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Managing—and better yet, PREVENTING—Speaker “No-Shows” *Top 8 tips for Less Stress*

By Andrea Driessen, President, No More Boring Meetings, a Division of Amplify, Inc.

A no-show speaker is most meeting planners' worst nightmare. You can lessen or even *eliminate* this stressor...and boost your peace of mind...with the following strategies.

1. **Remove the possibility of flight delays.** When hiring an out-of-town external speaker, include a clause in your agreement that requires your speaker to book a flight with at least *one back up or buffer flight* after it, in case the initially booked flight is cancelled or delayed. This simple step can save you untold worry.
2. In some cases, you can offer to pick up the speaker from the airport yourself, or ask a colleague. You **maintain control, save money** on ground transportation, *and* enjoy **rare, one-on-one time** with your speaker.
3. Ask, or even *contract*, to ensure external **speakers call you** upon arrival in the event city—an easy way to boost your confidence and composure.
4. Ensure the speaker has everything at his/her disposal to arrive at the **right venue, at the right time, in the right room.** This may sound obvious, yet details can fall through the cracks. This includes accurate driving directions (don't just rely on Mapquest.com—we all know it can be very wrong), parking information, your full meeting agenda, meeting room name, a building map, and the name and cell phone of the speaker's main onsite contact.
5. If other organizations are **holding meetings simultaneously** in or near *your* event venue, ask their planner if a speaker on *their* agenda may fit for you.

6. Book your speaker through a **speaker resource such as** www.NoMoreBoringMeetings.com . Or if you didn't, and are faced with a no-show, call one immediately upon hearing you have an MIA speaker, because:
 - Agencies and bureaus have a singular capacity to **quickly and effectively** tap the most targeted speakers, *including those based near your event venue and who therefore can arrive on short notice.*
 - You can trust that the agency roster features only the most **reputable experts**, which serves to *prevent* no shows in the first place.
 - In the very unlikely event that an agency-booked speaker is unable to make it due to an unexpected emergency, the agency will work fast to secure a replacement, or you will likely **owe nothing**.

7. Tap a local **college** or **university** for specialized experts. Someone may be just one phone call away. Be sure to **pack such the schools' contact information** in your "bring-to-meeting" materials to save time and headaches on site.

8. If ultimately your speaker is STILL a no-show, have the following in your back pocket as **stress-saving "insurance policies:"**
 - Carefully select an additional **replacement speaker** when booking your "planned-for" expert. Contract with this replacement to be **"on call"** in the event of a no-show—either accessible on that day by phone or, better yet, in *person* at the meeting. While this option may require a fee, it is likely much **less expensive—in dollars and reputation—than no speaker at all.**
 - Tap your executive team for, say, a candid "view-from-the-trenches" Q&A, a panel discussion or a "talk show." **You'll save the day by increasing the executives' accessibility in the eyes of attendees, and boosting the depth of the overall education.**
 - If no exec team is available, plan a **relevant activity** in which your audience can participate in lieu of the external speaker's session. This could include a facilitator-led discussion on the original keynote topic, for example.
 - Pre-plan a **"60 Ideas in 60 minutes"** brainstorming or facilitator-led program related to the no-show topic, so attendees walk away with practical strategies and tips directly associated with the originally scheduled topic. Be sure you've identified and trained a facilitator for this program in advance.



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