COMPASS ROSE WORKS

Speaking Engagement Preparation Guide

A practical workbook for preparing author talks, presentations, workshops, and speaking engagements—from the first invitation through the final thank-you.

1. CLARIFY THE ENGAGEMENT

- ■ Confirm the date, start time, time zone, location, and expected program length.
- ■ Identify the host, organizer, and day-of-event contact.
- ■ Understand the audience: size, age range, interests, and why they are attending.
- ■ Confirm the requested topic and the host's goals for the program.
- ■ Determine whether Q&A; is included and how much time is available.
- ■ Confirm whether the engagement is in person, virtual, or hybrid.
- ■ Clarify compensation, honorarium, travel reimbursement, or other agreed terms when applicable.
- ■ Ask whether books may be sold and who will manage sales.

ENGAGEMENT SNAPSHOT

Host / organization	_____
Date / time / location	_____
Audience	_____
Topic / program length	_____
Host contact	_____

What does this audience most need from me?

2. BUILD THE MESSAGE

A strong presentation has one clear purpose and a small number of memorable ideas. Decide what you want the audience to leave knowing, feeling, or ready to do.

CORE PURPOSE

In one sentence, what is this presentation really about?

THREE KEY TAKEAWAYS

1.

2.

3.

STORIES & EXAMPLES

List the stories, book excerpts, examples, or experiences that make the message human and memorable.

3. ORGANIZE THE PRESENTATION

Give the audience a clear path through the material. A simple structure is often stronger than trying to include everything you know.

- Opening: earn attention and establish why the topic matters.
- Orientation: tell the audience where the presentation is going.
- Main content: organize ideas into logical sections.
- Stories/examples: use them to illuminate the point, not replace it.
- Transitions: make it clear when you are moving to a new idea.
- Conclusion: reinforce the central message and key takeaways.
- Call to action: tell the audience what to do next when appropriate.
- Q&A;: reserve the agreed amount of time and prepare for likely questions.

PRESENTATION MAP

Section	Main Point / Content	Approx. Time
Opening		
Section 1		
Section 2		
Section 3		
Conclusion		
Q&A		

Timing reminder

Practice with a clock. Plan to finish the prepared portion slightly early rather than forcing the host to stop you.

4. MATERIALS, TECHNOLOGY & LOGISTICS

Good preparation makes the presentation look effortless—even when a projector, microphone, internet connection, or room setup does not cooperate.

- Confirm microphone, projector/display, screen, speakers, clicker, and internet needs.
- Confirm the presentation file format and whether the host needs a copy in advance.
- Carry a backup copy of slides or presentation files.
- Bring needed adapters, cables, charger, extension cord, or power bank.
- Prepare handouts or downloadable resources when part of the program.
- Confirm room layout, podium/table availability, and arrival/setup time.
- Know parking, building entrance, check-in, and accessibility details.
- For virtual events, test camera, microphone, lighting, screen sharing, and connection before the event.

SPEAKER BAG CHECKLIST

- Laptop / tablet and charger
- Presentation backup
- Adapters / cables / clicker
- Printed notes or outline
- Books and display materials
- Business cards / bookmarks / handouts
- Pens / marker
- Water
- Event contact information

Special requirements / notes:

5. DELIVERY & AUDIENCE CONNECTION

The goal is not to perform a script perfectly. The goal is to communicate clearly and connect with the people in the room.

- Arrive or connect early enough to settle in before the audience arrives.
- Introduce yourself to the host and key staff.
- Speak to the audience rather than to your slides.
- Use notes as prompts instead of reading full paragraphs.
- Vary pace and pause after important ideas.
- Watch audience reactions and adjust when necessary.
- Respect the agreed time.
- Handle questions respectfully, including questions you cannot answer.
- Mention your book, website, or resources naturally when relevant rather than turning the talk into a sales pitch.
- Thank the audience and host before closing.

LIKELY AUDIENCE QUESTIONS

My final closing thought:

6. AFTER THE ENGAGEMENT

Professional follow-through is part of the engagement, not an optional extra.

- Thank the host or organizer within 24 to 72 hours.
- Complete any promised follow-up to the host or attendees.
- Record attendance observations, questions, sales, expenses, and useful contacts.
- Save photographs, testimonials, or feedback when permission allows.
- Record what worked well and what should change next time.
- Update the contact record with future opportunities or suggested follow-up.
- Reconcile books and payments if sales occurred.
- Store the final presentation and supporting materials where they can be reused or adapted.

POST-EVENT REVIEW

What connected best with the audience?

Where did I run short or long on time?

What will I change before giving this presentation again?

What relationship or opportunity should I follow up on?

A professional presentation begins before you speak and continues after the audience goes home.

Compass Rose Works Author Resource Series

For educational use. Confirm venue, technology, payment, recording, sales, and event requirements directly with the host organization.