

Identifying and Recruiting Speakers for Your Event

Speakers are a central ingredient in the success of any event, as they are the core of the program and, possibly the primary attendee draw. Provide adequate preparation and lead-time to match the right people to the event.

Speaker Identification: Sponsoring IEEE units have a key decision in identifying speakers: whether they intend to find volunteers or use paid speakers. This fundamental choice will require some thoughtful consideration and planning.

Below are points for each option.

Volunteer speaker - Based on the audience, volunteers may be preferred due to the budget impact, but this will increase the need for lead-time for recruiting and effective planning.

Be sure to budget for speaker costs, as even volunteers expect travel reimbursement or a token honorarium if the time commitment is significant.

Some suggested approaches to folks who may seek opportunities to speak:

IEEE Speakers - IEEE has a wealth of experts and knowledgeable speakers to draw from.

- IEEE Distinguished Lecturer Program - IEEE Distinguished Lecturers (SLs) are engineering professionals who help lead their fields in new technical developments that shape the global community.

DLs are selected for their expertise specialize in the field of interest of their Society/Council and known presentation skills. They have agreed to travel to various technical and regional groups, such as Society and Technical Council Chapters, to lecture at events. There are 30+ Society/Council participating in the program.

http://www.ieee.org/about/volunteers/tab/distinguished_lecturer_program.html

- IEEE Fellows - IEEE Fellow is a distinction reserved for select IEEE members whose extraordinary accomplishments in any of the IEEE fields of interest are deemed fitting of this prestigious grade. Many IEEE Fellows also serve as expert speakers and panelists.

The IEEE Fellows Directory allows for searching by name, location, field of interest and year.

https://www.ieee.org/membership_services/membership/fellows/fellowsDirectory.html#

- Society/Technical Council Respected Speakers Bureau – Many Societies also have speaker bureaus to support requests for speakers. Investigate the S/TC webpage within the field of interest appropriate for your event

External Speakers – Below are some suggested sources to identify speakers or experts for your event outside of IEEE.

- Authors, Technology/Business journalists or ‘experts’ in the geographic area where the event will be held
- Financial or Industry analysts who study a specific industry or technology segment
- Senior technology executives at organizations in the geographic area. (CIO, CTO, CMO, Logistics, or disciplines where the application of technology is critical).
- Do not overlook governmental bodies! Policy makers or regulators
- University researchers or Laboratory leaders who are able to discuss emerging technologies, especially if they can expand on how the technologies will be applied and impacts on current approaches, models or industries.

Note: If you identify a potential speaker, check the IEEE Rosters Search to determine if the candidate is an IEEE member. This may make an easy entrée to request speaker participation, and possibly even use of facilities at reduced or no cost.

IEEE Roster - <http://rosters.ieee.org/home.html#> - *IEEE Account required*

Speaker outreach – Before making contact with a potential speaker, it is very helpful to prepare a complete, but concise overview of the event to help them understand the opportunity; assess the fit for them and any personal or professional benefits.

Include the following: theme/topic, location, sponsoring IEEE unit, and any other primary speakers, information on the target audience and the expected take-away messages you wish to leave with them.

Speaker honorariums – An honorarium is a payment to an individual of special achievement or renown, in return for that individual’s willingness to participate in an IEEE event of short duration such as a speaker, with the understanding that the payment does not constitute compensation commensurate with the actual services provided. The honorarium is intended as a ‘thank you’ for their time and expertise and is not a quid-pro-quo.

Typically, honorariums occur one time and generally do not exceed \$2,000, and are usually less.

Tax Payments - If your conference makes payments to individuals other than for expense reimbursements, such as honoraria, then you must obtain a W-8 or W-9 form before paying for their services. Obtaining this information prior to payment is the best way to ensure success.

The W-8 form is required for non-US individuals; the W-9 form is required for individuals who have either a US social security number or a US employer identification number

Charitable Donation – In lieu of honoraria or speaker fees, some individuals may prefer to have a donation made in their name. The IEEE Foundation has a simplified process that may make it easier for you to meet this request.

<http://www.ieeefoundation.org/honoraria-giving>

Paid speaker – Paid speakers may provide greater audience pulling power along with certainty that they will appear on the date and time agreed to, as most work with booking agencies that provide logistics and planning support to manage the travel and other details.

- Role of speakers – Before seeking a speaker, it is essential that organizers determine which of two primary roles that the speaker will fill at an event:
 - a. Expertise – broad or deep experience or knowledge in a particular field that builds credibility to the program
 - b. Name Recognition/Stopping Power – general awareness or association with a topic through media, title or other activities. May possess expertise and knowledge, but the choice may be determined by the ability of the speaker to attract attention and attendees
- Timing – recommended that 4-6 months is the ideal planning cycle to secure a speaker. Higher profile individuals may require more time.
- Topics – Speaker bureaus have a broad range of speakers in the Innovation and Future Trends segment, which is growing quickly. Organizers should define the audience and several themes, rather than a very specific technical area when seeking a speaker. Many can tailor their remarks to the audience and event.
- Inclusions – it is important to specify what services are desired or required. E.g., Talk (length), Q/A session, panel discussion, Meet & Greet, Book signing, etc.
- Logistics – most speaker bureaus manage all travel and logistics, including those costs in the appearance fees
- Fees – typically range from USD\$5,000 up to USD\$35,000. Factors that influence cost are location, other appearances in the area and time of year. Do not hesitate to explore options with whatever budget you have available.
- Tax reporting – if you use a speaker bureau, verify if they are handling the tax reporting requirement on behalf of IEEE. Otherwise, the organizing committee is responsible.

Speaker Bureaus

Below are credible speaker bureaus that IEEE is aware of who operate globally and have a depth of expertise and roster of speakers. There may be other options for your local needs.

Leading Authorities

Jeff Robbin
Jeff@lauthorities.com
+1 202.721.7673
www.leadingauthorities.com

National Geographic Speakers Bureau

Andrew Pudvah
apudvah@ngs.org
+1 202.857.7264
<http://events.nationalgeographic.com/speakers-bureau/>

Other speaker considerations

Speaker handling – If your selected speaker is a C-Level or celebrity, they may require higher levels of handling and management than others may.

Plan to conduct a minimum of one planning one phone call with the speaker or their handler before the event to get specifics of the presentation.

Topics to confirm include:

- What type of microphone they prefer?
- Do they prefer a podium? High stool? Comfortable chair?
- Will they present from their computer? On the other hand, will you be required to provide one? What type? (Mac or PC)
- Are they planning to show a video?
- Will they want time to rehearse before their presentation?
- How do they wish to handle questions?
- Other items

Provide a Speaker Ready room onsite, a place for the speakers to relax before heading to the stage.

IEEE photo release - You must obtain written release from speakers if you plan to use photos or video of the. If this was not done earlier, have the speaker approve on-site.

[Download the IEEE Photo Release](#)

Speaker gifts - It is customary to provide unpaid speakers with a small gift as an acknowledgement of their contribution. Be sure to include funds in the event budget for this purpose.