

How to create a great Speaker Showreel



A showreel is a great tool for speakers and gives you control. It allows you to present yourself in the best way possible to your potential client/s. It's really a video advert. But so many speakers get it wrong (in my opinion). Having viewed hundreds and thousands of showreels, this is what I personally think works well and what I like to see and not see. Please use what you think is useful to you:

Duration

Your video needs to be short and impactful. If a client is looking to choose a speaker, they will be looking at several options, some clients consider dozens of speakers – so if your video is too long it might not get viewed to the end. Cull it as much as you can and produce a video of max 3 minutes duration. If you find that hard – get someone else to tell you what to edit out.

How to open the video

Ideally you want the viewer to hear your voice as soon as possible. So, start with a strong clip of you speaking that will get their attention and then you need to tell the viewer who you are. They need to know why they should listen to you. A great way to do this is to use a video clip from a speaking event where you have been professionally introduced by an MC, but make sure it's super short. That MC will have used your scripted introduction and it will be a short version of your full profile. Or maybe you have been introduced on a TV show. If you don't have a video intro you can intro yourself, or you can talk/have a voice over, over some images, maybe of press cuttings, or book covers, or photos of you climbing a mountain (if that's what you do). Or you can simply use a couple of slides set to music with a couple of lines of text. Keep it short.

Music

Do include music. A piece that expresses your personality. Why not have your own theme tune? You can then use it for walk on music, podcast intro, website etc. If you use a piece of commercial music that you get a license – this site is useful: <https://www.prsformusic.com/licences> You can also have your own piece of music created quite inexpensively on <https://www.fiverr.com/> or <https://www.peopleperhour.com/> Alternatively, you can buy a royalty free music here: <https://www.premiumbeat.com/> or my personal favourite site for music <https://audiojungle.net/>

Be careful where you use your music, drop it very low under your speaking clips or have no music at all when you are speaking you don't want to make it difficult for people to hear you and can also affect how your message is conveyed. Do use it as intro, outro and under images or slides.

Content

A speaker showreel needs to show you speaking. Sounds obvious I know, but I have seen many a reel with the speaker on stage speaking but it's set to music and I can't hear him/her. You can include interviews and panels but ultimately a viewer wants to see and hear you speak. Ideally you will want to have several short clips from different events with varying sizes of audience. Try to include one key take-away message to show the kind of value you give and ensure that the clips are short enough to keep things moving but not so short that it feels like the reel is jumping from clip to clip too much. If you have press clippings, best-selling books, won awards – all of that is of interest to the viewer and can be cleverly included as images or slides to music.

Editing

I would always recommend professional editing unless you are experienced at editing and putting together videos. It is worth the extra cost to get the sound levels right, the clip changes and the overall quality. Don't know a professional editor? We can help enquiries@mfl.global

Testimonials

Include testimonials. My preference is to have slides with quotes on them rather than talking heads, unless that talking head is very recognisable in which case leave them in. But otherwise, I prefer a nice written quote with who made the quote on a slide. No testimonials from other speakers please unless your target bookers are speakers. Testimonials should be short, punchy, and impactful... bullet points... that can be read by the viewer in 5-10 secs max. You can use testimonials between sets of video clips, scattered through-out the showreel to break it up nicely or in one grouping.

Contact details

Now this is an interesting one. If you are looking to work with bureaus – they really don't want to see your contact details at the end of the video or anywhere else on the video for that matter, as they want the client to book through them. If you are working directly with end clients, then put your contact details at the end. You could create two versions, one with and one without.

Finally Try it, Test it, Time it

When you have compiled it... ..run it by a handful of people who have not been involved in the making of it. Ask for their candid feedback and listen (as it's what the audience thinks that counts) questions along the lines of:

- What immediate impact was conveyed?
- How did the showreel make them feel... inspired, intrigued, confused, none the wiser, informed, stayed tuned, turned off, too short, too long. Professional, amateurish?
- What's it like being on the receiving end of your showreel?

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