Speaking Program Overview

A speaking program consists of identifying and submitting applications for speaking slots at industry or business conferences. Clients are interested in speaking at influential conferences because it provides the opportunity to showcase their product or service to potential customers and position themselves as a leader in their industry.

The speaking program consists of 5 steps:

1. Creating a speaking calendar
    a. When a new client joins Trainer, the on-boarding process typically includes the creation of a speaking calendar. This is an excel spreadsheet that lists events that have speaking opportunities the client can participate in. The spreadsheet must capture key details including the event name, the event sponsor, the dates of the event, the location, the deadline to submit for speakers, the event's attendees, the process to submit a speaker, the cost to submit a speaker, and the event contact's details.
    b. The most challenging part of creating the speaking calendar is determining which events are relevant for the client. You can determine this by finding out what past speakers have presented on. For example, if past speakers presented on IT monitoring in the cloud and that's what your client does, the event is likely a fit. Another way to determine if an event is appropriate is to look at who typically attends the event. Often, this information is available to companies interested in sponsoring an event. You may need to request this information from a sponsorship contact. The information will contain how many attendees usually attend the event, what the title of the typical attendee is, and what size company they are from. If this attendee profile is consistent with who your client typically sells to, then the event is likely a fit. For example, if your client typically sells to the CTO and the event is attended by people at the manager level, then it is likely not a fit.
2. Proposing the speaking opportunities to the client
    a. Once the speaking calendar is created, it is very important to be aware of the deadlines to submit speaking submissions. If one of these deadlines passes under our watch, we could cause our client to miss out on a very important opportunity to increase their company's sales and visibility. When a speaking submission deadline is approaching, it is the role of the person in charge of the speaking program to notify the client. Typically, it works well to do this in an email, in which you can provide the client with all the details you gathered for the speaking calendar, and then to follow up with the client on the weekly client call. Depending on the complexity of the speaking submission, you want to give your client plenty of notification when a deadline is approaching. Six weeks ahead of time is about average.
3. Creating the speaking abstract
    a. Once the client agrees that the event is a strategic opportunity for them to speak at, you can begin drafting the speaking abstract. This usually consists of the speaker's information (i.e. title, contact information, etc), the speaker's biography, the proposed

speaking topic, and an abstract summarizing the topic. Sometimes abstracts will have character or word limits, so it is important to keep these in mind.

   b. The content for the speaking abstract's topic can come from a variety of places depending on the client. In some cases, this information can be gathered from client docs, including pitches, messaging documents, blog posts, etc. In other cases, you may need to schedule a call with the speaker to discuss the topic they want to present. Be sure to include the "top three things attendees expect to learn" from the speaking session – list them in bullet point fashion.
   c. Once the abstract is created and it has gone through internal reviews at Trainer, it is shared with the client contact for review. In some cases this contact is also the proposed speaker. In other cases, the contact will also need to have the proposed speaker review the abstract.

4. Submitting the speaking abstract
   a. The process of submitting the abstract once it has been approved by the client is usually straightforward. Most events have websites where you can submit the various components of the abstract. In other cases, you may need to send an email to the speaking coordinator with the abstract attached.
5. Following up on the speaking opportunity
   a. Once the abstract is submitted, you should confirm that it has been received. You may receive an email confirming this or you may need to call a conference organizer. You also need to find out when the accepted speakers will be announced. When that date arrives, you need to follow up with the speaking coordinator and confirm whether or not your client has been selected to speak at the event. Either way, you need to notify your client as soon as possible with the result. If the client is accepted, you will want to make sure they have all the details on the event and a list of the materials they are expected to provide as a speaker. If they are not accepted, you will want to find out why from the conference organizer and then let your client know.