

A paid speech you can book at every association any year...

I call it the “state of the art” speech, but it could have lots of similar names. And if you do it right, the sponsor is very likely to ask (perhaps even beg) you to give it again and again! (You can even build your own empire around it.)

An example helps here. Let’s say there is a Lighthouse Management Association, there are 50,000 lighthouses, and twice as many members who are involved in keeping the light lit and the coal stacked. (You can see what I know about lighthouses, born in suburban Chicago!)

The core of your “state of the art” lighthouse management presentation would answer these three questions:

(1) How did lighthouses and their management get to where they are now? That’s mostly quick history, some “march of time” visuals, problems along the way, and their solutions. Call this **IN THE PAST**.

(2) It’s 2015. How are the managers and lighthouses doing today? Numbers, budgets, the most common or most serious 5 or 10 current problems, plus visuals of several model lighthouses. Maybe a summary of the best and worst job requirements for the chief honchos. A look at salary ranges, lighthouse-related courses in colleges, anything they want to know more about across the country (or is it shore to shore?) This is **RIGHT NOW**.

(3) **IN THE FUTURE** might be at set dates (5, 10, 15, 50 years from 2015), or in the near future and the far future (provide realistic time spans like 2020-30 and after 2030...). Here you focus on changes afoot now, possible need solutions likely implemented in the future, long-range needs decades away and how they might be met... If possible, maybe even some sketched

visuals of how lighthouses might look in 50 or 150 years.

Compiling (1) is pretty much a history dig, some search tools, lighthouse history accounts and books, a few retellings of relevant “as it was” stories by the pioneers. Humor helps here, as does brevity. (Summarize it in the speech, but you might do full research and write “the” or “a” key book about it in the future. That’s another foundational brick in your empire.)

The association may be your biggest helper in **composing and organizing (2)**. It’s always amazing how little most practitioners know about the larger field they serve. (They are busy doing what they do where they are at. To know more is probably why they are at the convention you would address.) Gathering the present-day facts is another blog. Lists are good: lighthouses and managers (or how to find them quickly), money in and out (global to wee beamers), personnel job descriptions, most common local and national problems (financial, political, directional, technical), equipment (present, problems, solutions), and so on. The listeners should know in 20 minutes the current state of the lighthouse art (where they are, why, how they are the same and different—you fill it in.)

Number (3), probably the last 10-15 minutes, **is the testiest** because it’s “maybe” stuff and usually anybody’s guess. Of course the listeners will wonder if you are just pulling the guesswork out of the air—or their leg. One way to handle that is to say that you contacted 100 scattered lighthouse managers with a questionnaire, plus of course you asked the associationfolk and a dozen recommended “big names” in this field (you actually have to do it!) and here are the 10 trends or innovations or areas of most likely change they saw in the future. List the 10. You might place them on a horizontal “future line” with dates every 5 or 15 or 25 years when they would most likely be started or implemented. Then you discuss all 10, most in some depth (with source links, if available),

a few shorter “who really knows but...” comments.

Why would associations or related sponsors jump at the chance to book this speech or seminar? Because it’s exactly what the members want to know. And in a small part because you are objective and aren’t likely to be pumping some company line. (The questionnaire will help you see what they do want to know. Just ask, “What do you really want to know the most about...” and “How will your lighthouse look in 50 (or 100) years?—or “ideally, how might your lighthouse (or your job) look in 50 (or 100) years?”

Why would they hire you to speak if you can’t tell a lighthouse from a farm house? Because if you present yourself and the topic right, they need to share that information. It would be easier if you were a 40-year lighthouse manager, or at least a manager, knew lighthouses, were an association soul, were a federal officer dealing with lighthouses, were a futurist and you did “state of the art” speeches (preferably about lighthouse management), taught lighthouse history, and so on. But an experienced speaker with a long interest in lighthouses might be plenty. (Long might be relative. Perhaps long vertically, with book jamming your new passion.)

Where does the empire fit in for you? If what you say on speech day is a resounding (or even moderate with clapping) success; it was honest, instructive, and even (heavens) enjoyable; it made huge sense to all listening, and they want a follow-up in two or three years (with more emphasis on (2) and (3), that’s a warm roar telling you to write a book in the general lighthouse management area. And from that book you spread out with more books, more speeches (why not a next-year follow-up about technology, management, and lighthouses, another related need the following year, and on the third year, “state of the art” again?) By that time you’re an “expert” in your defined (“state of the art in...”) area and attendees eagerly fill your hall to hear about themselves again. Emperors or empresses open the door with expertise,

then expand it (and add other information dissemination means to sell more of it, like books, a newsletter, blogs, workshops, public speeches (at lighthouses?), videos, and so on...) An excellent way to begin the financial fiefdom is by starting with “a paid speech you can book at every association any year...” (Just pick one you at least really care about!)

Best wishes,

Gordon Burgett

P.S. I'm half done with a how-to “state of the art” book. I will run an occasional blog on this topic too. If you want to know more or know a “state of the art” speaker whom I might interview, send an email (glburgett@gmail.com) or get on my free, every-two-month, easy-to-escape [newsletter](#) and I will add you to the “state of the art” elist and tell you when the book has seen light. You'll get a discount too!