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# **SPEAKERS**

# **BEST PRACTICES**

**TIPS & TROUBLESHOOTING  
THAT CAN  
HELP YOUR PRESENTATION**

**BE A  
SUCCESS.**

**GIVE. ADVOCATE. VOLUNTEER.**  
**LIVE UNITED**



# BASICS

By featuring speakers from United Way partner agencies at campaign meetings, we're able to bring the value of donations to life. Speakers Bureau is your agency's opportunity to show United Way donors the good work that you do—and thereby encourage them to give. Thank you for agreeing to participate!

## HOW THE PROCESS WORKS

**SPEAKER REGISTRATION:** Your name was turned in when your agency submitted its application for funding earlier this year.

**REQUEST FOR SPEAKERS:** Employee Campaign Managers (ECMs) request speakers for their workplace campaign meetings by calling the United Way office or by submitting speaker requests form. From time to time some ECMs request a certain agency and/or speaker. If they do not have a specific request, then the United Way office suggests the ECM look at the dynamic of their workforce to better align which type of agency might be of interest to the majority of their employees. On occasion an ECM requests that United Way send any United Way partner agency to address their employees.

**REQUEST TO SPEAK:** For a specific request, the United Way office will contact that agency by phone or email. If no specific agency is requested, the United Way office will send out 'blanket email' to all agencies asking who might fill this request.

**SPEAKER CONFIRMATION:** Once a match is made and you have confirmed you will receive an email and a 5-year history on that company's United Way giving. Please review this history very carefully. It includes very valuable information such as: # of employees; # of donors; # of Leadership donors (those who give \$1,000 or more per year); Corp gift total; Employee gift total; average gift, etc. The history will be e-mailed or faxed.

**MEETINGS:** You should plan to arrive 10 minutes before the meeting is scheduled to begin. By arriving early, you can meet the ECM and become familiar with the surroundings and set up.

**CANCELLATIONS:** Company cancellations sometimes happen, often without much advance warning. Every possible attempt will be made to notify the speaker of this cancellation. And of course, sometimes speakers need to cancel too. We ask that you please give the United Way office as much advance notification as possible.

**FOLLOW-UP:** A quick follow-up survey will be sent to the company and the speaker after the meeting to see if their expectations were met and to evaluate the success of each presentation. We appreciate your candid feedback.

## DEVELOPING YOUR PRESENTATION

Your presentation will usually be part of a longer meeting that can feature a United Way video and remarks from a company representative and/or a United Way staff person. It will be helpful to become familiar with our videos and marketing supports in advance. If you do not have a sample packet of our materials, they can be seen online at [www.uwov.org](http://www.uwov.org)



## STEP 1: PREPARE

It's a great idea to develop a short, 2-3 minute speech as well as a longer, 5-10 minute speech so that way you'll be prepared for any speaking engagement. The United Way office will tell you how much time you can expect to have so you can practice your presentation to fit the allotted time.

Think about your program and agency, what it does and how it changes lives. What issues bring people to you? How widespread are these issues?

Explain the basic issue your program addresses.

Many speakers find it helpful to write the major points of a speech on note cards, but add this caution: don't write out your entire speech and attempt to read it. A natural delivery, even if it's not "perfect," is far more engaging than a recitation. Give yourself some time to compose and practice your presentation.

Once you have mapped out the story you will tell, the rest of a good United Way presentation is very simple:

Introduce yourself, your agency and your program.

Tell your story.

Bring it back to United Way: Help donors see that as important as your agency/program is, the community also needs a wide range of services to serve a variety of needs.

Thank the audience for their past gifts and ask them to please consider giving again. The dollars are needed and the agencies are ready to put those dollars to work.

Invite questions. If you don't know the answer to a question, just say so – but tell them you will find the answer and give it to the ECM. They will appreciate your honesty. Once you leave the company, contact the United Way office regarding the question. Be sure to follow back up with the ECM and provide them the answer.

## STEP 2: PRACTICE!

Experienced speakers agree, you NEED to practice out loud. Try out the speech in front of the mirror, present it to a co-worker, family member, or friend. Relax—your audience will be interested in your story when you tell it from the heart.

**DON'T JUST WEAR  
THE  
SHIRT.  
LIVE UNITED**



## TIPS FROM EXPERIENCED SPEAKERS

**LEARN THE ROOM.** Make sure you're familiar with the venue. Arrive early, walk around the area and practice using the microphone or your visual aids.

**MEET THE AUDIENCE.** Greet as many people as you can as they arrive. It's easier to speak to a group of friends than to a group of strangers.

**SMILE, LAUGH, AND BE HAPPY.** A speaker's attitude is infectious: A dull, monotone speaker will result in a bored audience. A lively speaker has the power to brighten the gloomiest room.

**MAKE EYE CONTACT.** Look at the audience throughout your speech. For small audiences, look briefly at different people. For a large audience, look at "clumps" of people at a time, moving from clump to clump as you make your points.

**RELAX.** Concentrate on your message, not your nerves. Nervousness gives you energy. Turn that energy into enthusiasm for your subject and the success of your speech. Beforehand, visualize yourself giving your speech, your voice loud, clear and assured. When you visualize success, you will be successful!!!!!!!!!!

## TROUBLESHOOTING

**I NEED TO CANCEL.** We sincerely appreciate your willingness to help and can appreciate that emergencies can arise that make it impossible to keep your commitment. We also appreciate your willingness to pinch-hit for fellow speakers on short notice. If you need to cancel, please call the United Way office @ 270-684-0668 x 0. Since this is a very busy time of the year, please do not send an email. By the time your email is read, the meeting may have already happened.

**I NEED MORE INFORMATION.** Our goal is to provide you with as much information as possible about your audience and the meeting environment. But we ask you to review your confirmation promptly to see if you need more information and to contact the United Way office with your questions as soon as possible. We will try to provide you with all the information you need.

### **I WENT TO THE COMPANY AND THE MEETING WAS CANCELLED/I COULDN'T GET IN.**

Unfortunately, every year there is at least one instance of a company forgetting about a scheduled meeting or other miscommunication that leaves one of our speakers high and dry. We try to track everything as much as possible, but still these mistakes do happen. Please note this inconvenience in your follow-up survey and accept our sincere apologies in advance for any hardship this causes you.

**THE CONDITIONS WERE TERRIBLE.** The room was too small, the acoustics awful, the machinery too noisy, the ECM was nowhere to be found—there are plenty of ways the environment can make it difficult to conduct a good presentation. Some are impossible to fix, but we ask you to troubleshoot for us and identify not only the problems you faced, but possible solutions too so we can help make it better next year.

**NO ONE FROM UNITED WAY WAS AT THE MEETING.** It is inappropriate for United Way to ask agency speakers to carry the full responsibility. Because United Way of the Ohio Valley covers a six-county service area, United Way staff is also out in the community giving presentations.