

# Turn Your Dynamic Speaking Presentations into a Best-selling Book

*By Peggy Henrikson*

You've become a dynamic speaker with expertise to share. Now you want to write a book that will add to your credentials, enhance your status, increase your income, and promote your presentations. The problem is, you love the thrill of revving up a live audience but the thought of writing a book scares the bejeebers out of you.

Relax. Think of the kudos and gratitude you've already received from your professional work. You're now expanding your reach through the written word. Plus you've already gained much of what it takes to write a book, and you can easily attain what you need to put your expertise on paper.

## **Consider Your Skills**

First, look at the skills you've developed that will transfer to writing a book. For your speaking engagements, you've—

- researched your topic,
- planned your presentation,
- related your experiences,
- explained your points,
- told your stories,
- entertained, motivated, inspired, instructed, and/or educated your audience.

You'll find all these endeavors helpful, if not essential, in writing—so you're more qualified to become an author than most people.

## **Expand Your Skills**

Take advantage of the skills you've accrued to create your book. Here are some ideas:

- People will buy your book because they like your presentations, so align your writing with your presentation style. Are you humorous and entertaining? Educational and factual? Inspirational and motivational? Perhaps you combine these approaches—but what's your overall theme and tone? What stands out? You'll feel most comfortable writing in a style that comes naturally. Aim your book at your presentation's market niche. Don't try to write for everybody. Imagine you're addressing your audience as you write. This will help motivate you motivate them!
- Keep your main purpose for writing this book constantly in mind. Write it down. Yes, you want the kudos and benefits, but you mostly want to help others. State what and whom that involves. For example, you may be a health guru who helps men over 50 extend their lives by making healthier choices.
- Create an outline, as you did when you developed your speaking presentation. You already have knowledge of your topic. Expand on it. Enrich

and embellish it. For a book, you aren't constrained to the time it takes for fanny fatigue to set in—so what else do you want your reading audience to know about your topic? What do you want them to do, be, have, believe, or know as a result of reading your book? List the main ideas or topics you want to cover, then fill in your subtopics in a logical progression.

- Enlarge your research to back up your points. No doubt you've accomplished an impressive amount of research on your topic, so you're no stranger to this skill. In a book, you can include myriad facts and figures that would be lost on listeners, but readers could refer to them any time.
- Weave in examples from your personal and/or professional experience (or that of others) to illustrate your points. You've done this for your presentations, so you know how it enhances your message. To get raw material for more stories, talk to others in your professional network. Chances are they'll appreciate the exposure of being quoted in your book. Don't forget to give credit when credit is warranted, and anonymity if your sources don't want to be identified (such as clients).

### **Supplement Your Skills**

Now you're down to addressing a few skills you haven't needed for speaking. But don't worry. It's all learnable or accessible. You might call in the cavalry and ask a professional book coach, editor, illustrator, photographer, and/or book designer to provide their expertise.

Consider the following suggestions as you plan your book:

- Study the structure of a book. Include the necessary parts and the optional sections you wish to add.
  - ✓ Necessary front matter: title page, copyright page
  - ✓ Optional front matter: Acknowledgments, Dedication, Foreword (which a colleague would write), and Introduction (which you write)
  - ✓ Necessary back matter: About the Author (If not on its own page, it goes on the back cover or cover flap.)
  - ✓ Optional back matter: End Notes, Resources, Appendix
  - ✓ Back cover: promotional summary of the book's contents and benefits
- Footnote your sources. You'll need the title of a source, author/s, publisher, date, possibly volume or issue, and page number/s. Keep track of where you find information as you research so you won't be scrambling for it at the last minute.
- Paint word pictures when you write. Remember, on the printed page you can't take advantage of voice inflection, emphasis, facial expressions and body language. Compensate by providing vivid descriptions and choosing words with zing to make your stories come alive.
- Consider adding actual illustrations or photographs to your book. Take advantage of the medium to enhance your information in ways you can't easily do in verbal presentations.
- Polish your prose. At this point, speaking and writing begin to part ways, and your task becomes trickier. For one thing, you don't have to spell your words

correctly to become a great speaker, but it's a different story if you want to become a writer. You can use your spell-checker, but as many people have discovered to their embarrassment, spell-checkers aren't always accurate. If in doubt, use Merriam-Webster Online or your own dictionary as a handy resource. Read up on (but don't get hung up on) paragraph and sentence structure, parallel construction, common grammar mistakes, and word gremlins that can fool you into thinking they mean one thing when they mean another.

Armed with this knowledge, do the best you can composing your chapters. When you've finished, have a professional editor detect and correct errors, suggest enhancements and clarifications, and add sparkle to the wording. Then you're ready to bring in the rest of the calvary to produce a book that extends your message well beyond audiences that hear you speak.

*Peggy Henrikson edits and writes nonfiction books, articles, and marketing materials with Barbara McNichol Editorial.*

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