

Foreword

By Randy Gage,
Author of *Why You're DUMB, SICK, & BROKE . . .*
and How to Get SMART, HEALTHY & RICH

It was certainly ironic.

Several years ago, I was interviewing Paul Lemberg via a live Internet hook-up during the Central European Direct Marketing Congress. I was in Portoroz, Slovenia, and he was in San Diego. As Paul was commenting how Central Europe was developing *their* technological expertise, the employee from San Diego's local Kinko's was trying to illuminate him better... by shining a flashlight under his chin.

The truth is, the webcast provided by Telekom Slovenia was perfect, and the only problems we had were on the U.S. side. We had over 5,000 people logged on to hear my opening keynote speech.

I was honored that so many people got up in the middle of the night to hear me speak. One of those people was Jim Barber, who sent me a congratulatory e-mail, and speculated that he might have witnessed the end of professional speaking as we know it. He sees webcasts and similar events as all but eliminating live seminars and conventions. I don't quite agree with that, but I do believe that the playing field is definitely going to change in that direction.

Of course I have never been too concerned with the medium I sell my information in. I am always happy when people buy it in any form, whether books, seminars, CDs, DVDs, speeches, or downloadable reports from my website. And so Jim and I have long agreed on one thing — professional speaking isn't about “speaking”, it's about “professional.” It's a *business*. And to succeed in this business, you need to treat it like a business.

Of course, as a business owner, you must consider your business model. Here's what you've got to understand if you want to be successful as a speaker...

You can't survive on doing speeches at \$4,500, \$5,500, or even \$7,500. (Or God forbid, on less than this!) That model no longer works. The economy won't permit it.

You will never last as a professional speaker if you build your business on the concept of getting individual speeches.

Speakers who have done this for years are now going broke. It's a busted model that no longer works. The threats of terrorism, reduced travel and training budgets, and economic meltdowns in a variety of industries have eviscerated that market. It's gone, and it ain't coming back anytime soon.

If you build your business on getting individual speeches, you will starve. The savvy speakers know how to position themselves as the definitive expert in their area of expertise, and create situations where prospects come to them. If you want to be successful today, you have to build your business model around the concept of a professional practice.

But your business model is only one of the essential considerations in building a successful career as a professional speaker. Think about this...

There is no exit strategy for speakers. Once you can't travel and speak anymore, what will you do? Who would buy your business? What is it worth without you?

What is your income mix right now? What percent of your business comes from non-speaking income? How much money did you make while you were sleeping last night? How many profitable websites do you have?

Getting back to my first question, if you can't travel and speak any more... what are you going to do to pay your bills???!!!

Tough questions. And the only good answers come from recognizing that it's a business. But that's not enough. Yes, it's a business, but the truth is, you are not in the *speaking* business...

You are in the information — or entertainment — business.

That's it. Remember that one simple fact, conduct yourself as a businessperson making bottom-line, business decisions, and you can look forward to an exciting and prosperous career as a professional speaker.

That's why I am excited about this new resource from Jim Barber. It's packed with the kind of stuff you need to run a professional practice as a professional speaker or consultant. Make the most of it!

– RG
