

5 Booking Mistakes—And How To Avoid Them!

By Booking Expert Dawn Jones from Successful Booking™

There are five common booking mistakes that speakers/coaches and consultants make that prevent them from getting speaking engagements; I'm going to tell you what they are and show you how to overcome them. These are simple yet fixable mistakes that can be the difference in getting blocked or getting booked.

Here are the five common mistakes:

1. I need someone to book me
2. I can train/coach on ANY topic
3. It's all about me
4. I do better when I'm winging it
5. Attitude

1. **Let's begin with number one: I need someone to book me.** So let me ask you, who *is* that someone that is going to book you? Many speakers, life-coaches and entrepreneurs think if they just get a booking agent, that will propel them to the next level. What they fail to understand that many booking agents won't even look at them, unless they're doing at least \$20,000 a month in sales with their speaking business. Because remember, the booking agent needs to earn about 20% - 40% from their clients. And forget about asking loved-ones, family members, or friends. The fastest way to ruin a great relationship is by asking someone you love to book you—especially if they don't know how to do it! Remember, you know better than anyone else what you do; and you do what you do better than anyone else—so take that bundle of energy and funnel it into a proven system that will work for you. So when comes to booking your speaking business, who is going to book you? You know the answer. You tell me—who has more passion, knowledge, understanding, and buy-in about you, than YOU? And, with a proven system, booking yourself is actually easier than you might think.
2. **Number two: I can train/coach on ANY topic.** Here's my next question for you, what are you booking? Many speakers/coaches and consultants forget what makes them unique. Instead, they take the "I'm going to just shoot in the dark approach and try to hit everything possible and hopefully I'll come up with something & get booked *somewhere!*" But what really happens, when the lights come back on, is that they realize they didn't hit anything because they didn't have a specific *booking* target where they were the expert.

Instead of taking the “shoot in the dark” approach, I recommend taking the “fishing in a barrel” approach. That is where you identify specifically who

you want to work with and catch those customers who want what you have. By narrowing your focus and becoming very specific and intentional, you will rapidly become the expert that stands out from the average speaker to an audience and industry that you know inside and out. I teach speakers/coaches and consultants is how to do just that! Identify their top talent, combine that with what makes them unique, and determine who is in their target audience or booking niche. When we identify these three things and create a strategic roadmap, you can take your talent and your passion and move to the next level.

3. **The third reason: It's all about me.** Many speakers/coaches and consultants talk of their accomplishments—whether on their websites, in their press kits or on the phone. Prospective clients have to wade through a sea of perceived bragging until they can find out what the speaker can actually do for them.

This begs the question, how do you let prospective clients know about your expertise AND that you can help them, without coming across as bragging? It is easy IF you tell something about yourself that is relevant to them. Let me explain. When it comes to booking, it's not about what you have accomplished, it's about how what you've accomplished can help your audience accomplish what they need to accomplish. For example, let's say that you've written a book, traveled and trained in all 50-states, have the highest sales in your topic category, and worked with celebrity speakers. ONLY tell those things IF those are the issues that interest your prospective client, and only tell them if you believe that you can help them do that too! Then tell them how to do it. It is ALWAYS all right to share your accomplishments IF you're showing others how they can do the same. But be careful, if you only talk about yourself, they'll question if you've worked with anyone else, so make sure to bring in more examples of other's you've helped rather than just your own experiences. Also, remember to ask questions before you provide answers of your accomplishments. Because, if a prospective client is looking for a keynote speaker but they don't want someone who might sell their audience any products and you tell them that you have the highest sales in your topic, you might get kicked off the short-list and not know why. Always ask before you tell.

While most of this is common sense, it is easy for speakers/coaches and consultants to get caught in the trap of thinking to themselves “well if I just tell them all of the things I have done and can do, that will fulfill their needs and they'll book me as their speaker.” That is not the case. You've probably heard the expression, people don't care how much you know, until they know how much you care. Until your client knows and believes that you understand what they need, they don't care anything about you or how gifted you are or what talents you are bringing to the table. They want to

know that what you have will meet their needs. The hidden key here is mastering great questions so that when you get on the phone with that person, you understand what questions you'll need to ask them as well as the best way to ask those questions so that you can identify what they need and be able to take the three or four things they give you over the phone and pull out of your hat the three or four things that you do to match their needs.

Now you might be thinking to yourself ah, I do that, don't I? Well, let me ask you this: How many bookings are you getting, how many people are saying, "Oh, we need what you have!" And how many times that happening to you consistently? Because if it's not happening consistently when you pick up the phone or send an email, then we need to take a look at the questions that you're asking and the information that you're delivering... And don't worry. I can walk you through how to do that.

4. **The fourth mistake is thinking to yourself: "I do better when I'm winging it."** There's an expression that says "you never get a second chance to make a first impression." What people hear or see, is what they expect. I know, again this sounds pretty simple, so let me ask you this: "Why on earth should somebody trust a speaker or coach enough to hire them for an hour and pay them thousands of dollars if they can't trust that speaker in three to five minutes to clearly communicate what is they're going to deliver in that hour? Many speakers/coaches and consultants pick up the phone, send an e-mail, or mail a press kit without being prepared as to what they're going to say, why they're going to say it, and how they're going to say it when they follow-up! This is so simple yet so critical, in fact, you **MUST** start with a booking script in order to successfully book yourself consistently—otherwise, you'll end up winging it. When you wing it, you will rely on your feelings to book you, and you'll only get booked when you *feel like it*—and you know the danger of relying on feelings for motivation.

I like to contrast *winging it* with *planned spontaneity*. Planned spontaneity is preparing, in advance, what you are going to say. Writing it down, reading it and memorizing it, until it becomes natural. Similar to memorizing the words to your favorite song. If you hear your favorite song on the radio and can sing along with it, it's because you've taken the time to make those words your own! You feel them, you know them and you believe them. (whether you're a good or bad a singer ☺). With your booking script, when you know what you're going to say, and how you're going to say it, you are **BELIEVABLE!** During the Successful Booking™ program I give you those words, you make them your own, and watch your calendar get booked solid!

5. **This brings us to the last common booking mistake that speakers/coaches and consultants make, and that is attitude.** Attitude, because what's not being said is being heard! The attitude you have with your clients will either be that of a servant, or that of somebody who has...well... an attitude.

Think about it, many people want to be thought of as being considerate; one who has a “servant’s heart,” one who wants to take care of people and deliver the best they have to offer. That is a great attitude to have... but who really likes to be treated like a servant? Servants come in through the back door. They do the dirty work, they pick up after people, they clean up, and they take orders. Really though, that's the job of an entrepreneur, to serve your clients and serve the people who are trusting you as a speaker or consultant—to serve them by helping change their lives. Not just when it's convenient, and not just when you're giving your speech or coaching your client, but in the little things, like attitude.

What's not being said, *is* being heard. They hear it when you're on the phone—in your smile or your frown; they hear it when you roll your eyes, or when you have compassionate eyes. They feel it when you are understanding and accommodating verses when you have an expectation that someone owes you something and should book you. The reality is that when it comes to getting clients or bookings, nobody owes a speaker or a coach anything! Any bookings that a speaker receives are a bonus. Bookings are a result of being intentional, sincere, having great follow-through and a great attitude. And, bookings only happen once the person you're on the phone with or emailing, believes, truly believes, that you have their best interest in mind & you have a servant attitude and capability to deliver what they need. Bookings and increased business come when your client believes that what you have is beneficial for them.

Keep these five common booking mistakes in mind whenever your booking or scheduling and you will have increased booking success.

If you'd like to book your calendar solid with more paying clients, be able to SET a schedule that fits your lifestyle, and sleep soundly at night knowing you have money in the bank, then [contact us](#) for a free consultation and you'll find out how to do just that and get booked solid for LIFE!

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