

A/V, Staging & Room Set-up

Safety Speaker

By: Kevin Burns
Safety Speaker/Consultant



Give Your Presenters the Best Chance of Success

With so much going on at a typical meeting or conference it can be easy to forget that the actual presentations are the primary reason we are there. There are many elements that must come together to make an event a success, but if the presentations aren't successful then nothing else matters.

It is absolutely critical that you give your speakers the best opportunity to deliver successful presentations because, in the end, that is what the attendee will remember, and will ultimately be the measure of a successful event.

There is no way to ensure that every presentation will be well received by an audience so there is no way to guarantee that every presentation will be a winner. As a meeting professional all you can do is give the presenters the tools to succeed. Fortunately this is not very complicated, and there are some simple things that can be provided to maximize the chances of a positive experience for both presenter and attendee.

There is nothing you can do about the actual content of the presentations, and some presenters won't be successful no matter what you do. There will always be the presenters that stand behind a podium and read their Power Point slides word for word in a monotone voice, but at least you can rest easy knowing you did your job.

- Jay Ward

*Principal at Genesis Technical Production & Design
gowithgenesis.com*

Please Be Advised:



Hotel and conference centers have been setting their rooms the exact same way for years. This doesn't make it the best way... just the way they've always done it. They will take it upon themselves to set up the room as they see fit unless they are told different.

That means that they will most likely place the lectern in centre-stage right at the very front (this is an old way of dressing stage and is NOT conducive to good meetings anymore). They will then tape down cables and they will probably place a screen and projector on-stage forcing stage-lighting to be dimmed.

This will not work for Kevin's presentation (or anyone else's presentation for that matter). If this is what the conference center staff have done, the entire stage will have to be re-struck.

Please ensure you have a representative in attendance when set-up of the stage takes place.

Sound:

- A professional sound system appropriate for the venue size.
- Wireless Lapel (Lavalier) Microphone.
(Please have extra batteries available, along with a back up microphone).

Lights:

- Lighting is important. Kevin needs to be it. Arrange for a general stage wash, with pinspots/parcans lighting for larger groups (over 500).
- For smaller groups, please ensure that the stage is lit brighter than the audience.



Recording:

- Audio recording of Kevin's presentation by the client or its contracted A/V services company/individuals will not be permitted without prior approval from Kevin Burns Corporation.
- No video recording of Kevin's presentation will be permitted, especially for use as a retail or supplemental product to attendees or the general public. Please advise in advance whether or not cameras will be in use for projection to large screens. Also, please provide a contact for the A/V Company servicing the event to Kevin in advance of the event.



Computers/Projectors/Screens:

- If the presentation that Kevin is delivering is *Trust The Process: Instill A Safety Attitude To Build An Engaged Culture Of Safety* no computers/projectors/screens will be required. Kevin delivers this presentation without technology.
- If the presentation is *The Perfect Safety Meeting: Strategies To Build Engagement, Get Buy-in And Make Your Safety Message Stick* then Kevin requires:
 - a screen and projector at either the front-left or front-right corner of the room or overhead high enough that Kevin will not block the screen or if right behind Kevin, ensure that the screen is rear-projected so as Kevin does not walk in light
 - placement of the screen away from front-centre-stage to ensure that lights can be turned up full without washing out screen
 - projector light will not throw into eyes of Kevin
- If Kevin is being projected on-screen during presentation, then the ability to cut away to slide when slides changes will be necessary for 10-15 seconds per slide.



Set-up “Trust the Process”:

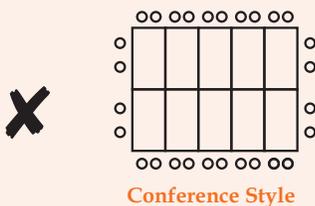
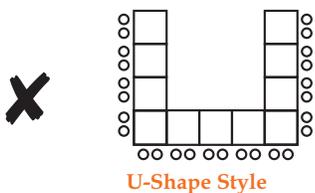
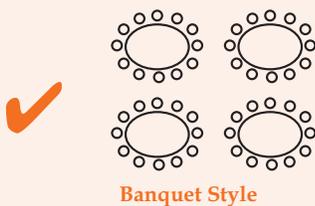
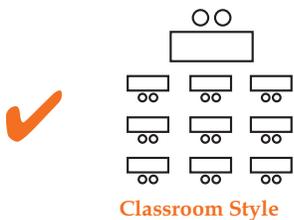
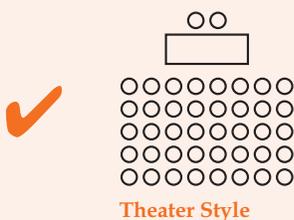
- Kevin needs a raised platform/stage to present to groups of 100 or more. Please ensure that the stage height is suitable for the audience number.
- If a podium/lectern is being used for introductions, please set it off to one side and a minimum of four feet back of the front of the stage so that Kevin is visible to the entire audience. **Do not set lectern/podium in center of stage and the tape down cables. This stage will have to be reset before Kevin can use it.** Ensure that at least eight feet from the front of the stage toward the back of stage is open with *nothing* in that space. This is Kevin’s walking space.
- Where no podium/lectern is to be used, please ensure nothing else is on-stage.

Set-up “The Perfect Safety Meeting”:

- Kevin needs a raised platform/stage to present to groups of 100 or more. Please ensure that the stage height is suitable for the audience number.
- If a podium/lectern is being used for introductions, set it off to stage-right side and a minimum of four feet back of the front of the stage so that Kevin is visible to the entire audience. **Do not set lectern/podium in center of stage and the tape down cables. This stage will have to be reset before Kevin can use it.** Ensure that the front four to eight feet from the front of the stage is open with *nothing* in that space. This is Kevin’s walking space.

Best-Response Room Seating Set-Up

Examples:



Theater Style

Overview: Chairs are lined up in rows facing the speaker. The rows can be straight, semi-circular, or herringbone (angled toward the front of the room). If space isn't an issue, it's best to offset each row so that delegates are not sitting directly behind one another.

Rating for Keynotes: ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Crescent Style

Overview: Attendees are seated at round tables - usually 60", 66", or 72" in diameter. Similar to Banquet Style seating, but the two or three chairs in which delegates would have their backs to the speaker are removed, thus forming a "crescent" of seating facing the speaker.

Rating for Keynotes: ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Classroom Style

Overview: Long, narrow tables are positioned in front of rows of chairs facing the speaker. The tables usually abut one another, although tables that extend beyond the stage ideally should be angled toward the speaker in order to provide better viewing. Water pitchers and glasses are typically placed on the tables.

Rating For Keynotes: ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Banquet Style

Overview: Guests are seated at round tables - usually 60", 66", or 72" in diameter. However, two attendees at each table will be required to turn around to see stage area.

Rating for Keynotes: ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Please use no other room set up than those listed here. Please be advised that Kevin will NOT present to a room with a set-up in either U-Shape or Conference Style as pictured above with big red X's.

PLEASE DO NOT set room for more than the number of attendees in the room. Several rows of empty seats and/or tables near the stage makes for a difficult level of engagement with attendees and the further back from the speaker, the less uptake of message. Worst yet, interaction, laughter and enjoyment are all minimized when the room is set too big (more chairs than needed) or seats too far away from stage.

Podiums/Lecterns



For the sake of argument, podiums and lecterns are often confused so let's just stick with calling those things that have microphones sticking out of them that boring presenters use and call them podiums (even though they're really called lecterns).

When setting up a stage for presentations there are many options: single presenters, multiple presenters at one time or sometimes panel discussions to engage in a conversation with each other and/or the audience.

It is imperative to think about how the stage is set for each of these instances to increase intimacy, ensure ideal sightlines for the audience and allow for maximum energy from the presenters. For example, if you have a single presenter on stage, do you really need a podium? Nothing can suck the energy from a presentation like a podium front and centre with cables taped down - immovable. But this is exactly what conference facilities will do to your stage if you don't tell them any different.

If you decide to not use a podium (and you should always discourage the use of one) it is a good idea to provide a stage that is large enough for the presenter to walk around. But if a podium has been placed centre-stage at the front of the stage, it is IMPOSSIBLE for a speaker to walk around - always having to walk behind the podium. Either move the podium back at least 4-5 feet, move it off to the side for use by those giving introductions only or get rid of it altogether.

Politicians use podiums. Professional speakers, presenter and educators do not. Set your stage for professionals.

When a panel discussion is necessary we often see the typical table set on stage, and panelists seated in a row with microphones in their faces (could anything scream BORING more than this?). This type of setup creates a barrier between the panelists and the audience.

Instead, have the panelists wear wireless lapel microphones and be seated in more comfortable chairs on stage with no tables (other than small side tables for water etc). If you want to connect with the attendees to help them feel more like they are a part of the discussion, you must remove the on-stage barriers: tables and podiums.

Examples of Preferred Stage Set-up (5 photos):

It is always best to ensure that the screens are NOT the focal center of attention. Screens are used to project slides which are a supplement to the presenter. The lights should never need to be dimmed because the screen won't be seen. Neither should the presenter be forced to walk in front of a beam of light from the projector.

Simple rule: People engage with people – not Powerpoint. Make your presenter the focus and the slides the support. Speaker in the centre. Screens/slides off to the side or overhead above the speaker.

Screens on either side of stage with open stage – lectern located Stage-right. Stage lighting is bright.



*Rear-projected screen does not
shine light in speaker's eyes.
Lectern stage-right. Stage
lighting is still bright.*



*Raised platform with single
screen off to side and lectern
located off to side leaving stage
open. Stage lighting is bright.*



Stage with an overhead screen and ceiling-mount projector. Open stage with lectern stage-right. Stage lighting is not dimmed.



Even a small "classroom" set-up with no stage can work: screen off to one side and lectern off to another.





Please leave nothing to chance. If you still have questions about staging and A/V Requirements, please call Kevin as soon as possible to discuss. We are flexible and can accommodate you if not left to the last minute. We prefer no surprises with regard to staging and A/V.

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