

How to Create an Effective WeSpeak Profile

Your profile is the gateway to attracting new speaking opportunities, it is important to remember who your targeted audience is. What kind of event organisers do you want to view your page? What do you want them to take away about you, and your expertise?

Include your relevant experience in an engaging way. Openly express what you are passionate about and showcase your skills by uploading videos and images from your presentations. Use your profile to give the organiser a clear indication that you are the right speaker for their event.

Here are a few tips on how to make your profile powerful:

COVER IMAGE

Many speakers make the mistake where speakers do not really project the image of a speaker.

You can claim that you're a speaker, you can claim that you are a high profile presenter, but you want to showcase that to event planners; you want to make sure that the very first impression they get is,

"Oh my God, this person commands the stage. This person is really, powerful in their message, on what they share on stage, and they are a speaker."

So, you are not only declaring certain information, but you are also not only sharing that as a declaration on your end. It is something, it is a conclusion they come to.

And a great way of doing that is having an immensely powerful cover image where you are on stage and, hopefully, there is a large audience in front of you. And that really showcases you and puts you in that position.

Now many of you are in the consulting business, many of you have books, many of you run workshops and trainings, that is a slightly different image.

Being an expert on a topic is obviously important because what you want to say to the audience needs to be unbelievably valuable.

But you want to distinguish yourself from other consultants who are doing consulting work from behind their computers and doing analytical work.

You are a speaker who commands the stage, and that is where there needs to be some overlap between having subject matter expertise and being a person who's great at public speaking, and you want to project that.

The majority of event organizers will not click on a profile that is without a photo, so always make sure to add a headshot.

Choose a photo that:

- **Has been taken within the past two years:** we all want to be our best self, but a picture that depicts you accurately will ensure your credibility in the long run.
- **Is high quality with a simple background:** Your profile photo does not necessarily have to be from a professional photo shoot, but uploading a clean, sharp image will make a good impression. Do not let the background be distracting, keep it clear and the **focus on your face**. Make sure your headshot is in focus, with good lighting.
- **Shows your face:** your face should take up at least **50% of the photo**. Although the fact that you hiked up to the top of Kilimanjaro is inspirational: it does not really help the event organiser see what you look like.

HEADLINE

What makes you special: creating a great headline.

Your headline is essential for leading the event organiser into the rest of your profile. Keep in mind that:

- **Your headline is what gets event organisers to click on your profile:** the short description will appear in all search listings with your photo, so make sure that it is compelling.
- **Only list your most relevant job title and organisation.** Do not list any irrelevant past companies that have nothing to do with the topics you speak about or train in, just highlight your subject matter expertise.
- **Talk directly to your audience and highlight your specialities.** Create a headline that is unique and original, and that will make the event organiser think. To make your profile more searchable, **always include important keywords**, but avoid diving too deep into industry specific jargon.

BIO

The bio is a tricky part of the profile. You already want to tell a story and pass a message in your bio, which is not really a resume, not your CV, for those who prefer that term.

The resume would be pretty much like this, a short pitch of who you are, but you already want to position yourself about what you deliver for event planners.

Think a little bit with the event planner's head — Okay, the person comes here and says, *"Who is this person? Is this person safe to invite to my event? Are they going to provide enough value? Are they going to be a good speaker to engage my audience?"*

And they say, *"What is the value that I'm going to get out of that talk, that I might pay R20,000, or R30,000, or even more for that talk?"*

The bio needs to establish credentials and they say, *"This person has a certain number of years of experience, but how is that going to resonate with the need that I have?"*

"Sometimes, people try to oversell by using big words, when something simple will often work better."

We often see that big words backfire, and here are one or 2 ideas there:

If you self-describe, you want to put your best self forward, you want to describe yourself in the best possible light.

And it is difficult because you want to really show that you're serious, you're an expert, you know your stuff, but if you do, if you overkill that, it really can backfire.

To say that you are an award-winning speaker, that is great, that is a description of the situation; but saying, *"I'm an outstanding speaker"*? Well, let others decide whether you are outstanding or not.

If I say, *"I've won a regional speaking contest at Toastmasters,"* that is a fairly good way of showcasing that I am probably a good speaker.

Or *"I've given 5 TED Talks,"* well that would show that you are a good speaker, or most probably you are a good speaker.

So be careful with those adjectives and the way you self-describe.

It could be woven into the bio so to say someone who's experienced and seen a lot, having travelled to 20 countries and having the craziest of experiences, sometimes with very difficult moments, has developed a resilience that she can share with you, so you and your team or the audience will come away with 3 ways to improve their lives the next day.

The bio, in some sense, is also a pitch.

The bio is also where you establish some credibility saying, *"These are the specific things I've experienced, I've lived, or I've done in my professional background, and here is how it connects to the topic I talk about, which can help you in the following way."*

This is a tricky sales message where you need to establish credibility by providing specific information about your background and your experience.

And then connect it to the talk that you will give.

And then sell that talk to the organiser so they will be persuaded in 2 sentences to say, *"Okay, this is what I need."*

And the rest of the profile is where you want to showcase self-declared credentials, meaning, *"This is what I've done, this is how many companies or how many organizations I've spoken to, this is how many presentations I've given,"* meaning, I am a good speaker.

How to write an effective bio:

- **Be clear:** Think about what you want the organiser to remember about you after they've read it. Have a narrative and stick to it. Are you an activist, an academic, an entrepreneur, or an artist? Keep it simple and be clear about your positioning.
- **Be personable and speak in first person:** Do not be afraid to show off your personality. Are you funny? Are you very direct? Let your summary reflect this. Try to imagine you are having a conversation with someone and write accordingly. Keep it engaging and to the point. Speaking in third person can make you seem **out of touch and impersonal**.
- **Pay attention to the layout:** make sure to break the text into paragraphs, bullet points and easy-to-read sections. Event organisers will most likely just scan the text. Make the relevant information crystal clear.
- **Be specific:** there is a big difference between giving a presentation to a "large audience" or saying that you spoke to "750 senior-level delegates at their executive retreat". Include figures, numbers, the level of seniority of your audience and any other information that makes your expertise more concrete.
- **Keep it current and accurate:** Don't copy and paste sections of your old resume or CV, fill this section in with what you have been doing lately, and what you'd like to be doing. Always stick to what you can deliver. False statements and representations can lead to disappointment from the organiser and no further bookings.

TOPICS

These provide practical, actionable advice or actionable steps that your organisation can double their revenue or triple employee retention.

It must be very result-focused, and it must be very concrete. And that's another very common mistake that we have seen in a lot of profiles, that it tends to be too broad, especially when you talk about leadership, or talk about corporate culture, or resilience, or thriving in difficult situations.

These are great keywords but try to be more specific in what you deliver.

Especially topics like leadership. It is so broad; it has got so many aspects to it that you need to pick one element or one segment of the part you're going to talk about in a business context.

So, presentations, where you can see the secret to get your best talent to never leave you. When we look at presentation titles, we often see two types of presentation descriptions and titles.

One that tries to sell the problem, and the other one really looks at solutions.

Yes there's a very strong case for selling the idea that talent leaving a company, that's a big problem, but it's not necessarily concrete enough, specific enough for a company to say,

"Okay, I understand you have highlighted a lot of issues we're facing, but how are you going to provide me those solutions in an hour or an hour and a half keynote, or a 45-minute keynote?"

So, is your presentation selling the problem in the sense of raising awareness about a problem, even if it is unknown to you at this point? But then okay, what is that you can deliver to help my team right away?

And we talk about these terms mostly in a corporate setting, so most or many presentations obviously happen outside the corporate setting, but the vast majority would be companies, corporations, associations, business organizations, chambers, hiring speakers to talk to their staff.

Another idea is, when you describe the talk, be very down to earth and say, *"This talk has proven,"* or *"Previous clients,"* or *"10 previous clients who have hired me for this talk have benefited in the following way."*

Then the event planner will say, *"Okay, actually that makes sense"* — as long as they believe your claim, and as long as it's really credible based on the other little cues that are shown on your speaker page, they are going to say, *"That actually makes sense."*

And then they draw the conclusion you want them to draw, which is when it might click and they say, *"Okay, let me ask for an offer or let me hire this person."*

The presentation title is just so important. How to describe what you talk about, but then what is it that you can reasonably deliver in a keynote, in 45 minutes, in 60 minutes or so, that is really going to justify the fee that you'll be asking.

Or hopefully in a couple of weeks or months when you travel to a faraway place where you were hired, and what is it that you are going to give to that audience gathered in that room.

You decided that the current pandemic conditions seem relevant, very topical. However, the event planner or client might say, okay, these are good topics for a book, good topics for an academic paper, or for a popular science paper, but why is the speech going to be different? That it is going to come with specific case studies, with anecdotes, with a personal story, with an engaging highly interesting storytelling?

It must be more than simply describing a prevalent issue.

A presentation, is not just giving interesting pieces of information, it's in show business, right? You stand out there, it must be something highly, highly engaging that triggers some sort of a change.

And that is slightly different from an academic presentation in a college or university setting.

And again, event planners are a sceptical bunch. They would say, *"Okay, we understand, you know your stuff extremely well, but we're ultimately in show business, so how are you going to be able to deliver for our audience who want to be info-tained? They want to get part information and part entertainment. Are you going to be able to do that?"*

This scepticism needs to be overcome by addressing it upfront on your page.

There's certainly colleges and volunteer work and activist organizations who hire speakers as well, but we are focusing perhaps rather on the corporate and the business world.

TAGS:

This serves a dual purpose. It's not only to show what topics you're an expert on so it's easier to find you based on keywords and tags, but it also matches you to events having the same tags and descriptors.

When we are matching you algorithmically to events, these expertise tags will play an important role in making sure that you get alerted about events that are of interest to the client.

We understand that you want to put something incredibly unique there, but we often wonder what is a leadership architect? Is it a leadership expert? Is it a leadership strategic advisor? So that might need a little explanation of what that is.

And that should happen somewhere in the profile, whether that is in the subtitle or in a different place in the bio, that can help.

CONSULTANTS

One word about **consultancy**.

Many of you are doing the speaking, training, consultancy. And we believe these are slightly different drums, where if you give a keynote and you give a speech, it must be extremely valuable, obviously.

But some organisers are wary, are a little cautious with consultants, because they might think, *"Oh, will he upsell me? Will he try to provide broader consulting than speaking?"*

So, in terms of pre-empting, preventing, this concern, you just might want to say, *"Well, my speech already is extremely valuable for the following reasons."*

And then, if you want, *"I am available for consulting,"* but not to have that doubt or that back thought where they say, *"Okay, I'd rather not hire someone who is first and foremost a consultant, and they happen to be doing speaking as a secondary job."*

So, think with the organizer's head and try to find out what concerns they might have.

And then talking about this — what do organisers think — they just want to minimise risk. That is the number one thing that they want to do. They want to minimise the risk that their boss, whoever that is, that could be the market, and that could be really the boss who's their superior, is not going to say, *"Oh, this person didn't deliver a lot of value,"* or, *"This person is very knowledgeable, but they're not a very good presenter."*

They want to be sure. And how do you help them be sure? You think about the 5, 10, 15 things they might push back against you as a speaker, and address each of those points upfront, so they say,

"Well, you might be too expensive."

"Well, I'm not sure that you're a good presenter."

"Well, I'm not sure you would understand the unique situation of our company, or association, or chamber."

And you can say, *"Well, I've worked with the following clients, and for each of them I customized, I tailored, my presentation."*

Or *"I do that which is obviously included in my fee to make sure that you get a very unique presentation."*

Testimonials/Reviews

One thing we would point out is there is often no job title next to the name of the person who gave the testimonial. Having just the name there, that is fine, it makes it more credible, but you probably want to put the organization's name there so that increases the credibility of testimonials and the endorsement.

And then you want to add a third-party endorsement in the testimonials, recommendations, and you also want to showcase that you live up to your word, and that you do through the media part.

"Is there a way to add testimonials that you've received over the years?" Yes, you can email those to us, or point us to LinkedIn or anywhere those testimonials are sitting right now, and we can help you edit that on your profile.

Effective testimonials:

- **have clearly stated outcomes.** They talk about the **effect** of working together, or the impact the talk had on the audience. The event organiser knows what they can expect by working with you.
- **are easy to read.** They hit the sweet spot in word count at roughly 40-50 words. Testimonials that are too short (for example, *"He was great, we'd be happy to have him back,"*) don't have enough weight to make them credible, whereas testimonials that are too long will most likely be passed over by the reader.
- **are from the right person:** When a testimonial is given by someone who is high ranking in the organisation, it gives extra credibility to the speaker.

BOOKS / ARTICLES:

Books and articles are often, a sort of unspoken requirement for a speaker to establish their subject matter expertise.

Articles certainly are less difficult than authoring a book, but many of these could be showcased through videos or, just simply, even photos showing that you have the speaker authority and the subject matter authority that organizers will be looking for.

Send an article to us to load to our Speaker Bureaus (Speakers Inc, Motivators and Conference Speakers) as this helps your profile to become more noticed!

Keep the Bureau up to date!

We have had the pleasure to work with many International Speakers and been duly impressed with their professionalism and willingness to work with Bureaus.

This does not only apply to keeping us up to date with new topics, articles or images but making everything readily available for us to use. We are sent links to directly download all materials we need and in the correct format not just a PDF file. Where a PDF file is sent to us, then these are branded with our details and logos – high professionalism to say the least!

We also require video files included in the documentation as an MP4 file and if you have video testimonials then please include these files.

Optimisation is not just about filling all details on your profile; it is also about being an active engager with us by keeping your page up to date with your current material, and the most recent events you've presented at.

Your profile is a way to market yourself to our event organisers. Make sure your profile stands out to them by keeping it up to date with diverse, relevant content.

Remember to follow all our social media pages and subscribe to our YouTube channels and we will follow you back. Links to each social page can be found on the websites:

- Speakers Inc – www.speakersinc.co.za
- Conference Speakers – www.conferencespeakers.co.za
- Motivators – www.motivators.co.za
- WeSpeak - <https://app.motiv8rs.com/>
- The Legacy Project – www.thelegacyproject.co.za