



CHOOSING THE RIGHT CYBER SECURITY KEYNOTE SPEAKER

TIPS FOR FINDING THE BEST PRESENTER
FOR YOUR NEXT EVENT



On the hunt for a cyber security speaker for your big event?

Or, maybe your company needs to see the value of protecting your network? Whatever the reason for booking a security presenter, you're in the right place.

In this ebook, we're going to outline every step of the selection process, including how to narrow down your search with the right questions and research.

Choose the best speaker with confidence, with our expert advice.

Start Your Hunt Early

How early is too early? When it comes to seeking out a cyber security speaker, some well-known presenters book gigs up to a year in advance.

If you have less than 365 days until your event or workshop, don't panic. We recommend starting to review keynote candidates immediately after you know the date of the speaking arrangement, or whenever you decide your team needs professional guidance.

All of these loose ends can become time-consuming, so it's best to get started sooner rather than later to ensure you can book the right speaker in time.



For larger-scale events like conferences, you'll have other things on your plate such as determining location, choosing a theme, planning your budget, etc. which you may need to address first.

Know Your Audience

If you are the one booking a cyber security speaker for your company, you probably already know a thing or two about your audience. But, let's not assume! Even if it's your employees that are in the seats, it helps to know which departments will be present and choose a presenter who can best speak to their specific pain points.

For instance, if a speaker is to be scheduled to chat with your finance department, the presenter might address security measures very differently than if it was your marketing team— perhaps talking about best practices for scanning emailed invoices vs. social media account password protection. Or, if the speaker was addressing your IT team, they may be inclined to get a little more “technical” than if they were talking with your telephone representatives.

Not all speeches will be delivered to one department. Perhaps you're booking a speaker for a highly attended conference, and you'll have a very diverse audience. It helps to do some research about the background of your guests or be very specific about the type of guest your presentation is meant for when advertising the event.

Regardless of the size of your audience, before hunting for a speaker it helps to have a general idea of who will be present the day of the speech. This will help you clearly define a goal for the presenter and craft their content around that demographic.

Define a Clear Goal for Your Speaker

Why exactly are you having a cyber security expert take the stage? Perhaps you had a recent data breach or a close-call with a ransomware demand.

When searching for a keynote speaker, be sure you have a goal in mind, which you can relay to the candidate before hiring them. For example, if you want to teach your team about network security, you will want to clearly define what “success” looks like at the end of the speech for your presenter.

Consider crafting a “mission” statement to share with prospective speakers, to provide some background about why you’re seeking a cyber security expert and spell out what you hope your audience will learn from the presentation. For instance, you could share some questions you’d like your audience to have answered by the end of the session.

Determine if You Would Rather Have a Celebrity or a Thought Leader

When seeking a cyber security speaker, or a presenter of any subject matter really, you’ll find there are generally two kinds of presenters: **celebrity figures or thought leaders.**

A celebrity might be someone who isn’t exactly an expert in the cyber security field, but could still lend a helpful voice. For instance, Michelle Obama was a speaker at the popular Inbound marketing conference, held each year in Boston. Michelle might not have been a marketing expert, but as [Marketing Insider Group points out](#), “her resume certainly speaks of expertise in communications and connecting with people.”

Celebrity figures don’t have to be “famous” people either. Perhaps you may consider bringing in a CEO from a company that faced an almost-disastrous cyber attack to share their experience, or another relevant source to bring a real-life example in front of your audience.

Maybe there’s one figure who you always admired for their insights on all things cyber security. Thought leaders are usually more inspirational in nature, rather than purely instructional. They are great for bringing energy to an audience and giving them a few ideas to ruminate on long after the presentation.

In special instances, you strike gold and find a cyber security speaker who is both famous and influential within the industry!





Know Your Budget

As wonderful as it would be to get a big-shot cyber leader at your event, you must first see which speakers are within your price range.

Many cyber security presenters charge different rates based on where they are asked to speak to cover travel expenses. For instance, the former Chief of Security at Facebook, Alex Stamon, has different fees based for local, US eastern, US western and various other countries, and many big speakers do the same.

Good speakers can cost anywhere but to \$50,000+. Before setting your heart on any speaker in particular, be sure to check their going rate and see if it matches your budget.

Watch the Speakers in Action

Before giving any speakers a call, be sure to preview their sessions.

Their “resume” is their on-stage performances, and the only way to truly witness what they’re made of is to see them speaking for yourself.

Look for videos of prospective candidates giving their presentations, and watch real-life demonstrations of their ability. You might not find footage of the full seminar or workshop, but even a compilation of short clips can be helpful.

While watching these recordings, ask yourself a few important questions or do some hard research to get the answers:

Is this speaker qualified to be discussing cyber security?

How many years of experience does your speaker have within the industry or a relevant related field? How many years have they been speaking or hosting presentations? Will your audience respect their background and knowledge?

Are they authentic?

Do you believe what they are saying is true, accurate or relevant? What are their motives? Do you think they actually care about their work and your problems? Make sure they are invested in helping you reach your goal(s)— not just in cashing a paycheck. Be weary of ametauer speakers who are more interested in promoting their brand or company than in helping your listeners.

Are they a good storyteller?

Do they paint a colorful narrative to help their audience understand, using realistic scenarios? You want your audience to be able to relate and empathize with the speaker’s examples.

Are they enthralling their audience?

How is the speaker getting the audience excited or engaging their interest? If they checked off the previous question and tell provoking stories, this speaker is likely a master of keeping interest— but don't assume. Look to see if they're energetic and upbeat, or for the type of mood you think your audience would be most receptive to learning from.

Are they providing live demonstrations of cyber attacks?

Do they interact with audience members by asking for volunteers, surveying to get listener's opinions, etc.? Sometimes it's helpful to watch peers interact with the speaker or one another, as well as to see tangible examples in-person.

Do you understand a clear goal from the talk, i.e. why the speaker is there/what pain points they are addressing?

If after watching the speaker talk for ten minutes you still aren't sure what they're trying to say, cross them off your list. Your speaker should clearly outline what they'll be addressing from the start and present with a clear direction that your audience can easily follow.



Are they offering unique, new information— as opposed to rehashing old ideas or information your team already knows?

Is the speaker offering valuable content, which your audience couldn't find on their own? If your team could learn what they're offering by reading a quick article, or worse, if your audience already knows what the speaker is "teaching," then you'll just be wasting their time and your money.

In their conclusion, did they encourage your audience to take an action or provide some sort of motivational takeaway?

Stick around until the end of the presentation or fast forward to the last five minutes. How did the speaker wrap things up? The best speakers inspire your audience to help them remember a lesson long after they step off stage, oftentimes by encouraging their listeners to do something or by challenging them to adjust their mindset.



If Impressed By their Delivery, Dig Deeper

After watching a few presenters speak, narrow down your choices by researching each candidate more thoroughly:

Do they have a social media presence?

What do they post about?

Look to see if they are a thought leader or how they interact with their audience online. Unanswered responses or a lack of interest in the cyber community could be a red flag.

Can you find other companies they've helped in the past?

Do more digging and find other companies or events this speaker has presented in front of. Pick up the phone and call them to ask about their experience. You may be surprised to hear that the speaker was late to the gig or that they asked for more money right before the date of the event.

People will likely be inclined to share more personal details with a friendly voice over the phone if they get the sense you are looking for genuine feedback.

What's their typical time limit?

A speaker who usually only delivers 20-minute motivational talks might not be able to fill your hour-long time slot. A more seasoned speaker, who is known for running extension workshops or selling out conference seats, would likely be a better fit.

Consider the length of the speaker's usual talks and if it matches your preferences.

Which speech topics are they versed in?

Look to see what your speaker has talked about in the past, beyond their most popular recordings. A great resource for this is the [National Speakers Bureau](#), which often lists descriptions of past presentations your presenter gave.

We shared cyber hacker Kevin Mitnick's topics as an example in the link above.



What are the reviews saying?

Check their ratings on popular sites like Yelp, the National Speakers Bureau, etc.— beyond the polished and hand-selected testimonials on the speaker's own website. Reviews on their personal site will mostly likely be all the good ones, purposely excluding the bad!

Schedule a Chat with Your Candidates

Once you've narrowed it down to three candidates or so, it's time to arrange a time to meet them and see if they're the right fit.

Try first to schedule an in-person chat, though this isn't always possible. Some big-name cyber security gurus might not have the time or capacity to meet with every interested party, and you may be forced to talk with a consultant who books their gigs.

Other speakers might live a few states away, making it unrealistic to fly them in for anything other than the event itself.

The next best thing to an in-person chat is a video call, via Skype, FaceTime or a similar visual chat platform.

Whether it's a talk with their booking agent or the speaker themselves, set aside at least a half hour slot to ask them a few questions, "face-to-face."



The Important Questions

Prepare a list of questions to absolutely ensure this speaker is right for your big day. First, it's best to confirm everything you've found in your research:

- Can the speaker talk about x, specifically?
- Can they help us reach x goal? (define what success looks like at the end)
- Can they fill our 30-minute, 60-minute, x-minute time slot?
- Can they travel to our location?
- Can they be there x day at x time?
- What would they charge for your exact event?

After Confirming The Logistics, Ask More Specific Questions

Will the speaker stick around after to answer questions?

After their presentation, will the presenter pack up and go or will they hang around for a bit after? Whether it's a meet-and-greet or just being there for the audience to mingle and ask individual questions, it's always better to book a speaker who is willing to engage with your listeners than one who is fast to jet.

Do they have any special demands?

Do they require the room temperature to be at 72 degrees at all times? Do they need water imported from some obscure tropical island? Ensure your speaker doesn't have any ridiculous secret demands that will cause you further headaches down the road. The best speaker will be flexible around your needs, not force you to bend around theirs.

Do they offer pre or post event marketing?

Some speakers have a full marketing team behind their efforts, one that's willing to help promote your big event. Ask if they'll advertise the presentation on social media, or if they have other channels for spreading the word about your conference or workshop, if open to the public and applicable.

Can they share any references?

Just like when applying for a new job your prospective company asks for references, don't be afraid to ask your cyber security speaker for theirs. You might not have found many bad reviews online, but you never know what a reference might reveal about your presenter. For instance, if the speaker tells you they spoke about x at that company and the manager tells you something different, that shows you speaker is either a.) disorganized or b.) lying— both not very admirable traits.



Have they worked directly with other companies like yours?

You may have already confirmed this in your research, but if not, ask them what makes them qualified to speak to the needs of your specific industry.

Pay attention to the questions they ask YOU.

During your own questioning or after you get the answers you need, pay careful attention to the kinds of questions the speaker asks you in return. Are they taking the time to get to know exactly what you want, to clarify or even to counter with better/help recommendations? If they indeed have the experience they claim, this exchange should be both thought provoking and reassuring.



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Have You Considered Kevin Mitnick?



In your search for speakers, did you stumble across Kevin Mitnick?

Kevin was coined “the world’s greatest hacker” and has received immense praise for his enthusiasm and experience around all things cyber security.

Kevin is known for his incredible infiltration into 40 major corporations, which earned him a spot on the FBI’s Most Wanted list. He’s now a trusted security consultant for the Fortune 500 and governments worldwide.

Learn more about his qualifications and book Kevin for a speaking engagement, today.

[Learn More About Kevin](#)

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