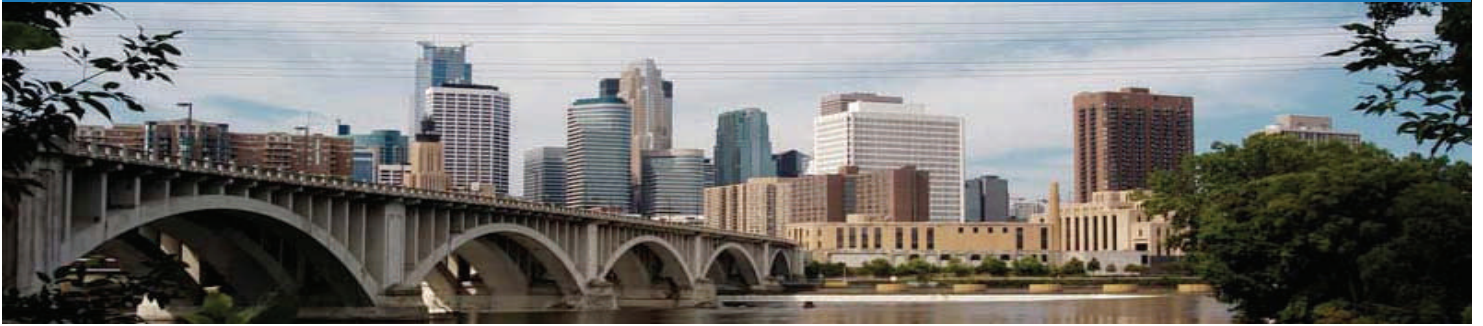


# Your Bridge to Purpose, Passion, and Platform



## The Great Digital Scavenger Hunt: Six Tools For Finding Professional Speakers Using the Web

By Michael Roby

Budgets are tight and getting tighter. Every facet of the meeting planner's day involves facing an onslaught of details preparing for an event. Selecting sites that fit the bill, building menus, choosing premium items, and coordinating agendas with the input of multiple constituencies and coordinating an endless flood of details are just a few of your challenges. Selecting outside speakers from the oratory multitudes present unique challenges. In about one-third of a second, googling "Professional Speaker" offers almost 9.8 million choices, and you don't have time to listen to all of their demos, so you pick one and hope for the best.

The location and property are perfect. Catering over-delivers on their service promise. The schedules work, collateral materials exceed expectations, and everyone loves the room gifts. Then it happens – your speaker bombs! Consider the following six ways to effectively use the web to help you find qualified speakers that meet your needs.

**Search Terms:** Be as specific as possible using search terms, but keep it simple. Include terms that identify exactly what you want, including the type of presentation, (keynote, training, motivational, breakout, etc.), location, and industry. Be descriptive.

**Speaker Websites:** When looking at speaker or bureau websites, look for testimonials, experience, and demo videos. If finding content is difficult, then you might question the speaker's ability to communicate from the platform. If the speaker blogs, you also see the type of content they deliver.

**LinkedIn:** This social media site offers a huge amount in a standardized form. General information about the speaker, as well as testimonials, links, and group affiliations all provide insight into a speaker. Testimonials become easier to expand and verify. You can even do market research that provides information from other meeting planners, as well as groups devoted to meeting planners. Networking with other meeting planners develops a massive amount of intellectual experience capital.

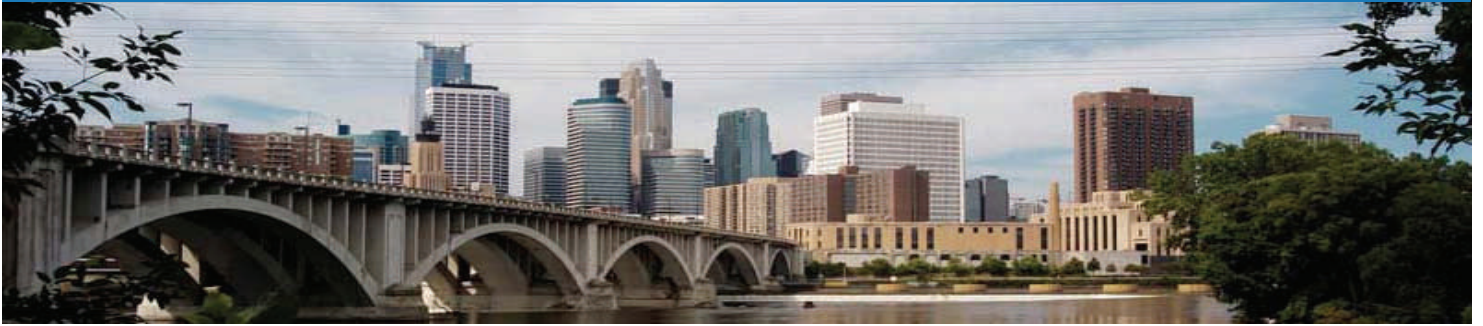


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## The Great Digital Scavenger Hunt: Six Tools For Finding Professional Speakers Using the Web (cont)

By Michael Roby

**Facebook:** Another social media networking service, Facebook is traditionally thought of as a “personal” site. However, more businesses are building a presence on Facebook. “Fan Pages” give you an idea of others who may have used the speaker’s services – or a sampling of their friends and family. This site also offers the potential to see professional speakers away from their businesses.

**Twitter:** Twitter is a social networking and micro-blogging service that enables its users to send and read other users' updates known as “tweets.” Tweets are text-based posts of up to 140 characters in length – just enough – and it is free. Twitter is searchable, and offers a glimpse into the world of value creation of speakers. Tweets often include links to other resources that may be helpful in your search.

**Professional Associations:** The National Speakers Association ([www.nsaspeaker.org](http://www.nsaspeaker.org)) and their numerous state chapters (for example, the Minnesota Chapter’s site is [www.nsa-mn.org](http://www.nsa-mn.org)) offer directories of professional speakers that provide a buffet of talent from which to choose. The fact that speakers hold membership in a professional organization does not mean they are a great speaker or will meet your needs, but it does mean they have met membership criteria and subscribe to a code of conduct that provides some accountability. The ability to find and search speakers in one place makes associations an invaluable resource.

The web becomes a valuable tool to help your make finding a professional speaker easier, and with better results.

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