

*TOP 10 POINTS IN HIRING THE PERFECT KEYNOTE/GUEST SPEAKER,
CORPORATE TRAINER AND BUSINESS CONSULTANT*

- Ed Berliner, "The Undefeated Image" Series

Whether hiring an expert as corporate trainer, keynote speaker, guest speaker, or even as a consultant to work with a group of any size, start here.

Expect and demand more bang for your buck.

Before hitting the road and working with excellent companies and organizations, I used to be part of a workforce that would be in the audience for speakers and experts. I later became part of C-Level management that would hire keynote and breakout speakers for events ranging from 20 to 2,000 people. More than once I voiced my concern over those "experts" who spent little or no time in the process, showing up for speaking events at the last minute, making either room service or off-site restaurants their haunt, then blowing out of the room and the event at tsunami-like speed once their talk was done. **I often saw the highly paid "professionals" offer little in the way of dedication, instead checking their timepiece to ensure they didn't have to stay one minute longer after the payment check was issued.**

I was admonished and told many times, "that's just how the game is played" or "we have to put up with some things we don't want in order to get the best".

Nonsense.

The promise to myself was that when I hit the road and worked with clients of any and every size, I would do things better. Because right from the very first phone call or email, there is just one tenet to proceed by.

I work for you.

It doesn't make a difference the budget, the topic, the travel, the location or whether it's thousands of people or a 1 on 1 training. **It's my job to provide that bang for the buck, that value for every investment, becoming a valued partner with every client.**

Perhaps therein lies the key difference in my approach. **We are partners. You're not a client. We are working together to ensure the highest level of performance is reached before, during and after the event. What we produce will make a serious impact on your business and the lives of those who dedicate themselves to a craft.**

From my years on television and radio as a news and sports broadcaster, I was under the gun to deliver a spot-on performance every single time. That meant get the research done, write the stories, deliver each one as a professional, then follow-up on the stories and the performance. Reviewing every phase of the individual project, and if there was a slip somewhere, doing everything I could to ensure it wouldn't happen again.

What I do as a trainer, speaker, consultant and teacher is a craft. I'm being hired to bring every ounce of my expertise to every appearance. Anything less, I've failed to deliver that value.

Frankly, I never fail my partners.

Which is why when it comes to my process with every partner, it's detailed, thorough, and designed to deliver what I believe is a level of unparalleled service. **I work from a simple 10 point checklist**, a list I have no problem making public because, with all respect, I don't believe any other speaker, trainer or consultant can match what I provide and what we as partners will deliver.

1. [GETTING TO KNOW MY PARTNER:](#) We've had our initial conversation, exchanged handshakes, and it's time to get to work. With every partner, I schedule and block off at least one hour for the initial discussion, and quite often it goes well past that time in a conference call. While I often speak with the person in charge of the event, I welcome the opportunity to be on line with the entire team, answering questions and discussing how we make this performance more effective than any other. In a recent first call, there were 8 members of the partner's team gathered for a video conference call. Meeting everyone face to face gave us a level of intimacy and teamwork that proves to be unmatched. **This is my discovery. I need to gather as much information as I can in order to deliver a knockout show. Here is where I learn what you want to achieve with the overall meeting/conference and how I fit your needs. What strategies you have in mind, and how can my experience make those concepts come to life in a unique fashion.** For instance, the last thing you should hear from a trainer or speaker is how the program or performance needs to "make people happy". Certainly, you want everyone to be glad they attended, but you would rather they be completely engaged in the message. **My job is to help you deliver change within your organization, create a different way of thinking and move people forward.** Fear not, they will be entertained. They will be talking about this experience for a long time, and it will have a positive impact on your business and their lives.

2. NO BULLYING TACTICS: **You have a budget. My knowledge and experience is valuable. This is where respect becomes part of the partner process.** Far too often I've been told of negative experiences dealing with those who have blown their ego out of proportion, becoming more demanding than their station deserves. **I've never worked from a rate card, and never will. I will work diligently with each partner to make their budget work, and we will ensure both sides are 100% satisfied with every aspect of the financial agreement.** I've heard far too many stories of performers demanding first class airline seating, top notch transportation services, high end restaurant meals, special accommodations, everything short of demanding scheduled foot rubs. **We're working together for a common goal, and that means teamwork at every stop along the way.** I'm a business class flyer, but have happily flown coach to make a budget work. I'll use my personal traveling perks when I can. Uber or Lyft are great cab services, and there's always a shuttle to and from the better hotels to save a buck. When possible, I prefer to stay on-site if it's a hotel or resort, which gives me an edge in being a greater part of the event. In those cases, I dine as part of the partner's conference package, which always saves them on budget. If off-site dining, I have never once soaked a partner for a higher end experience just because I can. And if on the road, there are always wonderful hotels within reach. If a partner uses a travel agency, then I work with them to find the best package. **In every circumstance, we work together to make the budget fit. Plenty of over-demanding people out there with an ego that borders on bullying will seek to make a killing and bust your budget. Not here. If you experience that with anyone, my suggestion is to drop them like a hot stone.**

3. THE PRESENTATION FITS YOU, NOT THE OTHER WAY AROUND: This one is simple. You and your staff have an idea what you want. The event, the location, the overall theme of the event is yours. **My task is to fit my knowledge, experience and teaching method into your needs.** I have never performed the same show twice, as every program fits the room, the time of day, the time of season, the particular editorial needs, and most important, what you want to accomplish. **Every show is heavily based on current events that are relevant to your needs.** I cannot count how many people I've spoken with who tell stories about speakers and trainers using aged material that bear no relevance to a current audience. These teachers simply failed to listen to what their clients wanted, falling back on what was easy. **Never allow someone to sell you an idea of a "standard program". Every presentation is unique, every audience demands a targeted approach, every outcome is customized to your needs.**

4. CONSTANT COMMUNICATION: I will admit to not being available 24/7, as there are a few hours every day in there for sleep and walking my furry kids. **I am, however, on call at all times and prepared to be there when you need me. I'm also an appointment guru. We make a date and time to speak, I am always right on time. Professionalism demands it.** There are no secretaries or agents to get in the way. Emails and calls are usually answered within the hour. I have a check-in system for the days prior to the event. On the road, I'm in touch with regard to travel delays, arrival at specific points, and the scheduling of additional meetings. Again, the line is "we're partners". **We're on the same team, and for that to work, you need to be assured that I'm there when you need to talk. For those that take days to respond, they're not the type of professional I would suggest dedicating your event to.**

5. DEDICATING TO THE EVENT AND THE MISSION: Speaking of dedication, I remember my first speaking event for a national service organization, held at a resort in Arizona. The organizers were somewhat mystified when I asked about other events around the main performance such as cocktail receptions, showcase events, informational reviews, even the simple welcome in a large hall setting. As I explained to them, **I dedicate myself to the event and am available for meet and greets, to emcee certain public and private moments, wherever I could be helpful. These side events allow me to mingle and meet those who will be in the audience. I believe the personal touch works, as we break the wall between performer and audience.** I also use these times to better understand the business, the culture, the pain and pleasure points people have about their professional experiences, and simply to bring the experience to the level of friends and colleagues. I weave in stories from my discussions with members of the audience into the overall presentation. When it's proper, I have even brought people on stage and talked about our discussion. It's a personal touch. **This is a closer bond to the audience and makes them feel as if they are more than butts in the seats. We're a team, and we are all invested in creating a positive personal and professional culture.**

6. INVESTING IN YOUR CULTURE: Another perfect segue to investment in the culture of your company, your team, your organization. Learning as much as I can about the company history, where the team has been in the last few months and years, and the specific issues we need to work on in order to solidify or change the culture. As I noted earlier, this is the end result of what you want to accomplish with my teaching and training. Far too often, I've watched as speakers and trainers fail to spend the necessary time and learn about the person they call a "client", or just an event. I can't stress enough, and more often, that we are partners. Before the event, I will have a thorough knowledge of your culture, how it works, and how you want it to work. Every organization has a special culture. Those who don't wish to understand it cannot possibly serve your training, consulting and speaking needs.

7. THE MARKETING PARTNERSHIP: As partners, **it is my responsibility to bring my marketing and PR experience to every event when necessary. For those conferences, training sessions and certain appearances where marketing the message becomes part of the package, I put my extensive social media network and media marketing experience to work with your staff.** Plenty of social media pre-event marketing and links. Conjunction posts with your social media team. I always make myself available for pre-event interviews, used on social media and standard forms of media such as newsletters and internal communications. **One of the more unique media services I offer is a green screen studio where, as part of the package, I have created a series of 1-2 minute videos that were used on partners websites and on their social media pages, including You Tube and Vimeo.** I'm happy to make recommendations on how to use the local, national, and internet media to your advantage in creating more buzz about the event. **Podcasts with key members of your management team are also the perfect way to promote the corporate message, considering I'm your host at the event and host of the podcast. At the event, where applicable, there's Facebook Live and plenty of tweets.** After the event, notes and comments about the people, the mission, and how we're moving your efforts forward. **Here in the media-centric 21st Century, it is imperative than the person you utilize is more than just someone who shows up, speaks, and departs.** My media marketing experience always becomes part of our partnership.

8. ON-SITE DUE DILIGENCE: Where possible, **I prefer to do a site survey of the location where the event will happen. If not possible nor feasible, I work with your team and the local A/V team to ensure all necessary equipment is prepared.**

Depending on the event needs, I bring with me a produced program that will emanate from a Mac laptop, requiring specific hookups for video and audio. For remote and larger events, **I always prefer to arrive a day early, get the lay of the land, test my equipment with what is on site, and work portions of the program for timing.** I always prefer to be at the event at the very least two hours before the program begins, but I remain flexible to take whatever time is necessary. A professional speaker or trainer doesn't show up for the first time to an event a half hour before it begins. **As someone who has been involved at the highest level of live events over my career, I leave nothing to chance. This is your Super Bowl, your Stanley Cup Playoffs, your Election Night. This is your event, and I'm an integral part of making it work as smoothly as possible.**

9. PROVIDE UNIQUE TAKE AWAY MATERIAL: For so many speakers and trainers, this is a book or brochure handout at the end of the event. In the 21st Century, this doesn't cut it. I recall being at an event where the speaker, a very expensive one, had 100 copies of her book to hand out when finished. The audience was not very engaged, as she was using very dated stories and examples to make her point. At the end of her presentation, she was not personalizing her books, and gave out four. **While there are very successful authors providing books at the end of their performance, I believe in the power of much more memorable media. My takeaway materials are focused on those that can be downloaded and available to every attendee with the ease of a smartphone.** As part of the package, I can provide scripted and edited portions of the actual performance in a number of different formats. Imagine your audience revisiting the show while in their car, from their smartphone, in multiple formats. **This groundbreaking concept of takeaway is part of our initial discussion to ensure it works seamlessly for your audience.**

10. POST PERFORMANCE REVIEW: There are two distinct areas of post-performance. **The first is meeting with you and your team within one week after the event. We'll discuss everything, conducting a thorough post-mortem that will identify every facet of the show that worked to perfection, and those areas where we both will consider improvement for future events.** My aim in being your partner is to deliver a complete package that will be the basis of future training, consultation and event appearances. **We will also discuss and approve those promotional and marketing materials for your use.** A special item I offer my partners is personal conversation with those members of your team that could benefit from follow-up consultation. **Whether C-Level, middle management, or that special member of your team that can use the extra push, I'm available to solve problems and listen to their ideas. Trainers and consultants need to be invested in your success, and creating a brief personalized service for those members of the audience chosen by you makes a world of difference.**

Refuse to settle for less. Demand that bang for our buck.

Let's get to work.

Rock On, True Believers.