

THE CIRCUIT'S MOST ELECTRIFYING ACTS

By Jennifer Juergens

They are authors, politicians, economists, sports celebrities, CEOs, professors, born-again, musicians, actors and, yes, even unknowns. They are dynamic, hard-hitting, humorous, moving, inspiring and reflective.

They are motivational speakers.

There was a time when Norman Vincent Peale and Dale Carnegie had cornered the market on motivation. Not so today.

Of the 3,000 members of the National Speakers Association, about a third are classified as motivational speakers. Sales and inspirational speakers are the second- and third-largest groups in the association. Many major speakers command high honorariums, or fees, and make thousands on the sale of books, tapes and videos, helping to boost motivation into a multibillion-dollar business.

Brian Palmer of the National Speakers Bureau in Chicago sees a 20 percent average annual growth in the number of speakers, resulting in part from the rapid increase in corporate and association meetings. Says Palmer: "They want to have a speaker at a meeting to make it kosher in the eyes of the IRS. They have to have an outside speaker, and they want it to have some direct correlation to the business they are in. A speaker is also seen as a reward or diversion. They want someone interesting and entertaining."

Says Tony Alessandra, Ph.D., who makes almost 100 motivational speeches a year: "When I started in 1975 there wasn't any business. There are more speakers today because of increased business." And that increased business has spawned a whole new

breed of motivational speakers. Even the definition is becoming a bit vague, with the line between "Inspiration" and "motivation" getting blurry.

Jim Cathcart, president of the National Speakers Association in Phoenix, draws this distinction: "Inspirational speakers lift the audience's sights and stimulate listeners' minds. Motivational speakers generate enthusiasm. Motivational speakers are mood improvers. What they bring is the ability to improve the attitude of the audience."

Honorariums can range from \$500 for new speakers on the circuit to \$75,000 for a Ronald Reagan. In the \$1,000 range, says Cathcart, are the ones with some unique characteristic. They might have a public position or have accomplished something extraordinary, like swimming the English Channel. Those who command \$2,000 to \$3,000 have written a book or received some public attention. Those in the \$3,000 to \$5,000 range are well-known speakers with good references and a hook that makes them notable. Above the \$5,000 range are celebrities or really well-known speakers.

But all the experts agree that money is just one factor to consider when selecting a speaker.

With so many speakers out there, a meeting planner has a tough job choosing the best one for a particular event. Bernie Swain of the Washington Speakers Bureau says the top motivational speakers are "the ones who have excelled at their own profession and can go on and show themselves as an example of success. The top speakers are the most successful people that no one has ever heard of."



LAYNE LONGFELLOW, Ph.D., CPAE

BACKGROUND: A graduate of Ohio University, Longfellow got a doctorate in psychology from the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor and became a Fellow of both the National Science Foundation and the National Institute of Mental Health. Longfellow, 51, gave his first talk to the Association of Junior Leagues on behalf of his employer, The Menninger Foundation. The talk inspired other Junior League chapters to hire him to speak.

QUOTES: "Success is in the journey, not in the destination... You cannot motivate people through *your* value system; you motivate them through *their* value system."

CUSTOMIZE: See notes.

FEE: \$7,000 for one hour to a full day, plus expenses. \$10,000 for two days.

NOTES: Longfellow will often incorporate piano playing, songs and poetry into his delivery, as well as slides and photos. A typical topic: "Where Will I Find Life's Meaning When Ambition Is No Longer Enough? He often addresses groups in the health-related fields. The longer the talk, the more customizing he will do; for shorter speeches he draws on core material.

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