Speech is Power program

From Expertise to Stage

Speaker Activation Lab

Presented by the Magazine Association of BC (MagsBC)

Program Overview

From Expertise to Stage is a practical, interactive professional development program designed to help underrepresented magazine and media professionals turn their knowledge, experience, and perspectives into meaningful speaking opportunities.

Over seven live workshops, participants will identify their areas of expertise, develop compelling presentation topics, build public-speaking skills, and learn how to position themselves for conferences, panels, and other industry events.

The program combines hands-on exercises, small-group discussions, peer feedback, and opportunities to practice. It concludes with a speaker showcase, where participants will deliver a prepared presentation to an invited audience.

Format: Seven 90-minute live workshops, plus a final speaker showcase.

Cohort: Approximately 8–12 participants.

Audience: Magazine and media professionals, with particular emphasis on individuals from historically underrepresented communities and those who have had limited access to industry speaking opportunities.

Course Platform: The course will be delivered through Maven.com, where participants can access live workshops, session recordings, learning materials, assignments, and opportunities for cohort discussion.

Cost: Complimentary for participants selected to join the Speaker Activation Lab through MagsBC.

Schedule: The course will run either from December to February or January to early March. Dates will be finalized soon.

Course Syllabus

Session 1: Meet the Cohort & Find Your Starting Point

We'll get to know one another, share our experiences with public speaking, and discuss what we hope to accomplish. Together, we'll establish a supportive environment for learning, practicing, and giving feedback.

Session 2: From Expertise to Speaking Topic

We'll explore participants' professional knowledge, experiences, and perspectives to identify potential speaking topics. Each participant will develop one idea into a presentation concept with a working title, target audience, and central message.

Session 3: Building a Talk That Works

Learn how to turn an idea into a compelling presentation. We'll explore storytelling, presentation structure, strong openings, and memorable conclusions while developing an outline for a 5–10 minute talk.

Session 4: How Speaking Opportunities Really Work

We'll explore how conference and event organizers select speakers, what they're looking for, and how to position yourself for opportunities. Participants will begin developing their speaker bios and practicing how to pitch their ideas.

Session 5: Finding Your Voice on Stage

We'll explore techniques for managing nerves, improving delivery, using voice and body language, and connecting with an audience. Participants will practice speaking in a supportive environment and receive constructive feedback.

Session 6: Speaking on Your Own Terms

We'll explore identity, representation, tokenism, and setting boundaries with event organizers. Participants will learn practical strategies for navigating challenging questions and speaking confidently on their own terms.

Session 7: From Your First Talk to Your Next Opportunity

Participants will rehearse their presentations, practice responding to audience questions, and receive feedback ahead of the final showcase. We'll also discuss how to develop a professional speaker profile and pursue future opportunities.

Final Event: Take the Stage — Speaker Showcase

Select participants may deliver a prepared 5–10 minute presentation to an invited audience of peers and industry professionals. The showcase provides an opportunity to share their expertise, gain practical speaking experience, and celebrate their progress.

About the Facilitator

William Johnson is a Vancouver-based media entrepreneur, journalist, and strategic advisor working at the intersection of media, technology, and business.

He founded Vancouver Tech Journal in 2018 and later joined Overstory Media Group as VP of Strategy & Operations, working across a portfolio of Canadian news and media brands.

His work has appeared in *The Globe and Mail*, *Maclean's*, and *Billboard*. He has also interviewed and moderated conversations with founders, executives, and industry leaders at events including SXSW, Web Summit, Collision, and SaaS North.

Through Relevant Holdings, William advises organizations on communications, business development, media strategy, and creating meaningful connections through events.

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