How to Introduce Speakers Effectively!

A young public speaking student once asked the day’s guest speaker: "What is the hardest part of your work as a speaker?"
Speaker replied: "As a rule, the hardest part of my work is waking up the audience after the introducer has concluded his/her remarks."

I say Amen to that as there is more to a great introduction than the review of the speaker’s background, credentials and/or experience.

Fact is you have a wonderful opportunity to set the stage and launch your guest speaker into his or her speech or presentation. Key to a great introduction is a thoughtfully-written introductory piece that both the speaker and you, the introducer, collaborated on PRIOR to the event.

Speakers want to get to the heart of the matter from the word ‘go’ as opposed to having to set the stage themselves. Speakers prefer to have someone position them in the minds of the audience. This cannot be effectively done by talking to the guest speaker a few minutes before the actual delivery. Do your due diligence and prepare accordingly. This is not the time to wing it. Winging it is for rank amateurs and, rest assured that amateurs do not get rave notices!
The contents of a great introduction are as follows:
1. Open with an attention-getter that acts as a claim about the speaker's main message.
2. Tell the audience what his/her topic is.
3. Tell the audience why this topic is relevant to them.
4. Tell them why bringing up this topic at this gathering is timely.
5. Outline the speaker’s credentials and experience that strictly pertain to the message and topic (the facts that the speaker is married with children and enjoys ballroom dancing are IRRELEVANT).
6. Use the speaker’s name as a verbal cue to invite him/her to the podium or front of the room.

Here is a great example of an effective introduction!

1. Open with an attention-getter that acts as a claim about the speaker’s main message.
   
   Example: “Ladies and gentlemen, I urge you to STOP EXERCISING! You heard me correctly! STOP EXERCISING….The Way You Are Doing It Now. That is what today’s speaker is asking you to do.”

2. Tell the audience what his/her topic is.
   
   Example: “His topic today is Health and Wellness through smart exercise!”

3. Tell the audience why this topic is relevant to them.
   
   Example: “Through workplace wellness programs, everyone here can:
   - Increase their productivity
   - Decrease absenteeism
   - Reduce insurance premiums
   - Decrease long and short term disability
   - Boost morale
   - Help with team-building”

4. Tell them why bringing up this topic at this gathering is timely.
   
   Example: “Soon, our workload will increase as we are poised for growth in the number of clients we serve. So we need to be in shape to face the challenge.”

5. Outline the speaker’s credentials and experience that strictly pertain to the message and topic (the fact that the speaker is married with children and enjoys ballroom dancing is IRRELEVANT).
Example: “Igor Klibanov is the author of 3 different books on wellness, the most recent of which is STOP EXERCISING! The Way You Are Doing it Now. He is the founder and owner of Fitness Solutions Plus. On June 3, 2010, he was selected as one of the top 5 personal trainers in Toronto by the Metro News newspaper.”

6. Use the speaker's name as a verbal cue to invite him/her to the podium or front of the room.

That is how you will speak and impress!