

How to Create Book and Speech Titles that Sizzle and Sell

by Joe Sabah

If you want to get past first base, your book or speech needs a killer title. National Speakers Association member Joe Sabah shows you how.

Why does one speech become a gotta-get-that-speaker-or-die while another falls flat, flips or flops? The BIGGEST reason: It's ALL in the title! Which speech or seminar would you put out big bucks and stand in line to hear: "The IRS Tax Code of 1986" vs "How to Avoid Paying Income Taxes this Year and EVERY Year"?

Benefits are the key to a GREAT speech or book title. Offer your audiences lots and lots of benefits (see Rule #5, below)

Here's Joe Sabah's Rule #1 for a good (or better yet, a GREAT) speech title: If the Meeting Planner has to ask "What's it about?", you've got the wrong title. Your title should have them saying "I want to hear this speech" or "How soon can I attend this seminar?"

We've all heard the expression "You never get a second chance to make a good first impression." This applies to speech titles as well as appearance. I came out of the Dale Carnegie era. In the middle 1950s I enrolled in both his courses. Each ended up as a book with a sizzling title that sold and still sells, each with a point that is helpful to speakers.

The textbook for his most popular course is "How to Win Friends and Influence People." Think about this. Dale wrote this book in 1937. It outsold every book except the Bible. Carnegie's title, in addition to perfect timing (right after the Depression), has TWO BENEFITS: Winning friends--and influencing people. Carnegie followed with book #2: "How to Stop Worrying and Start Living," another best seller, also with two benefits. Who in this life does not want to stop worrying or start living?

Joe Sabah's Rule #2 for a great speech title is to create one that sizzles and sells: Offer the buyer or customer specific, appealing benefits that will get you booked by a discerning meeting planner. Your speech title must appeal to two different audiences, the meeting planner and the audience. The challenge is two-fold, to capture the fancy of the meeting planner for his or her job requirements, politics, boss, group, organization, etc., and then meet or beat the perceived needs or wants of the audience. The title must please both parties.

The criteria are simple: It must satisfy a want, meet a need, answer a question or fulfill a curiosity -- benefits, benefits, benefits. What benefit does your speech title offer your attendees? Will it help them grow hair, lose weight, improve their love life, get more freedom, make a difference or make more money? (Just kidding... or am I?) Here's some easy homework: On your next visit to the grocery store, buy a copy of the National Enquirer and Reader's Digest. (Yes, they are tax deductible for business research purposes). These two publications are outstanding examples, each with dozens of titles that SELL. Study the titles and the content, then the titles once again. Analyze what makes them work.

Joe Sabah's Rule #3 for a great speech title is start yours with "How to...?" When my son Joe was about 10, he commented to my adult friends "My dad will buy any book with the title that begins with 'How to'." Check your own book shelves. What do they reveal about you? I searched our local library via the internet

and found more than 5,700 books in print whose titles begin with "How to." Consider "how to" make your speech title catchier by starting it with "How to ...?"

Joe Sabah's Rule's #4 for a great speech title is to upgrade the obvious (but possibly somewhat dull) title into an appealing one with creativity, imagination and emphasis--code for "have fun with this." My first seminar was titled "How to Get the Job You Want." Later I decided I could do better than that and changed it to "How to Get the Job You REALLY Want." Attendance (and income) increased. But the seminar (and subsequent book) really took off when I added, "and Get Employers to Call You." Benefit, benefit, benefit. The expanded title, "How to Get the Job You Really Want and Get Employers to Call You" has gotten me on 628 radio talk shows, which sold more than \$357,000 in book sales ALL at full retail. I was on a roll.

I had entitled another popular speech, "How to Get On Radio Talk Shows." I've used the title for over 16 NSA chapters and publishing associations across the U.S., and this title continues to draw large audiences everywhere. After I used "creativity, imagination and emphasis," my second book came out with the title "How to Get On Radio Talk Shows All Across America Without Leaving Your Home or Office." My latest work started out with the obvious title, "How to Build Your Successful Homebased Business? After I used "creativity, imagination and emphasis," this hot-seller was entitled "Have Fun * Make Money * Stay Home: Building Your Successful Homebased Business." Again, Benefits, Benefits, Benefits. This is the key to a GREAT speech or book title. Offer your audiences lots of benefits.

Now let's get down to business, your business. Here's the formula to help YOU create YOUR speech title that sizzles and sells. First ask six to eight friends over for dinner and a brainstorming session. Yes, you feed them first. Next, without any explanation, read your title to your friends, pause, repeat it a second time. Then ask them to vote (with a show of hands) "How many of you would give this a 10, 9, 8, 7 etc." This will give you the pulse of your audience. Ask for feedback "Why did you give this an eight?" "Why did you give this a two?" Remember people love to give their opinions. Companies pay big money for surveying what people want; they call it market research

Next, ask your audience for ideas to strengthen your title. By this time you will have come up with 5-10 possible titles. Thank your friends for their dedicated hard work. Then type these five to ten titles on a sheet of paper and fax them to a dozen or so other friends. Ask these people to circle the ONE BEST TITLE that they would consider booking or buying and fax the result back to you. You may wish to survey local meeting planners and ask for their opinions.

Joe Sabah's Rule #5 for a great speech title is to extol Benefits, Benefits, Benefits. This is the key to a GREAT speech or book title. Offer your audiences lots of benefits. Make the Joe Sabah five-rule formula work hard for you... but only if you do. Get started today. Create the title of your next best selling speech or book.

Joe Sabah's Five Rules for Great Speech Titles 1. If the Meeting Planner has to ask "What's it about?" you have the wrong title. 2. Create a speech title that "sizzles and sells" 3. Start your speech title with "How to...?" 4. Upgrade the obvious title with creativity, imagination and emphasis 5. Extol Benefits, Benefits, Benefits

Joe Sabah has appeared as a guest on 668 radio talk shows. He sold more than \$357,000 worth of his first book. His second book, How to Get On Radio Talk Shows All Across America Without Leaving Your Home or Office, has already passed the \$558,000 mark His latest book is Have Fun * Make Money * Stay Home: Building Your Successful Homebased Business. Joe is also founding president of the Colorado Speakers Association and has been a member of NSA (National Speakers Association) since 1982. Joe Sabah can be reached at 303-722-7200, fax 303-733-2626, email JSabah@aol.com.