



HOW TO HIRE A DIVERSITY SPEAKER OR TRAINER: 5 ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS

By Dr. Maura Cullen

When hiring a diversity speaker or trainer one challenge is deciding who is the best fit for your organization out of the thousands of diversity speakers and trainers available. Here are some easy guidelines that will help you make the best decision.

1. **EXPECTATION.** It is important to have clarity regarding the goals and outcomes for your training or event. A long term consulting project requires a different skill set than the person that will conduct a keynote address or training to a larger audience. Set a clear foundation as to what you expect from the person you hire.

Another critical factor that often dictates the selection of a speaker is budget. A clear picture of your expected budget range is will guide your search as well.

2. **EXPERIENCE.** With a topic as sensitive and as controversial as diversity, you want to be certain that the person you select has the skill and expertise to deliver the message you want in a memorable and positive manner. An experienced speaker brings a solid foundation of knowledge and shares it in a way that the audience can connect with. Speakers with experience are able to handle uncomfortable situations and are clear that the experience is not about them but rather the people in the audience.

3. **EDUCATE.** This is huge. Some diversity trainers/speakers verbally beat up participants in the blame/shame game. That manner of educating usually results with participants getting resentful and tuning out. It is vital that the speaker you select educates not humiliates.

That said, the experienced diversity professional speaker must incorporate three essential elements critical for long-term learning. Building the path of diversity competency means increasing the participant's AWARENESS-KNOWLEDGE & SKILL levels.

4. **ENGAGE & ENTERTAIN.** A speaker can possess the best knowledge or latest research but if they do not deliver the information in an engaging and entertaining manner the audience will tune out quickly.

In a nutshell, they have to have enough stage presence not to bore your audience to death.

5. **EMPOWER.** You want people to walk away from the experience feeling empowered and inspired to continue to implement the knowledge and skills they learned long after the training is completed. This can only be sustained if they buy into the theory that diversity includes them and that it serves the greater good for everyone.

Expectation-Experience-Educate-Engage and Empower. Finding a diversity speaker or trainer who possess these key elements will steer you in the right direction to find the person who is the best fit for your organization.

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