karmaCRM Clarity at Work

The Professional Speaker's Sales Blueprint

Introduction

You already know how to rock the stage. You've got the speaking part of being a speaker down.

But what sets a prolific professional apart from an aspiring amateur isn't just stage presence. It's also about making sales.

Motivational speaker Neen James puts it this way: "It doesn't matter how awesome you are on stage in this profession. If you can't run a business, you will go out of business." Unless you're a lead generating and nurturing machine, you're going to be stuck delivering your five-star keynote to a lot of empty rooms.

Pro speaker and customer experience expert Shep Hyken says, **"I've been saying for years that the job isn't doing the speech, it's getting the speech**. The speaker's job is marketing and relationship-building. The speech is the outcome of everything you do."

But, what, exactly, do you need to do? Here are the three key components of our professional speaker's sales blueprint: get organized, create follow-ups, and nurture your relationships.

1. Get organized

Think about the existing state of your contacts. Does this sound familiar?

> Sure, I definitely have a list of hot leads I'd like to touch base with. I've got them all on that Post-it note on my desk. I've been wanting to add the CEO that Jeremy mentioned at the wedding -- he said he'd forward me her phone number. I should text him about that. Oh, also, I have four or five emails from that conference of people who said they'd recommend me at a drop of a hat. Now, were those in my Gmail or in my website inbox? Oh, and didn't Jeremy say that Facebook Messenger was best while he was traveling? I should get on that.

Hopefully you're more organized than this! But, even if so, if you don't have an established system for managing your contacts, chances are leads are slipping through the cracks.

At some point, you can no longer rely on your memory or a Post-it note to get a clear picture of your contacts. You need a tool that helps you organize your contacts and your sales activities.

A CRM (Customer Relationship Management) system is one such tool. A good CRM is flexible enough to adapt to your unique systems while structured enough to take a whole lot of thinking off of your plate.

Here are some ways a CRM helps you organize your contacts:

- Storing, sorting, and segmenting contact data
    - Basic contact info, such as name, address, phone number, email, social media handles, and web address
    - Advanced contact info, such as industry, revenue, referral source, birthday, and lead status
    - Customized contact info to suit your individual workflows -- anything from revenue goals to favorite local restaurant

- Tracking your entire communication history with a particular contact so you won't have to remember when you left a voicemail or guess if a lead has visited your website
- Collecting research, conversation notes, and other helpful errata to make your sales process more personalized and meaningful

"**If you don't have a CRM system, get one –** even if you're just starting out," says customer experience expert Mike Wittenstein. "With web traffic tied to our CRM, we can track interactions, get in touch with people when their interest is high, and tailor some of our online and follow-up phone messages according to customer interest. This tech means we will be much more personalized in our service delivery."

If you're not ready to commit to a CRM, dedicated contact management tools, such as FullContact or CircleBack, a general database tool like Microsoft Access or Apache OpenOffice Base, or even an Excel or Google spreadsheet can also help you get organized.

The important thing is to find what works best for you. Once you get your network of ducks all in a row, it's time to start building out your sales outreach system.

2. Build an outreach system

This may not sound like the sexiest part of your career. But streamlining your outreach, connecting regularly and valuably with potential clients, and growing your pro speaker business *is* pretty darn exciting, and you'll get all that and more with a strong system.

Motivational sales and customer-service expert Michael Hoffman backs this up: "You've got to have schedules, systems, and processes. Otherwise. . . your follow-ups don't happen and your relationships don't grow."

For your outreach system to be effective, you need to define your sales activities and then make sure you get them done.

Prioritize your activities with task lists

While creating and implementing a usable task list for your professional outreach sounds easy enough, in practice, the devil is in the details.

- How will you organize your list?
- How will you make sure you capture all the tasks that need to be done?
- How will you integrate your task list into your workflow and your schedule?
- How will you delegate tasks you share responsibility for?
- How will you oversee the completion of projects made up of smaller tasks?
- How will you reconcile contact-specific tasks with the info you keep on a contact?

See? A whole bunch of devils. And turning them each into an angel is key to mastering the “business” part of the professional speaking business.

As above, your tools are your friends. A good CRM will answer many of these questions for you. It’ll integrate your tasks with your contacts, facilitate coordination on tasks, and free up your time so you can concentrate on the highest-value activities.

Project management tools like Asana and Trello are also great for making friends with your task list. Though most don’t integrate with your contact info, they can help you organize your to-dos, capture all that needs to be done, and prioritize your daily tasks.

Set reminders to make sure get things done

Of course, a task list on its own means nothing. You also need a system to ensure you get those tasks done.

Reminders are more than just a convenience. They also free up *a lot* of brain space. By automating reminders for all your tasks (which your CRM can do for you), you can stop worrying that you’re forgetting to follow up with a lead and instead enjoy uninterrupted time to create knock-their-socks-off speeches.

3. Tend to your relationships

As a professional speaker, you're the type of person who doesn't have too much trouble connecting with people. A big part of your job on the platform is exuding the confidence, charm, and relatability that gets people to listen.

Now your task is to take those natural relationship-building skills and use them to get yourself *to* the platform. But, it's not always as easy as calling up a CEO and charming your way into their next trade show. To harness your knowledge, people skills, and expertise, you need to provide value, stay top of mind, and educate your contacts.

Provide value

Pop quiz! When you're starting a new friendship, do you:

A. Ask a lot of questions about your new buddy

B. Share stories and info you think might make them happy

C. Recommend books, movies, and restaurants they might like

D. Spend a lot of time talking about how great you are

Did you say D? Probably not. While it's great to be confident, most people don't like to be around folks who spend all their time talking about how smart they are, how big their house is, or how much better they are than others. Plus, when you tell someone all the ways you're awesome, it makes people less inclined to figure out your awesomeness on their own.

Being curious, helpful, and informative, on the other hand, is a natural way to build new friendships. The same is true of building new professional relationships (and expanding the ones you have).

So, in all of your relationship-nurturing efforts, be sure to lead with value. You want to communicate in ways that make your contacts' lives better, easier, and richer. Here are some examples of how you can do that in emails you send to leads:

- Send along an article you or someone else has written that you think will give insight into your contact's challenges
- Share a recording of a speech you've given that's relevant to your audience
- Pass along recommendations for tools or publications that other clients have found useful

Follow up like your livelihood depends on it (because it does)

Persistence and sales success go together like a well-prepared speaker and a rocking keynote. If you give up the first time you hear a *no thank you* or whenever a lead doesn't respond, you're going to spend a lot of time not giving speeches.

Here's how to avoid that particular pitfall:

- **Follow up often**. The average salesperson makes only 1.3 call attempts before giving up and moving on. The odds of making contact with 2 attempts is below 60% while the odds of connecting with 6 contact attempts jumps to 90%.
- **Follow up quickly.** You're 400% times (!) more likely to connect to a lead if you follow up with them 5 minutes after inquiry than if you wait 10 minutes.
- **Follow up using different forms of communication.** Do this over time: don't call, text, and email in the same day -- there can be a fine line between persistent and aggressive.
- **Follow up with a variety of information.** Send a blog you wrote on improving customer experience and then a testimonial from a happy client.

By prioritizing persistent, quick, and varied follow-up, you won't just close more deals. You'll also build better relationships and keep your work top-of-mind. Plus, outreach that doesn't directly end in a sale today can develop into a sale a few months or even years down the road.

Automate your outreach

As you can see, the amount of follow-up it takes to get people's attention these days can be overwhelming. If you don't have a personal assistant to manage all your correspondence, automation can save you massive expenditures of time and energy.

Create templates

You'll likely be reaching out to your leads in similar ways, repeatedly. For example, you may often email a lead to schedule a meeting or check in if you haven't heard from them in a week or so.

Whatever your M.O., you probably find yourself repeating yourself. Instead of reinventing the wheel every time, create general email templates that you can personalize and use again and again.

Use email sequences

Since you need to connect with your contacts repeatedly to get their attention, you can plan out a multiple-email sequence to nurture your relationships and save you time. With these sequences, you can map out a journey for your leads.

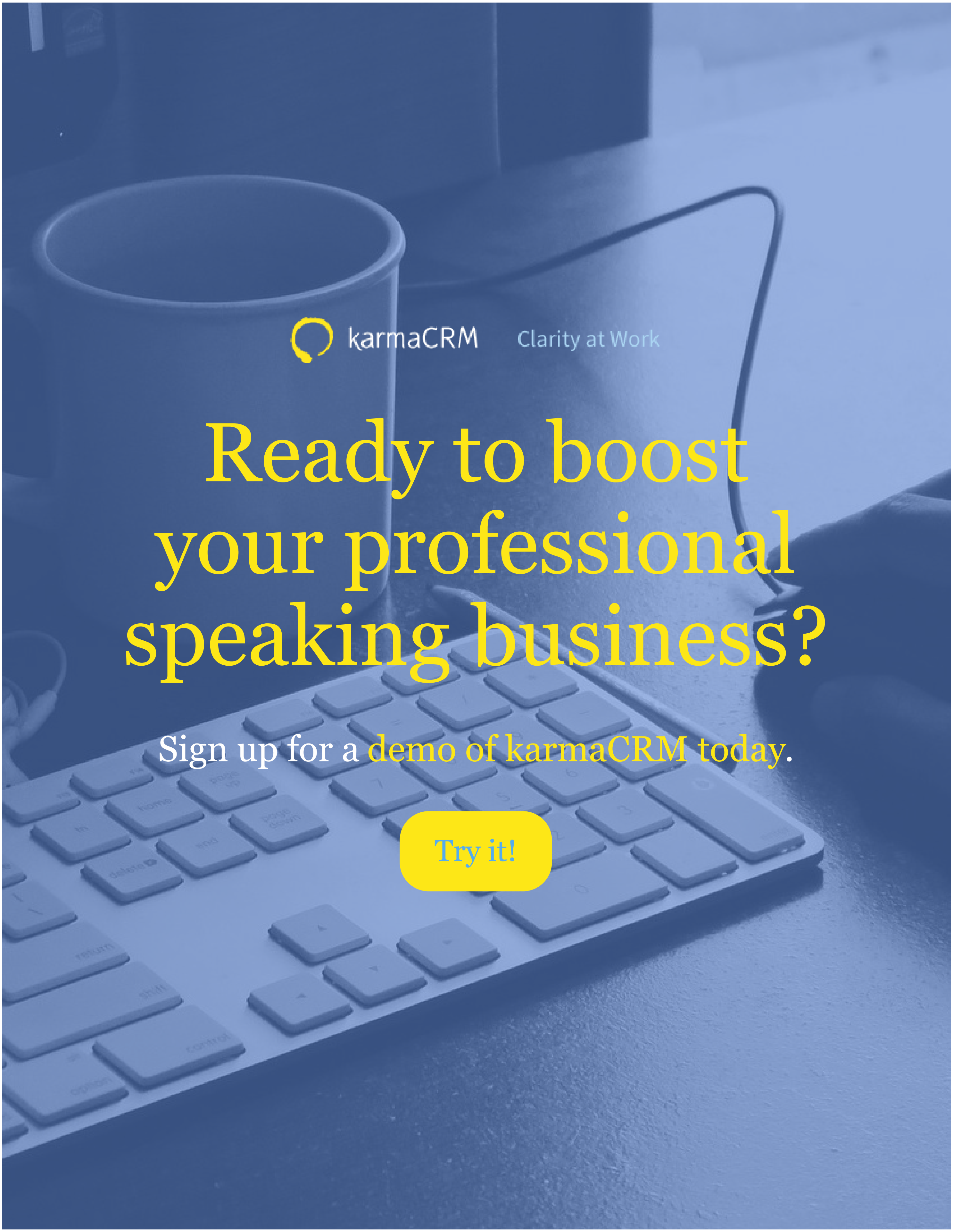
For example, say you want to connect with the people who visited your website and signed up for your email updates. These people are more or less strangers to you -- you know that they're interested in your work but you probably don't know much else.

By crafting a series of casual, friendly, and engaging emails to them, you can build on that initial interest. Your sequence might go something like this:

- **Email #1**: A little hello that provides them with a few of your best articles. This will show that you're dedicated to their education and to your work as a thought leader.
- **Email #2** (if you don't hear from them): A quick response to your last email, just making sure they saw the resources because they might be helpful.
- **Email #3**: A link to a podcast, webinar, speech recording, or other big offer to draw them in. You might close this email with an invitation to connect on the phone for a few minutes about their upcoming events.
- **Email #4** (a week or two down the line): A quick informal email to say hi and to see if they'd like to chat for a few minutes about their professional speaking needs.
- **Email #5**: A casual check-in with a new article, testimonial, or other useful resource you've created.

Automate, automate, automate

Now, you might be thinking, that sounds like *more* work, not less. Using a CRM or an email automation tool like MailChimp or Constant Contact, you can use these templates and sequences to send regular, scheduled emails to your contact lists. That way, a lead can be nurtured for weeks at a time, automatically.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