

James Taylor

Hey, it's James Taylor he a keynote speaker on creativity and artificial intelligence and the founder of international speakers summit. Today I speak with Phil M. Jones and we talk about building the base of your speaking business, the 666 rule, and the one phrase you need to sell your speaking. Enjoy this session. Hey there, it's James Taylor. I'm delighted today to be joined by Phil M. Jones. Bill M. Jones has made it his life's work to demystify the sales process reframe what it means to sell and help his audience to learn new skills and power, confidence, overcome fears and instantaneously impact bottom line results. Author of six international best selling books and the youngest ever winner of coveted British excellent in sales and marketing award. Phil is currently one of the most in demand speakers and advisors to companies worldwide. It's my great pleasure to have Phil join us today. So welcome, Phil.

Phil M. Jones

Great to be here. James. Thanks for inviting me on.

James Taylor

So share with everyone what's going on in your world just now.

Phil M. Jones

Oh, what's going on in my world. Like always, my world is chaotic and busy in an organized mess of travel content. And, and client demands and different types of audiences in different ways. So I'm forever putting my hat on saying, what group of people is it that I'm serving today? So I've just just come off the run of, of six weeks worth of an abundance of different types of events across the world in different ways. So what's happening for me right now is Today's the first day I get to breathe in at all. So I'm kind of excited about

Phil M. Jones

that.

James Taylor

Now, I'd love to know your journey into speaking because I was looking very early on in your life. You've also had a strong, entrepreneurial, bent to what you do as well, I think I saw that you by the age of 15. You're actually earning more than your teachers at school, because you'd hear out some friends now. So tell us that that journey from from budding entrepreneur at school into what you do today is really known as a keynote, keynote speaker, author and trainer. Yeah.

Phil M. Jones

I mean, I started in business from a very young age. So I wanted to make some extra money. It's about to get some of the things that my parents decided they didn't want to buy for me. So I started a little carpooling. In business at the age of 14, like we realized there by the age of 15, I was kind of not going to school as often as I should. And I remember getting invited in my school teachers questioning my attendance. And I responded to those classes with the questions like how much money are you making, and they refused to tell me at the time, but I was making more money than most of my school teachers by my 15th birthday.

And I continued like on an entrepreneurial journey through my teens still built studies around my businesses. So I still took school pretty seriously. But I viewed them as quizzes and puzzles that was a was a fun thing for me is that I had to kind of get these these puzzles that within the most efficient period of time. And at the age of 18, I had a dilemma, big university opportunity in front of me to go to one of the best schools back in the UK. I didn't want to go and I became the youngest ever sales manager for a business called Debenhams department stores that you'll know from the UK, and I guess even from my early kind of corporate days, I had a speaking inspired background even though I didn't know that's what it was. At the time, so I did a lot of store openings, a lot of trainings towards store openings in those retail world. So I guess my first gigs was me at 18 years of age, stood at the top of escalators, in a new department store environment, addressing an audience full of employees, getting them inspired about what we were going to go on and achieve over the next six weeks and then keeping that updated. So that got me very, very comfortable. But also going through that environment of being a very aspirational employee in a leadership role is we'd have a lot of leadership conferences, we'd have a lot of guest speakers coming together to talk to our audiences and I thought one day I'd love to be able to do that. Now I continued through a number of a number of kind of things with my career where I became a store manager sales training consultant for DFS furniture group, went from there to become head of retail at Birmingham City Football Club, and from there to do the same at Leicester City Football Club with Mila Mandarin then I built a big property business property business works We have quite a lot of our clients through seminars. So again, that always have me stood in front of rooms full of people. And in fact, every one of my entrepreneurial career choices or corporate lead career choices, always have me speaking to a roomful of people. My property business and a bump in 2008. I'm sure some people might look to be able to have some memory towards that too. And we had a great business on a Monday. By Friday, we had a product we couldn't give away. So wondering what I was gonna do next, I was being invited by business networking groups to say can you come and help some of these local business owners through some of these recessionary times by delivering back some sales skills? I always had quite a strong voice in those small business environments, of offering advice and guidance. And I was delivering those education slots for free didn't think about it being a speaking career. And then I thought, well, there are just so many people in this world who are good at a thing but don't know how to acquire customers or grow that business. So didn't get to really be good at the thing. So I wrote a one day sales training course. And I started to invite people from that small business environment to my one day program. And that was Yeah, back into 2008. So almost 10 years ago, and six people became 12 people became 20 people became 30 people became Can you come deliver this to my team became me then speaking externally to sell places on my workshops. So I'd speak at larger events for without fee to be able to drive people towards my workshop that then became a coaching business, then became a consulting business. Then I wrote my first book in 2012. And then I went on the road internationally delivering more of what we would now call speeches, but my business here today is I deliver somewhere in the region of 100 paid presentations a year takes me all around the world, written six best selling books. And I do anything from a from a 12 minute keynote up to a three day program with audiences and then have somewhere like 30 different revenue streams in my business around To the I've now become remarkably fun, but it's been a it's been a beautifully organic journey driven by

ambition, aspiration and a simple belief that if somebody else can do it, can somebody else be me?

James Taylor

Well, I've always looked at what a great journey my fascinating journey through all these everything, obviously, sales has been, has been the kind of golden thread that has kind of gone through a lot of that as well. And I'm wondering like, as you were kind of going, you mentioned almost two different types of presenting so there was the marketer workshop training style, then there's kind of more platform selling style where you're giving a talk for free in order to get people to come to your workshop or consulting and then there's more keynote speaking, which I can know you for for today. Who are your mentors because they're all slightly different flavors and and they require slightly different skills I would imagine. Yeah, it's hard

Phil M. Jones

to define specific mentors if I if I'm to look early days, I was always hugely inspired by Guy new cool Peter Lee and Peter Lee was somebody I collaborated with them But with him was taught by when I was part of a management training program back in, in the furniture days, maybe 1520 years ago. And he was the first guy who bought the Dale Carnegie programs to the UK. So I got to study Dale Carnegie's work quite in depth for that. And I loved the way that Peter would engage and would facilitate within an audience and had both the gravitas of a powerful speaker, but also had the charm of, you know, the guy in the pub that would be able to have a conversation and quite often when you're saying these audience to the matter how many people are in it, you felt like he was talking just to you. So I love that. There's also a guy in the UK called Richard Denny. Richard Denny is kind of like the godfather of professional speaking when it comes to UK background. And I remember being in a conference that Richard delivered and I may have been 17 years of age at the time, and I thought, that guy's cool. And I got to know Richard quite well through the years and got to learn a little from him, and then on the marketing side of the business, and we might link into that Shortly is a guy called Peter Thompson. So Peter Thompson is somebody who's been around a long, long time. When we then look towards role models outside of of those three, there's two other categories that I would consider. One is, is the people that have mentored me from a distance. So I might not have had personal conversation with them, but I've studied and and and then model their behavior. So that could be as much as a Jim Rowan. But it could also be the fact that I'd stick myself in the audience as often as I possibly can of other people performing to say what I like about that, what worked well, where can I get some role modeling from other people's efforts, and then also stand up comedians. So I've got like an abundance of stand up comedians, because I think in the world of professional speaking, stand up comedy is about as tough as it gets. So to look towards that, to push the envelope was huge. And then the flip side of all of this role model stuff is all the negative role models.

James Taylor

So you basically look at them and say, This is not why I want to become Not the kind of Correct,

Phil M. Jones

correct. And I think it is important to look towards those groups of people as it is towards those that you have aspiration towards. Because there are hundreds of ways you can build a business as a professional speaker, hundreds. And it's very easy, particularly in today's marketplace where information is so easily and readily available. That what you do is that you think you have to be all things to all people that you that you think, well, if somebody else is successful, I need to be more like that. And we end up then seeing copycat speakers. And the trouble with that is you can't be what you're not. It's like an impossibility. You can take influence from other people. But if you're trying to be what you're not, then what happens is one that you get found out or you feel bad because you don't feel like you're being you in what it is you're doing. But you've built a reputation for being something you're not and you can't break out of that shell. So a level of authenticity is important, but you need to discover that through looking at what it is that other people do with it. I'll take a piece of that. I'll try it on for a while and I view it Like, like, if you went out shopping for a day, you might have an idea of what you would like. But until you put something on, and you take it for a walk, or you look at yourself back in the mirror with it, you don't decide whether it's something you like or not. So people early on in their career, I think they should, they should just soak themselves up in the world and learn it, learn the different business models. And the business models are as important as the as the presentations themselves. Because without a business model that supports your ability to get to speak regularly, then the game gets over real quick.

James Taylor

What do you use? I mean, on this summit, we've got the thing I was a little bit concerned about when I'm interviewing so many different speakers and they have such different role, different business models and what they're doing. Yeah, was that for the for the someone that's watching this just now they can feel a bit discombobulated and they can feel that, oh, that's what I want to do. Any advice that you would give in terms of helping the speaker that's watching this or aspiring speaker that's watching this to have some kind of compass to help them guide themselves so they can know. Those things are not, you know, they're interesting, but I don't necessarily want to want to do

Phil M. Jones

in order to be able to successfully speak you need a number of audiences and then clients that would pay to put you in front of those audiences. Well, often people don't do is to put themselves in one singular box. When it comes to winning business, you can't aim at just one thing any one period of time because what you need is you need some business that will feed your family on Friday. You need some business that can sustain you to be able to live for a year and then you need something to be able to chase. I'm a big believer that the in the world of sales, you cannot manage any more than 18 prospects at any one period of time and having trained over 2 million people, I've still found that same thing to be true 18 prospects is the most that you could ever have. So if you can get yourself laser focused on 18 prospects, you can become what I call devilishly productive. And the reason I call it devilishly productive is because we split that magic 18 into groups of six, six and six. My advice would be at any given period of time when you're looking at what kind of speaking business you want to build is give yourself three different categories of types of events or

types of things that you might want to do. So say for example, it might be with a low hanging fruit is at that bottom end, is this is what I have within arm's reach. Right now, this is where I have some wind at my back. This might be the industry that you've grown out of this might be the geographic location of where you based, it might be something you deliver online because you've already built an audience. low hanging fruit, which was really in with easy reach that you can get a yes to relatively quickly put some money on the table for Friday. For me at the early stage of my business, that was my one day sales workshop. always working six prospects towards my one day sales workshop. What did I really want to do? Well, when I first started I only corporate training events that could give me 40 5060 people in the room, pay me a handsome fee to be able to deliver a half day or a full day workshop. Well, that would be MBAs a slightly longer pipeline but always be working six prospects there. And then my dream gigs. At that point in time when I was first starting was i'd love the keynote the main stage, the 45 minute keynote the 60 minute the 90 minute the big fee everybody like loves you, you love them, you sell a load of books, everything's beautiful, then you disappear again for the next day. So always be working six prospects in those camps. What then happened though, was is as your career progresses, is what was then my low hanging fruit now becomes something we don't do anymore things then start to be able to shift through that moment. So always what you're looking for is to say, what is going to feed my family right now? What is going to give me some sustenance to mean that I can have peace of mind and reassurance and then what am I shooting at big time. So we're playing three different business models that potentially feed each other at the same time. And then try those three on if you then find something that doesn't work, switch one out with something else but three target markets, three different types of Businesses progressive steps business model. And you'll find what you love. This is the most the best job in the world and the worst job in the world. If you're not with your people, if you're not serving audiences that serve you back, if you are putting yourself into a situation where your travel schedule is overwhelming your life, then it takes over your ability to better enjoy what you do on the platform.

James Taylor

So wondering that terms as you as you've been building, and now where you are in your own career, thinking about the kind of the sustainability so moving out of the, I just need to get speaking gigs, with workshops, public workshops, corporate, you're now at a stage in your career, where you're making different types of decisions. And wondering the weather. Let's think like the recurring type of models start to come into that. So going up and keynotes is amazing. But it's like a little bit like being the kind of rock star going to a gig and you're doing those shows. And that's all That comedian going doing that live tour. But when you're not on the road, there's maybe nothing happening. So how do you start to think about like building in sustainability and things that those are revenue streams that could be coming in when you don't necessarily have to be on the road?

Phil M. Jones

Yeah, I think that's what you're always looking at in that middle group of six people that you're working different things for different people. And if I gave a child a cupcake, what is the only part of the cupcake but they would like to eat

James Taylor

that nice cherry sitting on the top now,

Phil M. Jones

they want the cherry on the top of the frosting and sprinkles but they don't want the cake itself. They want all the stuff that's on top of the cake. Now most speakers are the same. What they want is they want the charity they want the frosting they want the sprinkles on all the good stuff. Trouble is you can't live on that sweet tooth piece alone, we needed some sustenance. So I encourage anybody looking to build a speaking business to go build the base of the cupcake first. The way I look to do that is firstly understand what your what your livelihood personal expenses are. Whether it's 3000 a month, 5000 a month 10,000 a month. 15,000 a month, whatever it might be, build a sustainable business model in that place that says, my bills are covered, I can live my life. from that position, you can have a down sell and upsell from that position. So for me right now, my author business just changed my life. I make enough recurring royalty based revenue from my books and the work that we've done to mean that I can pay for everything we have in our life. And it doesn't leave me a comfy comfy life, but I don't have to worry about paying a single bill based on the author business that we built.

Phil M. Jones

Historically, that used to be a coaching business.

Phil M. Jones

Historically, that used to be a retained number of training events like a 20 gig contract with one client that the paid me out. And it's also been recurring revenues of online coaching programs too. But I've always had something in that space that says I've got something working here that pays for everything, and I focused on that but it's not sexy.

Phil M. Jones

What that means, though, is then when I get a hifi speaking gig, come in

Phil M. Jones

It's, um,

Phil M. Jones

feels like it should feel it feels like rock star money because it's on top of what I need. If I had to take that rock star money, and then use it to pay my bills this month, I don't feel like the rock star should feel like it feels a little incongruent with that rock star moment. So it's worth building the base. To give you the feeling of saying that the good stuff is the good stuff. Now the down sell there also could then be the good stuff. So then means you could start to look at it and say, Well, when I do these workshops or these training events, what can I do to get

extras? I was at an event yesterday in Rochester, New York, it was a small group full of people. It was like 35 people. My down sell for fun was that we did a book for everybody in the room, like 35 \$15. Now I don't care in the fact that I get big six figure fees and things on occasions for contracts. I still love walking out with 500 bucks extra on the back of an event. I still love it. It's like a buzz. But we can then look at say how do we commercial be commercial As we build a business, but getting your speaking business right means that you should try on different models, but always be working three, always work the base of the cupcake, then you enjoy the sprinkles love that

James Taylor

love that analogy. And what's your cause your background, you have such a strong background in the sales piece. I want to know what advice you would give to the speakers out there when it comes to I mean, actually, I say sales. But one of the things I've noticed about you is actually how brilliant your branding is. And so that's kind of kind of going but i don't know, i class can like marketing moving into sales in this kind of place in between. But I can look at your book, I can look at your website from standing at a distance. And I know it's you. Right, and because there's a look and feel it, people some people may not appeal to others, but I'm guessing for your target audiences. It's the thing that connects and it's very it's kind of a classy kind of thing. Does it have a black background with orange writing? It's kind of feels like New York Times there's a there's a story Feels like a substantive there. So I'm interested to know a little bit the branding piece of what you do, how much you kind of thinking about that for what you do. But also how the the any advice you would give to speakers in terms of the sales, especially as they starting to be speaking more, and they're getting more inbound coming in and how to do

Phil M. Jones

those inquiries. Well, let's do the two things is to develop the piece of the brand. It takes forever of trial and error, like like you.

Phil M. Jones

I mean, in this game 10 years right now we are on website iteration number 23. We, you know, I rewrite my copy. I have a recurring piece in my schedule every six weeks or a story look at things sees what needs to tweak what needs to change and if your career is doing this, your BIOS out a date every three months, right? So things need to continue to look to change. What you do want to look at though in terms of setting your stall out is the biggest thing that a potential buyer Thinking when they're looking towards booking somebody, it's not Will you be brilliant? It's Will you not suck?

Is risk risk mitigation?

Correct is is what they're looking at is to saying, you know, if I'm putting my reputation on the line, is my reputation potentially going to be tarnished by this not? Is my reputation going to be amplified by this. So what they want is anything that can give them some confidence that you've done this before, and people like them have had a pleasant experience in the past. This means getting real, authentic testimonials. This means getting great photography. One

of the reasons that my branding materials look so good, is that we've been photographing and recording every event since I first started. And I've been putting my own people in to be able to do that most of the time. video content is key. So don't think you have to have all of these things in the first instance. But no, it's your quest to get them and continually be on the quest of being able to make it better. And model of somebody you need to write is find somebody that you call I like this stuff and and you draw influence from it and say how do I make my stuff look the same but the brand is key and build it out on everything you know business card email signature, your thank you cards that then follow up towards other people. If you're running your own events with your banners look like in the room What are the pens look like that your your delegates are using? What are the paths look like that they're working on and we see we control that entire process and I have done since my very first workshop to create an experience that says this guy looks like he's done this 100 times before even my first workshop we look like a giant organization. But what did I spend I spent a few hundred pounds on making you look like we've done that before that that's the goal of most of your branding.

James Taylor

And when it goes like when I think about something like Debenhams, for example, they've always been very good at that the aim of a certain type of customer My wife is probably like their type type of customer and and everything you go in it has a certain kind of feel as a certain quote, you know a certain kind of quality. You can see it transcend it has obviously changed over the years. You can see being replicated in their print their TV as the online, you can stand a distance you can go into the store, there's all those little triggers that you get to see that it relates to that brand. Now when

Phil M. Jones

it comes to the sales piece, there's two things that I want everybody to think about is. First things first, there are two questions that you need to know the answers to before you start entering into this world of professional speaking. And I think many people forget this because what they want to do is want to be a speaker, they can speak on anything to anybody about like almost any subject. That's where they think often two questions that people should know the answers to ahead of time is number one, who are the people that they serve. And the narrower that position is, the easier is to start going out hunting and looking for opportunities. And the second lowest questions is which problems do you solve for them? I'll share this super quick with an analogy is if you are looking to open a tin of beans, what would you be looking for to better help you on that quest? You know, not a Swiss Army knife. Yeah.

James Taylor

Oh, am I right? If you're in a pretty desperate

Phil M. Jones

state, you take a Swiss Army knife. Yeah, but first thought is I want to open a tin of beans. I need a tin opener on open a can of beans I want to count out, right? That's what you're looking for. And the same thing is true when it comes to people looking for speaker. So if you're a leadership speaker, well, there's 1000 leadership speakers in the world. If you're a

leadership speaker that helps independent retailers and you're an independent retailer, it now becomes easier for me to pick you if you are a you know, an innovation speaker but you're an innovation speaker for the accountancy profession they can't see profession could look in and say you get me what an audience is looking for to get the show me that you know me type vibe. So the more that you can hate say these are my people, the easier it becomes to find business. And I know that's kind of counterintuitive, but when you're aiming everybody, you're not the right fit for them and they're not the right fit for you. When you say I'm aiming here, we can find a perfect match a little bit easier.

James Taylor

Can you mentioned those two Six, six and six years. So can would you advise someone who's maybe just getting started to putting aside people that are already up and running with the speaking of those those those three buckets? would you advise that maybe it's the same same kind of problem that they're solving, but maybe do choose different audiences? Or should we call it that that's maybe the way to the different audience? Yeah,

Phil M. Jones

yeah, the problem that you solve is is, is really kind of straightforward. And the problem is, for example, the problem that I solve for my audiences, and I help them make more of their conversations count, but that's what I do for people. And I help them understand how the importance of the right words at the right time can drive the right kind of actions. Now, as my reputation is growing, that means that the breadth of audience can start to get wider because I get bookings, because I'm Phil Jones, not because of the problem that I solved, but it's taken 10 years to get to that point in time. I started saying I help small, independent business owners that didn't understand the sales process to understand how they could sell more effectively to try to have a recession. So that was the problem that I helped solve. That was the People, small independent business owners that are looking to trade our recession. Well, I'm a small independent business owner, I'm looking to trade our recession, this guy could probably help, but positioned myself as a sales trainer that think they didn't need it. sales training was what I delivered. But the people I helped in the program myself are two completely different things and see I changed the conversation.

James Taylor

Yeah. As my friend said, recently, you had something you have to hide the broccoli in the cake. So, so that I'm interested as you were kind of going your own journey, because I think this is one that maybe maybe platform speakers can struggle with when they can start to move it into the corporate world. So you were even that small business owner? It's It feels like more of a b2c type of relationship because they don't have the credit card. their money. Yeah. How do you when you started moving, so you develop that market? And as you started moving into the more the corporate world, which is more of a b2b relationship, so it's in on invoice, let's say and yeah, how did you did you What did you have to change to make that make that move?

Phil M. Jones

The biggest cost commonality is more apparent than the differences. The commonality is, is you're in the people business. What starts to happen though, is that Firstly, you realize

you're spending other people's money. So instead of them investing money with you to mean that they might be able to send the kids on vacation this year. You're they're spending money with you to help them get that promotion. So so what happens is the motivation in the individual that's responsible for making the purchase changes, that's the only thing that changes, you're still helping people. The other difference is, you've got to be aware that the procurement process is sometimes different that you're going to wait 90 days on invoice or that you have to then have more rigid procedures in your place when it comes to having things like your insurances, your contracts, your just your procedures in place to say that I'm going to play your game when it comes to getting paid. In terms of doing the work what doesn't change that much. Just pay to pay gets dangerous.

James Taylor

So you talking about this Moving into the sales piece as those speakers once they can identify, you know, who do they serve? What problems they're solving for people as well? Where does it need to? Where does it need to go next on that

Phil M. Jones

we're going to find yourself in conversations with people. And what we must firstly understand is what selling really isn't selling is earning the right to make a recommendation. What selling isn't is is isn't embellishing a product or service with features or benefits hoping something's going to stick. And the mistake here is what people do is that they were looking for is we're looking to get validation that the problem that we believe that they have is a problem that is true to them, and then fine credibility towards the fact that we might be the people to fix it. Take for example, a typical inbound inquiry for speaker typically inbound inquiry for speaker isn't the phone ringing. It's a web contact form or an email coming in. And that email typically asked the same two questions. Number one is are you available number two is what's your fee.

Phil M. Jones

That's the typical kind of decision I was flat without. That's the typical inquiry that comes in. We're going to know the answers to those questions. And Firstly, we don't actually know the need to know the answers those questions. Because who's the person who's in control of every conversation?

James Taylor

It should be you as the as the because you don't have an almost you have enough information at that point?

Phil M. Jones

Yeah, the person

who's in control of every conversation is the person who's asking the questions. So what happens is when you get questions asked of you, if you want to gain control of that conversation, it isn't an answer that you need. What it is that you need is a question. Yeah. So the answer to the question isn't an answer at all is the question to the question. That's what we should be looking together. Think about. Okay. So inquiry comes in and says, Are you available? What's your fee? What the typical response is, is yes, hell yes. I'm definitely

available and what's your budget? That's what many people come back with, which is the worst thing we could do. Something every speaker needs to know for certain is their fee. What is your fee Now I don't care what that number is. But you need to know that you have a thing or not, you're prepared to accept whenever you can get, what is it, you place a value of your time in now, you might get paid different numbers to that fee. But you've got to know at every given period of time, what your fears, I also don't want you necessarily to disclose this at this point in time inquiry comes in, what I would like to do is to respond to that inquiry using a different means of communication to the one in which the inquiry came in. So if the inquiry comes in via an email, my first response would be via telephone, I'd be calling them myself, because I want to be seen as demonstrably different to every other person that they have put an application out towards. So I would respond, my words would be something along the lines of it's just a quick call. Why would I say it's just a quick call because I don't want to get into the meat of the discussion right now. Thank you so much for your inquiry coming in. I've checked my schedule and as I can see right now, I do have some availability on that date. I'm happy to be able to place it on hold for you. But answer me this Just tell me what is it about me in my work that makes you think that I might be the right fit for this kind of event?

So I responded with a question, what do they now do that providing more information to you as well, and you're getting more nuance? Yeah. And I'm getting the whole backstory more often than not, they do my job for me.

James Taylor

So they start to almost tell you the things and you're sitting there able to able to feed that. But actually, truth be told, this is what any good salesperson is doing. It kind of goes back to Dale Carnegie, seek first to understand then be understood,

Phil M. Jones

same difference. And what we're doing is we're getting we're getting some backstory on it. So I think it's remarkably important that we ask those kind of questions of people. We can then go on to ask kind of ongoing questions. We can ask things like so what's your experience of working with a paid professional speaker?

James Taylor

That's an interesting one, because that's that's and that's a very interesting one, because you're basically pulling it you mentioned earlier, they're just speaker's negative role models as well. So you're in their head. You're getting all the things that they really really dislike about working with speakers.

Phil M. Jones

I'm getting the whole thing but So just note the new ones. And I'm one of the world's leading experts when it comes to writing intelligent questions to avoid objections. It's like the thing that I'm doing any of my consulting work and I love it for fun. But that question there is what's your experience of working with paid professional speakers? There's a few things. Number one, it positions you as a paid professional speaker. Yeah. The other thing is, is you find out where you've been out with things in the past. So they say things like, Well, last year, we booked so and so and we've had this person in the past, etc, etc, etc. They want to have a

conversation with you about money. So you say well, what have you paid your previous speakers? Now I get some form of benchmark if they choose to be able to tell me I haven't said what's your budget? I've said What did you pay your previous speakers? What I can now say is I can say things while you're looking for this your speaker to be better or worse.

Phil M. Jones

They can say things well, hopefully better you could say well, would it be fair to say that you want it better than you've had before that it would make sense that you might need to pay a little more,

James Taylor

you having a very, very different conversation there. And, and, and, obviously it was bit importantly that you switched modalities got it switched mediums in terms of going from someone on email to going on the phone. I wonder about that question or that part there? where, you know, we hear more and more, maybe less on the CEOs, but maybe on the on the event planners, maybe younger, they might, you know, phone is not such a big thing. So how do they feel when they get that call from you?

Phil M. Jones

More often than not, they feel great. I mean, I had one yesterday, right. So yesterday inquiry comes in via referral for a multi gig event across the US. Join email goes in somebody might want to consider for the event is Phil Jones, response comes back. Thank you for the introduction. Phil, can you let us know some times that we might have to get together to have a conversation?

What do I do? I pick up the phone.

So I don't respond saying

I'm here sometimes meet my meet my assistant Bonnie. I'll get something set up for you, etc. I respond with a phone call. Hey Leah. It's filled in over an email dialogue right now, I got 45 minutes before I go on stage in a second. And I thought I'd try and catch you right now without clogging up some future time. She says,

Well, that's great.

Thanks for jumping on this, I wish more speakers would do this. Where am I in this negotiation, now,

James Taylor

you're in a very strong position, because you're setting yourself apart once again, from all the other speakers that probably would just done an email response, or unfortunately, we hear a lot of speakers that don't even respond as well. So you're, you're instantly at that top of that, that that line now

Phil M. Jones

and I want the listeners in to understand something really important right now is there's nothing that I'm sharing today that will work with all of the people all the time. So it's not like oh, feel secure, and I try to call them and they didn't pick up or they didn't like it, that's a load of rubbish. It's this is stuff that works with more of the people more of the time it should you choose to apply it, so it's not for everybody. But what would happen if I didn't get to connect

on that phone call? Well, I might shoot a quick email. I might do it deliberately from my phone. So it says sent from my iPhone on the bottom as opposed to With my six email signature, my response might be, hey, received your inquiry, just try to reach on the phone. Just so you know, I'm free between four and six this evening, and I'm going to be traveling to the airport on my way back from a gig, it might be a great time for us to be able to connect, shoot me know if we can make that time work. So I'm moving out of that corporate piece. And out of that scheduled formality rigidity and moving it towards a more friendly conversation and showing that I'm in on this too. And that they're going to have a conversation with the person as opposed to be pushed through the process.

James Taylor

And on on that call. Sometimes, if that email has come initially from let's say, not the final decision maker, let's say it's come from the persons organizing the conference. So you're calling back the person that has organized the conference, not let's say the decision maker, how are you? Are you are you trying to get onto that, get that decision maker then on the call after that, so that you can do that or you just happy to go with just the the person who is contacting you initially?

Phil M. Jones

Well, what you generally find in the speaking world is the decision maker is the person who's going to sign off on it, but that decision maker takes 95% of the influence over that decision from the person that you're speaking to. Okay, so, you know, they might not be signing off the purchase order or the check, etc. The the event planner, or the initial inquiry person is somebody who actually carries a huge amount of influence in that. The minute I try to disregard the level of influence of that first person has and go over their head, I actually lose their support. So what I want to do is I want to train this person to have an effective conversation internally to mean that I'm the only choice.

James Taylor

So how do you do that and when you're having one of the things that you want to ensure this person understands in order that they're going to when they have that conversation with with their boss, then they can ensure that they're helping you and doing your job?

Phil M. Jones

Well, the things that I want to understand from them is not what they need to understand about me is I want the to get them to have the confidence that I understand what they need. So what I'm looking at is Those series of questions again is tell me what's your experience of working with a paid professional speaker in the past? So how many people you've got coming to the event? Is this the first time that you've done an event of this nature? What is the theme? Or the outcome that you're looking for? Tell me if somebody was awesome. What could they deliver in this session for you right now that would mean that you would go away feeling immensely proud of you, Joyce. I'm asking series of questions that they get this other person to say I understand your problem as well, if not better than you do. So there's no Let me tell you how freakin awesome I am. What there is, is let me discover and understand what it is you're looking for and see if that see if this fit is right. Now sometimes I go through this round of discovery with a client and I'm like, I don't think I'm the right guy.

Sounds to me what you're looking for is somebody that's more like this. Would this be fair? Well, yeah, that's kind of what I'm looking for. Right? Somebody you need to speak to is, you know, would you welcome an introduction to somebody like that because I think they might be able to deliver your brief, slightly better. Annika

James Taylor

so almost like what you're doing there is, instead of going, this is me, I'm brilliant. Here's the problem. here's, here's, here's how I solve your problem. Here's how I deliver the solution. And then finally, you this your problem, you have basically flipped around the other side, you're focusing on, what are your challenges? What's your problem? Finding out from then? Like, how has the waste of solute, solve that problem? Maybe not just the keynote, maybe there's other things that you can also be doing in terms of training and other stuff. And then finally, you're coming to yourself,

Phil M. Jones

it's got it's kind of flipped it and very rarely do I need to tell somebody about my ability to be able to train and deliver from the stage because they already knew that that's why they reached out to me in the first place. Yeah, that's we think about the way the world is right now. It's rare that somebody jumps into a conversation or reaches out to somebody or finds themselves considering a conversation with you without them. Having a look across your website, checking out your LinkedIn profile watching a video or two They understand that you've got something about you, what they're looking for is is Do you understand the problem that we have? And do you feel that you've got the ability within your toolkit to go out and be able to do over deliver in this environment? Is that something you feel confident about? And I've learned to walk away from more opportunities recently, then then try and force myself into something that isn't right. And the busier you get, you start to learn. So I probably have room in my schedule for around 50 keynotes a year. And that limitation is fun. Hmm. Because it means that I could be I could be on stage in the wrong gig, delivering the wrong message to the wrong audience. And Okay, um, I got paid and it might have been like a solid performance, or I could have took that same day, that same moment and made a real difference with people that really have a need and a requirement for the problem I solve and I could have had a blast, the day would have passed regardless. So

James Taylor

one of the things that helps you do that is kind of going back to what we spoke at right at the start is you built that base, so that we You can you're having those conversations from a position of, of confidence of strength and feeling you can you can walk away You don't have to be taking this if you're not the race speaker, they don't say I'm not ready speaking you may suggest someone else for example, but you're, if you didn't have that base, it might feel you might feel okay, actually, you have to escape

Phil M. Jones

you have to Yeah, and I've been there too in the past. And that's what taught me the importance of the base. So I you know, every year I want to start every year saying my bills are covered. And and, you know, I do 20 gigs a year with the same client year in year out that isn't my dream work. It isn't like me doing the thing that I love. I just quite like it. Like I

quite like it. I'm really good at it and it delivers a result. It isn't me living my dream. But it is me getting a regular recurring revenue coming in every month teaching, teaching, teaching teaching, which allows me the freedom to go find the things that make my heart sing

James Taylor

to make those decisions. So So when you and we don't have too much time this because I'm conscious of your time just now as well. And when we start to you get on the gig itself and you get there to the, to the place, are there other things that you're looking to do, when you're actually there to ensure that you really over deliver on outside of just that the keynote, there are other things that you're ensuring that you want to try and do there,

Phil M. Jones

there's a few things that I do is number one is I always like to get to my venue the day before the event. Like it's not always possible, and I want to see the room before I close my eyes. sounds stupid. But if I've seen the space that I'm going to work in, then what I've got is I've got some familiarity to how I'm going to use that room, how I'm going to work that room, what potential constraints could exist to me. I want to get there early. I want to shake the hands of the AV crew. I also do something that almost no speakers do. But I think for me is absolutely essential. And every time I do it, I get further positive reinforcement. That's the right thing to do. Is it doesn't matter what time I'm speaking whatever that audience have heard. That day ahead of my speech is imperative to me. So if I'm on at 4pm, I'm in that room from 9am fly on the wall at the back listening to everything was delivered before me. Because my job is to serve that audience not to deliver my speech. The mistake could happen is that if I deliver something out of context, but don't tie it back to something that was said by somebody else earlier, don't link those examples. I could be in conflict when in fact, so I'm actually saying the same thing from a slightly different angle. Yeah. And that is disservice to my audience. So I do that without fail ahead of time. I also plan how I'm gonna utilize the stage, what I might do in terms of props, I come on and off the stage, you know that I kind of actively work an audience. That

James Taylor

was one of the things I really enjoyed about your I mean, there's last thing I enjoyed about hearing you and seeing you speak before but one of the things that I thought made a really big impact in the room was that you were moving around. You were having that and it feel much more interactive. You You're going and spending time with an individual person in the room having that conversation. The whole room is then transfixed on you having that that conversation with that person.

Phil M. Jones

Yeah, so that requires prep too. So what I might need to do is I might need to find the types of personalities in that room that if I'm going to pick on somebody individually, how do I get the right feel of energy or vibe? Or do I see somebody as a, as a strong influencer, particularly in a smaller room that I think will if I can sway that person and get engagement from them, then I'll change the energy in the whole room? How am I going to map if I'm going to work through a set of tables or down some roads and alleys etc? Where is my safe places to walk? Have I tested the microphone towards any potential feedback spots with

speaker systems etc? What am I doing to be able to then get back onto the stage because that could be Crikey embarrassing, like I jump off the stage, realize there's no steps and I've got to get back on elegantly in some way. And I live in This fear of rip in the back of my trousers or pants, and that being the thing that I get remembered for. So I, I try and mitigate any any kind of risks there. And what I'm looking at is a really simple principle is that I always want to control my controllables there's so much stuff that you're at sea with so much stuff that you rely on your experience, you rely on being able to be in the moment. And the more that you control your controllables in your performance, the more you can actually find freedom and enjoyment in the delivery of your performance because what you've done is you've anchored down everything you possibly could do to allow you to be able to bring your true brilliance in the moment.

James Taylor

So on that control your controllables wasn't your speaker bag wasn't that bag that you carry with you to all of your speaking engagements that you'd never, never leave home without. I have

Phil M. Jones

three slide clickers because I'm always fearful of one guy and wrong.

Replacement batteries. I have two versions of every adapter To that I could possibly ever need if I need my slides to go on. I have photographs of my passport in case I ever lose it. I have multiple thumb drives with presentation decks on them as well as the things that I've sent across. I carry throat coat tea, I carry entertain the secret to be able to lubricate my throat sometimes if I'm struggling a little bit on the road I carry airborne or Baraka, you know like the vitamin things in order to be able to take care of my health when I travel what else is in my bag and extra extra charges I got this great little charger In fact I was gonna show it to you where it's like a portable pack that has multiple USBs in it as well and replaces the need to be able to put an outlet in the wall. So anything I can that I'm kind of gadget like, like mad if it can save me save me time. In fact, I got this little thing as well. I bought the other day. This is kind of super cool. So this is like an outlet. And then it's multiple USBs. And things if I want to work on a plane, instead of having like something plugged in somewhere, I can plug this little thing in, that doesn't fall out, that then allows me to better plug multiple things in on my desk when I'm traveling, and compression socks to make sure that I don't like lots of stuff to be able to make sure I'm still healthy on the road. Yeah, more so than delivering the performance. And thank you cards. And then I have a bag full of thank you cards, because there's always people I meet on the road. And I want to say thank you to. And

I carry stamps for both of us in the UK with me at all given times to if I want to mail something to somebody.

James Taylor

Um, what about apps? Is there any particular apps online tools, online resources you find really useful for yourself as a speaker, I guess

Unknown Speaker

probably the biggest resource for me as a speaker outside of all the ones that you're going to hear from everybody else is I use an app called I talk. And I talk is a voice recording app that directly syncs up with Dropbox and sometimes if I'm working on a new bit, or I'm playing with the idea of a new opening or bad See, even though I want to take a recording of my own speech, then sometimes what I do is I run I talk recording in my in my pocket, okay? Or I talk into ahead of time. And then what I've got is an audio file of my speech. Some other things I can then do with that is if I deliver something that I really liked, but I didn't know what it was, I've got the audio track to better go back to I'll then push that through rev.com. Yeah. And rev.com is a transcription service. There's lots of others out there. And I'll rip out the the transcription word dot play with that, dial it up. Now, sometimes I'll get blog articles from that. Sometimes it's just for my own reference. And you'll know what it's like as a speaker. Sometimes you do something in the moment, and it's brilliant. But you can't remember what you did.

James Taylor

Yeah, yeah. Or there may be as a camera sitting up up there, fixed up at the back of the room. And the audio is lousy because you don't have anything near you to be able to pick that up.

Phil M. Jones

Yeah, so so the ability to be able to do that and equally, you know, I'm often just dropped ideas into it thought for me just and I might have my headphones on while I'm walking through an airport. And it's recording in the background. And I and I'm, I'm talking to myself about, you know,

planning in a new opening, I do a lot of customized openings events, particularly given that I've, I've listened to the whole session in the morning on the closing keynote, I'll rework my opening, in order to be able to bring contrast or something has happened towards the rest of the event. And it kills because they realize this isn't a canned presentation yet, even though so much of it is structured. The ability for me to be able to create a level of tailoring in is something that event organizers really enjoy

James Taylor

what that book is there one particular book, you would recommend not one of your own books. I've got your book, and it's I'm actually starting to go through your book just now. And I would say of this summit, if there was a one book that was recommended more than any other book, it's actually been your book this year, which is a great testament to you.

Phil M. Jones

So that's exactly exactly what to say or exactly how to sell

James Taylor

exactly what the Say, yeah, exactly what I say. So if it was one book, we're gonna have links to your book here as well. But if there's one other book, you would recommend the speakers or aspiring speakers, what would that book be?

Phil M. Jones

I think there's a book that everybody should read. And it's a book called the coaching habit by Michael Bungay Stanier. Yeah. And it's a really short and easy read. It's meant with the purpose of helping busy managers to have more effective coaching, coaching conversations. But the brilliance in that book is just about having more effective meaningful conversations there is there is links towards sales language in that that it was never intended to be. But often what we're looking to do with our clients, is to coach them into doing what it is that we would like to be able to do or to coach them into seeing that we're the right choice not to tell them and Michael's book there, I think it opens up, maybe the ability to look at something that you've previously seen as something you might deliver to your clients, but learn to how you can use it to have more effective conversations to get more of what you want. That would be maybe a random but useful recommendation is

James Taylor

It's a great book. I had Michael on the on the podcast A while ago. And actually, if anyone is thinking about releasing a book and being as an author, his description of how he launched that book is fascinating because he didn't go the traditional route, especially in the marketing. So it's worth just checking out. But we'll put a link in here as well. But guys a great book. So a final question for you. Let's imagine you woke up tomorrow morning, and you have to start from scratch. So you have all the skills, all the tools that you've acquired over the years, but no one knows you, you know, no one, what would you do? How would you restart

Phil M. Jones

itself host an event that fixes a problem I know that exists within my locality. And,

and I would charge for that event.

So I take the skill that I'm good at, I find groups of people who can make quick decisions, and I'd go back to where I very first started. And when it comes to being able to host a live event, then what you do is you take the problem that exists so let me talk you through the exact language pattern here. So I wrote a sales training workshop that helps independent business owners to be able to get out of a recession, and ask a series of questions to people like me and our network like crazy to better Phyllis, first question would be How's business?

Everybody says business, you know? Yeah, that's

good. So So I follow up with another question. It's not really a question. I just phrased it as a question. The question I'd ask is the word Really? And they said, Well, you know, what things could you know, things could always be better. I'd say, Well, what kind of things are you doing right now, in order to be either improve or grow your business? And you know, they'd say, No, no law. I'd say how open minded would you be to running through a program and spending a day together for us to better learn some new skills you could put into practice that might help you improve your business from where it is right now, let's say sounds good.

That's saying, well, when is it? I'd say what do you free the 24th of April?

that say, Well, I'm not so sure yet. I'd say what are you free on all? This? Oh, no, I could probably be Free? I'd say great. Well, I'm running a one day workshop. And these are the details. Let me get you penciled in.

And I'd go out and have those conversations. And the thing that everybody needs to remember is that questions, create conversations, conversations, build relationships, relationships, create opportunities, and opportunities lead to sales. Everybody goes looking for sales, what we should be looking to do is where can we ask questions of the type of people that we'd like to help? So the same thing that happens here, right is that say, for example, that you know who it is that you want to serve back to the point that we made earlier on? How can you get into a position where you're asking questions of those people? Because those questions were great conversations, those conversations will build relationships, those relationships, great opportunities and opportunities will lead to sales. could be as simple as a workshop could be as simple as something like what you're doing here where you're interviewing experts, that you could start asking questions of the experts that you'd like to be able to serve. And chances are that that will result in you having some conversations, building some relationships, create some opportunities. making some sales

James Taylor

asking better questions. I love that I love that idea. And we have a you've got a great six part video series on of selling skills that we're going to have a link here below so people can go in and go through to that, as well describe describe a little bit more about what they're gonna find in that video series.

Phil M. Jones

Yeah, it's super simple is I love that people's attention span sometimes can be wicked like wicked short. So I wrote and then produced a series of six videos that we call our snack size seminars. This is where I take the entire sales process and break it down into six videos that are all somewhere around the six minutes in length. First one is learn to sell in six minutes. So it starts there. What we then work towards is some ways in which you can open more doors, create some more opportunities, how we can be more effective in our questioning how we can build a big list so that you would never need to make a cold call again. We looked at some closing techniques and then I teach people how to overcome the objections that they face. We do it all in a series of six videos. And I think alongside that will give people a PDF ebook of how they can win more appointments get face to face To some more people, and back it up with an audio one of my life speeches as well, but people can plug into that means is all there on that link. And that's just a giveaway for me. And what I would ask of anybody though is if they listen to this, and they listen to my materials by any of my books, do any of those things is is Promise me that it isn't going to be a consumption of information and no action? Yeah, it's not knowledge that leads to power at the implementation that leads to these two power. Things don't need to be perfect. You just need to get started. And before you get to do your best, you have to focus on doing better.

James Taylor

And where should people go if they want to learn more about you, which is talking about some of the books here as well, where's the best place? Where's your central hub for all that?

Phil M. Jones

I'm filling Jones comm is my website. That's the site that you talked about earlier on. And from there, you can find all my social channels, you can link out to any of the other stuff that we do. And and I love to hear from people where they put things into action. So come find me on LinkedIn or Twitter or my Facebook page, any of those things. Tell me what you'd like Tell me what you put into practice. Tell me what's worked. And I'll answer your questions. If your questions relate to something you've tried, and you want Learn how to do it better. If you're asking questions about something you haven't had to go out yet. Have a go at it first, then I'll give you some time. Awesome. Well, firstly, a pleasure speaking to you again. I love the work that you do. I think you do. You're doing some amazing, amazing cool things just now. I look forward to getting a chance to hear you again on stage really soon and catching up.

James Taylor

So thanks so much for coming on today.

Unknown Speaker

You're welcome, James. Thanks, everybody for listening. Real pleasure.

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