator is more focused on the getting the right HOW not on delivering the right WHAT. (If you are interested in more details on facilitation, request the September 2001 back issue on Facilitation by emailing me or click here [Facilitation - September 2001](#))

A person with strong facilitation skills might be your strongest moderator or focus group leader. In these cases, you are not seeking specific subject expertise but rather someone who can lead a group through a process.

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### Key Keynote Characteristics

A remarkable speaker, one of keynote caliber, delivers content and more. They package information in an entertaining way and inspire action from your audience. Keynote speakers transform universal ideas and themes (being great, overcoming adversity) and make them real for your audience. A remarkable keynote speaker has the following ten characteristics:

1. Understands the audience - Keynote speakers analyze your audience so they can both prepare their speech and also connect with your audience. By understanding the characteristics of your audience, they hone the elements of their speech that will allow them to reach your participants.
2. Brings value - You expect keynote speakers to deliver content bundled up in a creative delivery. Keynote speakers need to be credible, substantive and believable. Izzy Gesell, CSP, also states that keynote speakers need to be "authentic". Being authentic has the effect of holding the audience's attention. He breaks authenticity down into three elements: vulnerability, presence and spontaneity.
3. Creates a focus on them - Fantastic keynote speakers focus the audience on themselves. They do not rely on their visuals to deliver their message. PowerPoint is not a crutch, cue or may not even be used. They use the lighting and the physical space to deliver additional impact to their words.
4. Creates empathy - While the "presentation" is the keynote speaker, a great

keynoter relates to the audience, understands their condition, and provides relevant help. A keynote speaker applies the information about your audience to their material adjusting it to your needs.

5. Delivers information in a conversation - A speaker should converse with an audience. Whether the speaker refers to notes or has the presentation completely memorized, a great keynoter talks with your participants. Ultimately, an impressive keynoter focuses on the audience and not reciting of the presentation.
6. Employs strategic physical movement - Every strong keynote speaker employs highly targeted eye contact, hand gestures, movement around the stage. For example, a keynote speaker moves when they tell stories and stands still when they deliver key points.
7. Emphasizes focal words - Emphasis, like signposts, helps to show the way, to clarify meaning. Remarkable keynoters "point" at the words and phrases for the audience to process and remember. There are four ways to create emphasis. First, by making the word louder or softer--louder being the most commonly used method. Second, a speaker creates emphasis by inflecting the word up or down on the vowel sounds. Third, slowing down the pronunciation of a word or phrase draws attention. The fourth is by using silence on either or both sides of the word.
8. Creates a journey - A superb keynoter constructs a tour for your audience. The journey includes highs and lows, micro and macro views, and a lesson. The presentation includes diversity of rhythm, emotion, and tempo.
9. Brings it to a close - A great keynote ends strong. Endings are just as important as the rest of the program. The close summarizes for the audience what they are taking away.
10. Meets the objectives - The ultimate test of a speaker's effectiveness is whether they met the objectives for the session. The test: Did the audience gain one or more of the following: learning, knowledge, enjoyment, changed behavior, new skills or self-awareness?

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### Memorable, Moving, Emotive Messages

A dynamic keynote speaker creates a Wow Factor. He or she uses techniques that make the message more memorable, moving and emotional including:

- Humor - Humor eases the tensions of life and provides perspective. The appropriate use of humor adds entertainment, creates bonds between participants and enables people to better remember the point of the presentation.
- Mental images - Mental imagery or visualization creates a picture in participants' minds and helps them focus on the key concepts. Strong word choices also produce strong mental images.
- Pauses - Keynote speakers understand the value of silence to accent ideas, concepts and elements of their speech.
- Catch phrases - A keynote speech may contain "catch phrases" that summarize a main point of the presentation.
- Alliterations - Alliterations are a phrase or sentence that uses the same

consonant sound at the beginning of each word. Sue sleds sideways on shiny snow is an alliteration.

- Mnemonic devices - A mnemonic device is a clever aid in remembering, like a formula or rhyme. My daughter was taught to remember the order of the planets by this phrase: My Very Energetic Mother Just Served Us Nine Pizzas.
- Acronyms - Acronyms are an invented combination of letters with each letter acting as a cue to an idea you need to remember. Some of you may already know what my company name SEAL Inc stands for. Curious??? Email me at stinnish@ameritech.net or [SEAL Inc is an acronym for...](#)
- Analogies - Although now longer found on SAT exams, analogies are a useful tool found in speeches. An analogy is a comparison in which different items are compared, usually with the idea of explaining something unknown by something known. Analogies tend to suggest that existing similarities imply even more similarities.
- Metaphors - Metaphors are comparisons that show how two things that are not alike in most ways are similar in one important way. Metaphors are a way to describe something. A metaphor that has been used in corporate America is the parable of the gazelle and the lion. A shortened version of the parable is this: Every morning in Africa, a gazelle wakes up. It knows it must run faster than the fastest lion or it will die. Every morning in Africa, a lion wakes up. It knows it must run faster than the slowest gazelle or it will starve to death. It doesn't matter whether you are a lion or a gazelle; when the sun comes up, you'd better be running. A speech might utilize this parable and say that you are either the lion or the gazelle. Unlike similes that use the words "as" or "like" to make a comparison, metaphors state that something is something else.
- Stories or parables - Storytelling creates an environment which allows visual, auditory, and kinesthetic learners to follow along, comprehend and absorb material. Through stories represent a small slice of life, a speaker captures universal ideas, themes and concepts through the use of them. For more on the power of stories, request my past issue on Storytelling and the Freebie from May 2003. Email me at stinnish@ameritech.net or [May 2003 TIME on Entertainment and Stories](#)

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## Keynotes as Movies

If stories are one device a speaker can use, what better place to find great stories than Hollywood and the movies. Patricia Fripp, CSP, CPAE, wrote a fascinating article on how keynotes are like movies. The complete article is at:

[http://frippandassociates.com/art.7star\\_faa.html](http://frippandassociates.com/art.7star_faa.html) or click here: [Fripp's article Keynotes and Movies](#)

She writes, "Creating a complete presentation is rather like making a movie. A well-made movie has a good story (your speech), producers, writers and stars (you), key scenes and highlights (your signature vignettes and points of wisdom) and is made lovingly frame-by-frame (paragraphs, sentences, phrases and words) until the movie is complete."

Fripp includes five elements from moviemaking that allow speakers to craft great

presentations:

1. Flavor scenes - Movies often open with a "flavor scene" grabbing attention and positioning the audience for what is to come. A great speech contains a flavor scene too.
2. Scene changes - The biggest enemy of a speaker, no matter how dynamic, is "sameness" or lack of variety. Talented presenters use variety to keep their audiences interested.
3. Captivating characters - Exciting characters, real and imaginary, exist in great presentation. (These tie into the use of stories discussed above.) Skillful speakers build characters that specifically address the values, needs and wants of the audience.
4. Vivid dialogue - Great stories contain dialogue that allow the audience to observe the story unfold as if it were happening real time.
5. Lesson learned - Without a link or connection to the presentation theme, the funniest or most exhilarating story is pointless. Great speakers connect the dots for the audience and insure that all elements of the presentation exist for a reason.

Fripp's website is a fascinating resource for professional speakers, people who hire speakers, and people who give presentations. She also offers a great newsletter. Find these great resources at <http://www.frippandassociates.com> or click here [Fripp's Website](#)

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### Keynoters as Actors

If presentations are like story or movie, many successful speakers use acting techniques to upgrade their delivery. Ed Brodow is a businessman, actor, and negotiation expert. He highlights seven acting techniques that strong keynoters use:

1. Improvise - Improvisation means to make it up as you go along; effective use of improvisation gives the keynoter the space to be creative and spontaneous. Moreover, it allows a speaker to respond to the mood and reactions of the audience.
2. Motivation - An actor has a drive (or objective) in each scene that motivates the character. Impressive speakers motivate the audience members to enjoy, acquire new knowledge or new skills, change their behavior, or create new self-awareness.
3. Theatrical touches - An onstage performance is really a heightened form of what we normally experience as reality. Reality without theatricality is boring! Even the most subtle film performance has a dash of theatricality thrown in. So too, a talented keynote speakers add theatrical touches. Those touches include props, costumes, staging techniques, or visuals.
4. High energy and focused - Earlier I wrote about the flavor scene. A speaker must grab the audience's attention immediately from the first sentences. A great keynoter starts strong with the appropriate level of energy from the beginning. A speaker's energy is one source of audience motivation and energy.
5. In the moment - Great actors are great reactors. They keep their senses open and alert, not anticipating what the other actor is going to do. Likewise, the

most fabulous keynote speakers are not on auto-pilot. They improvise (see above) and they conduct a two-way conversation with the audience. Great speakers bring awareness of everything that is going on as they speak and adjust their presentation accordingly.

6. Variation - Anything that goes on too long in the same way is boring. Actors break a scene down into beats and establish variation for each beat. Superb speakers create variation in emphasis, movement, volume, energy level or material. People have short attention spans; variation is an effective technique for keeping the audience engaged.
7. Commitment to choices - Actors strive to make interesting choices and commit to them fully. Wonderful keynote speakers are passionate about their message and they don't hold back when performing.

Successful integration of these techniques, while still being authentic, help command audiences' attention and ultimately make keynote speakers more successful.

The entire article can be found at: <http://www.fripp.com/article.brodow.html>.

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### Entertainment Infused Audiences

Today's audiences are increasingly more demanding. Conditioned by their experiences in school, through the media (videos, television), through computer games, they expect to be entertained and involved. They want to be wowed by both quality content and quality. They expect a speech or a presentation to be a fun learning experience, and they expect a learning experience to be an interactive one. Traditionally, keynote presentations aren't typically interactive. My prediction is that the demand for engaging, interactive keynote speakers will increase.

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### A Thread of Continuity

Another way that a keynote presenter can be utilized is a thread of community. In this technique, the speaker presents a series of vignettes that are interspersed throughout the sessions.

A real master of this technique is Bob Higa, [www.bobhiga.com](http://www.bobhiga.com). I have had the opportunity to work with Bob on several occasions. Bob is an amazing presenter who uses magic and illusions as his vehicle to deliver his message, reinforce his client's message and further the meeting goals and objectives. While Higa does present the traditional keynote, he will suggest this style to his clients who are "looking for something different." Bob adds his perspective in this section.

I encourage you to learn more about Bob by contacting him at 847-991- 7911 or through his website.

Introducing...Bob Higa....

In creating a thread of continuity, the speaker might present a meeting opener, several pieces during the session and a meeting closer.

The advantage of this technique is that it provides the audience with a moment of entertainment and yet delivers a message relevant to the client's meeting goals. If the piece reinforces a message of the previous speaker or foreshadows the topic of the next presenter, all the better. Many times the client's presenters are knowledgeable and expert in their field; however, they may not be the best speakers. Shifting the energy and momentum at strategic times heightens the audiences' ability to stay fresh.

The challenge is finding keynote speakers who can be effective in this roll. Many speakers find the technique difficult because it breaks up the flow of their presentation.

To create a thread of continuity for your next meeting, use this tips:

- Present your prospective speaker with your meeting agenda and ask how they might approach the meeting.
- Ask how long each of their pieces would be. Have them be specific about their time as related to each piece.
- Does the piece involve audience interaction (a plus)?
- Is there music involved with the piece?

With some research and forethought you can have an innovative keynote and an innovative meeting. - Bob Higa

[Bob Higa's website](#)

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### Freebies: Customization vs. Personalization

**Freebies:** Isn't every speech customized? Mark LeBlanc defines three levels of speaker customization. In his words:

**Canned** - A "canned" presentation is more of a performance, humorous or motivational in nature. These often get a bad rap from speakers, yet they do serve a purpose and can often command high fees, depending on the skill level of the speaker.

**Personalized** - A "personalized" presentation is what most speakers do. It includes limited personalizing, e.g., company logo on the handout, an interview or two, and a reference or two during the presentation.

**Customized** - A "customized" presentation is specially prepared for an organization. It requires an in-depth study of the industry, client, culture, people and/or annual reports, and new content has to be created. New handouts are designed with specific material

(or some strong combination thereof). This level of preparation calls for an additional fee for the customization and preparation for the presentation.

Alan Weiss, CMC, CSP, estimates that about 60 percent of his speeches area static (content areas), and about 30 percent is client specific, and 10 percent is ad lib, often based on something he has seen at the specific conference or in the days news.

You may be interested in some back issues of Tips for Innovative Meetings and Events. Here are six that relate to this month's topic:

- **Presentation Tips** (July 2001) [Presentation Tips \(July 2001\)](#)
- **Facilitation** (September 2001) [Facilitation \(September 2001\)](#)
- **Training Meetings** (September 2003) [Training Meetings \(September 2003\)](#)
- **Audio Visuals** (February 2004) [Audio Visuals \(February 2004\)](#)
- **Visual Aids** (April 2005) [Visual Aids \(April 2005\)](#)
- **Speakers** (March 2006) [Speakers \(March 2006\)](#)

**More Freebies: Different Levels of Customization** Rebecca L. Morgan, CSP, CMC has a 10-level scale depicting in great detail how speakers can customize their presentations. While written with speakers in mind, it's a great tool to pinpoint exactly what you may want a keynote presenter to do for your meeting or event. Send for it by emailing me at [stinnish@ameritech.net](mailto:stinnish@ameritech.net) or click here [10 Levels of Speaker Customization](#)

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### Future T.I.M.E.

I have a last minute offer for subscribers to Tips for Innovative Meetings and Events. If you are interested in a complimentary registration to the International Association of Corporate Event Producers (IACEP) Conference and Showcase on Thursday night (September 28) at the Chicago Marriott Hotel in Oak Brook (on 22nd Street across from the Oak Brook Mall), contact Dick Smith, Chairman IACEP at [dsmith@communivisions.com](mailto:dsmith@communivisions.com) or call him at 630-629-8500. This is your chance to view extraordinary talent. Please call him today to reserve your spot on the special V.I.P. guest list!

Doors open at 6:30 pm for the Showcase. There's also an Afterglow from 10:30 pm until midnight where guests can actually meet and mingle with the talents (the Commodores, IDES of March, others).

Again, any subscriber can attend as a complimentary guest of Sue Tinnish, T.I.M.E. and SEAL Inc. But don't delay, RSVP today. (Dick Smith at [dsmith@communivisions.com](mailto:dsmith@communivisions.com) or 630-629-8500)

On November 15, I will be at the [Society of Government Meeting Planners Michigan Chapter](#) in Kalamazoo, Michigan. I love to see familiar faces in the audience. Please

come and see me.

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## Virtual T.I.M.E. and T.I.M.E. Gone By

I am a regular contributor to Here's Chicago's blog. You can find my contributions posted on Tips from the Pros at [www.hereschicagoblog.com](http://www.hereschicagoblog.com) [Here'Chicago Blog](#).

Here's the link the current article:

- <http://www.hereschicagoblog.com/blog/TipsfromthePros> [July Issue of Here's Chicago Blog](#).

As for the written word, if you are interested in past issues, please e-mail us with the month and topic and we will send you a copy of that newsletter. Here's what is included in past issues ([Back Issue Request](#)):

2000

Teambuilding (May), Green Meetings (June), Values (July), Minimum/Minimal Meetings (August), Evaluations (October), Politics (November), and Toys (December)

2001

Sales, Award Presentations (January), Change and Communicating Change (February), Open Space Technology (March), Adult Learning Styles (April), Trade Shows (May), Emotional Intelligence (June), Presentation Tips (July), Ice Breakers (August), Facilitation (September), Humor (October), Customer Care (November), Slack (December)

2002

Teambuilding Options (January), Promotional Products (February), Multicultural Communication (March), Outdoor Learning (April), Budgets and ROK (May), Creativity (June), High Touch Technology (July), Economic and Business Cycles (August), Successful Environmental Factors/Conference Centers (September), Return on Investment (October), Incentive Meetings (November), Resource Recap (December)

2003

Everyday Meetings (January), Diversity (February), Problem Solving (March), Marketing Pre- and Post- Event (April), Entertainment (May), Balance in Meetings and child care (June), Mobile Events (July), Last Minute Ideas (August), Training Meetings (September), Unique Venues (October), Data, Information and Number Crunching Privacy (November), Deja View (December)

2004

Branding (January), Audio Visuals (February), Networking (March), Strategic Budgeting (April), Sensory Meetings (May), Board Meetings (June), Leadership (July), Barrier-free Meetings (August), Time Management & Meetings (September), The Travel Experience & Stress (October), Voting Techniques (November), Deja View II (December)

2005

New Year's Resolutions (January), Brainy Side of Food and Beverage (February), Sarbanes-Oxley and Meetings (March), Visual Aids (April), Experiential Teambuilding (May), Emotional Meetings (June), Press Conferences (July), Green Meetings (August), International Meetings (September), Value of Entertainment (October), Copyright Laws (November), Deja View III (December)

2006

New Year's Resolutions (January), Generational Differences (February), Speaker Suggestions (March)

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