

BECOME A CONFERENCE SPEAKER

A virtual workshop for women who want to speak

PRESENTED BY: UPASNA GAUTAM, PRODUCT MANAGER AT CNN





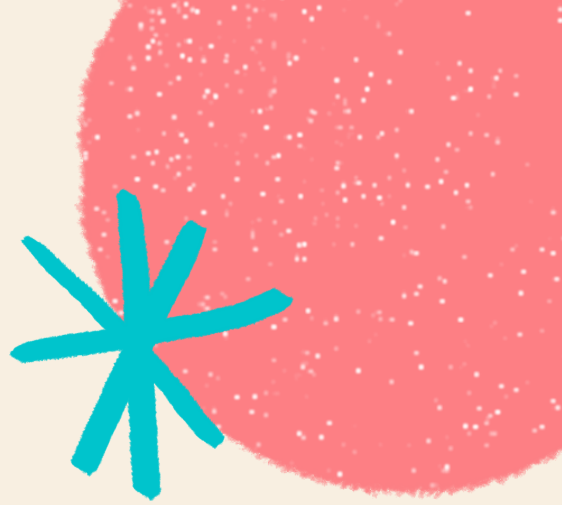
ABOUT ME

Upasna Gautam
PRODUCT MANAGER, E-COMMERCE
AT CNN
IN AUSTIN, TX

- 8 years of conference speaking experience
- Former Pharma Research Scientist & Lab Rat
- Product + Data Science + SEO

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OBJECTIVES

- **WHY IS IT IMPORTANT FOR WOMEN TO HAVE A PRESENCE ON THE SPEAKER ROSTER?**
- **HOW TO CHOOSE A PRESENTATION TOPIC**
- **WHERE TO SPEAK AND HOW TO FIND THE RIGHT EVENTS**
- **HOW TO CRAFT A COMPELLING PROPOSAL**





REPRESENTATION IN THE TECH INDUSTRY



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MAKE YOUR
CONFERENCE
MORE DIVERSE



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THE DATA

- WOMEN REPRESENT **25%** OF THE SPEAKERS AT TECH CONFERENCES
- WOMEN'S REPRESENTATION IN TECHNICAL ROLES IN THE WORKFORCE IS **20%**
- WOMEN HOLD A MERE **5%** OF LEADERSHIP POSITIONS IN THE TECH INDUSTRY
- **70%** OF WOMEN SPEAKERS AT TECH CONFERENCES HAVE REPORTED BEING THE "**LONE WOMAN**" CHOSEN TO SPEAK



INCLUSION DRIVES INNOVATION



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**WE CAN'T BE WHAT
WE CAN'T SEE**



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25%

**REPRESENTATION OF
WOMEN SPEAKERS AT
TECH CONFERENCES**



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**WOMEN'S
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TECHNICAL ROLES IN
THE WORKFORCE**



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ANYONE CAN BE A GREAT SPEAKER. ANYONE!

THIS MEANS YOU!

THAT'S BECAUSE:

- PUBLIC SPEAKING IS AN ACQUIRED SKILL
- AND YOU CAN LEARN IT WITH PRACTICE



THE BENEFITS OF CONFERENCE SPEAKING

YOU LEARN HOW TO FLUENTLY SPEAK YOUR MIND

- You'll no longer say "it doesn't matter" because you've lacked the confidence to state your case clearly
- You will exchange self-doubt with confidence
- You will become hyper-aware of the words you choose to speak and how they impact others - this will fine tune your communication skills for any/every type of person you encounter



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THE BENEFITS OF CONFERENCE SPEAKING

DEVELOP STRONGER CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS

- You will learn how to think through real problems and provide solutions
- You'll learn how to analyze the potential costs and benefits of solutions
- You will enhance your ability to conduct and analyze research
- You will foster a sense of curiosity about a wide range of topics and curate more interests, while cultivating inquisitiveness about the world



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CONFIDENCE
IS THE COMPANION
OF SUCCESS



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**CURIOSITY IS THE
ENGINE OF
ACHIEVEMENT**



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**YOU DON'T HAVE TO
WAIT UNTIL YOU REACH
THE TOP TO BECOME
A LEADER**



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THE BENEFITS OF CONFERENCE SPEAKING

YOU WILL GAIN THE SKILLS TO BECOME A GREAT LEADER

- Communication is the most critical leadership skill
- You will learn how to convey your message so that you can unite both stakeholders and individual contributors around a mission
- You will have an external platform and audience to amplify your domain knowledge authority and become a SME (Subject Matter Expert)
- Leaders require the capacity to drive change and public speaking skills are vital in learning that ability



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HOW TO CHOOSE A PRESENTATION TOPIC



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**"THINK OF YOURSELF AS A
TEACHER, NOT A SPEAKER."**

- Andy Crestodina, Co-Founder @ Orbit Media



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**THERE IS ALWAYS SOMEONE
WHO KNOWS MORE THAN YOU.**

**THERE IS ALWAYS SOMEONE
WHO KNOWS LESS THAN YOU.**



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THAT MEANS...

**YOU'LL ALWAYS HAVE
SOMETHING TO LEARN.**

**YOU'LL ALWAYS HAVE
SOMETHING TO TEACH.**



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LET'S REPEAT THAT

ON ANY GIVEN TOPIC...

- THERE IS ALWAYS SOMEONE WHO KNOWS MORE THAN YOU
- THERE IS ALWAYS SOMEONE WHO KNOWS LESS THAN YOU

THIS MEANS THAT:

- YOU'LL ALWAYS HAVE SOMETHING TO LEARN
- YOU'LL ALWAYS HAVE SOMETHING TO TEACH



STEP 1: DEFINE THE GOAL

START AT A HIGH-LEVEL

How can you...

- Share your passion for a certain technology that changed the way you work and/or think?
- Help others learn from a mistake you made?
- Offer solutions to a complex problem you encountered?
- Show successful navigation through a technical roadblock?



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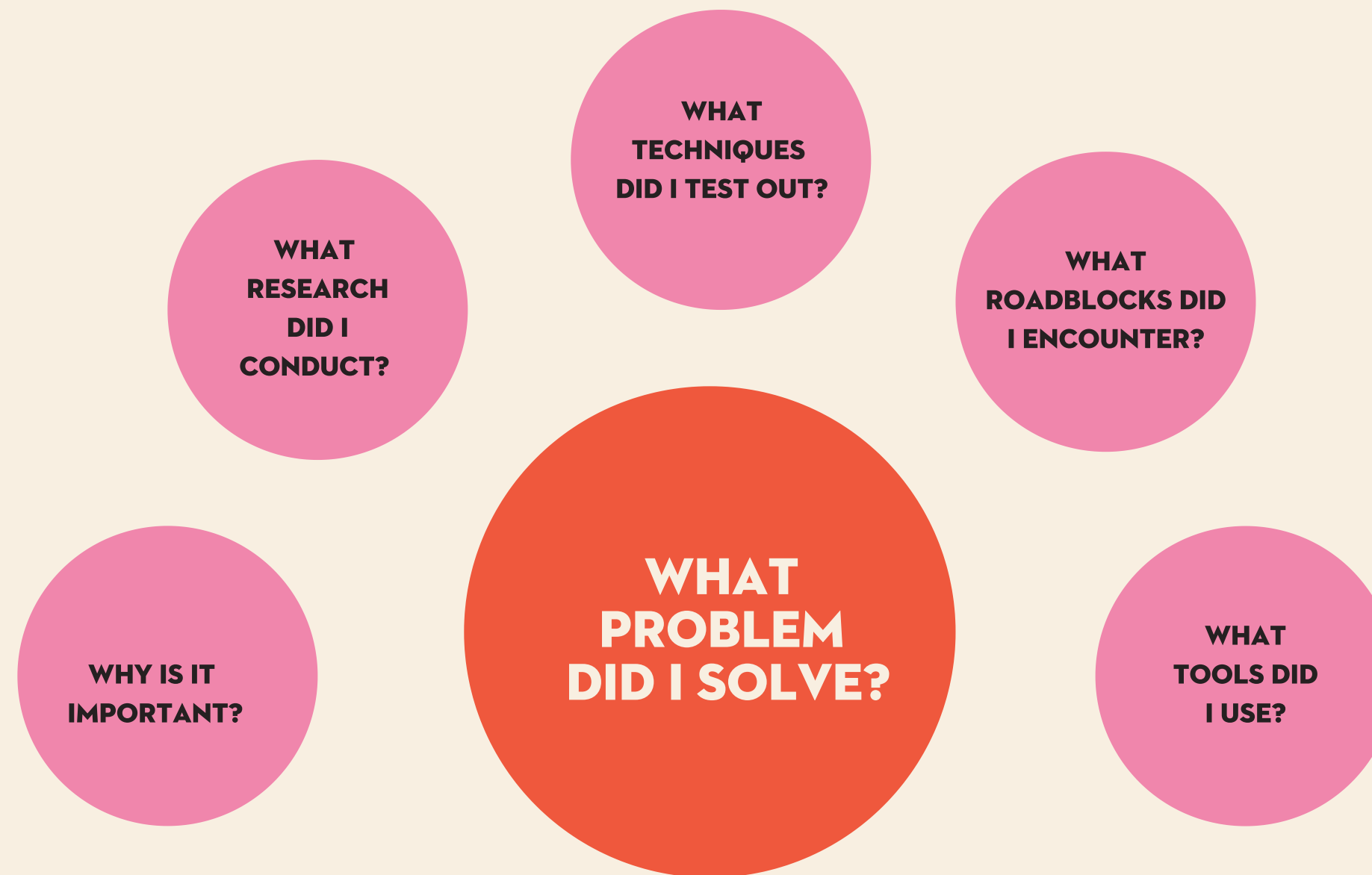
**USE EVERYDAY
INSPIRATION TO
PICK A TOPIC**



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STEP 2: MIND MAP

Organize and visualize each of your topic ideas



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**TURN YOUR AHA!
MOMENT INTO A
TEACHABLE MOMENT**



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STEP 3: GRADE YOUR IDEAS

IF YOU EXPLAINED THE TOPIC TO A FRIEND, HOW WOULD YOU RATE YOURSELF ON A SCALE OF 1-5 FOR EACH OF THESE FOUR FACTORS?

PASSION

How much does the topic excite you and do you love learning about it?

CONFIDENCE

How relaxed and poised are you discussing this topic with a friend?

EXPERTISE

How well can you explain the topic to someone outside of your industry?

RELEVANCY

How critical is the skill or solution to your industry?



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	PASSION	CONFIDENCE	EXPERTISE	RELEVANCY
TOPIC 1				
TOPIC 2				
TOPIC 3				



**PICK THE TOPIC WHERE YOU
SCORE THE HIGHEST OVERALL
AND HIGHEST IN PASSION**



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PASSION BUILDS EXPERTISE

- Age, education, and experience help perceptions of expertise, but they don't guarantee that you're good at something
- Expertise is the by-product of caring about, committing to practicing, and continuing to hone your craft
- If you're passionate about making a difference, don't let a lack of experience hold you back from sharing
- The more you communicate, the more opportunities you'll have to refine your ideas and build your expertise



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**PURPOSE DIRECTS
PASSION, AND PASSION
IGNITES PURPOSE**



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**"CONFIDENCE COMES UP
WHEN YOU'RE PASSIONATE
ABOUT IT. START FROM A
PLACE OF CONVICTION."**

- Kirsty Hulse, Founder @ Roar Training



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ASK YOURSELF

- What are you endlessly curious about?
- What can't you stand about the industry? What bugs you? What makes you really pissed off?
- What has always felt like an obvious question no one is asking?
- Where do you go when you 'why' something to death?





**BUT WHAT ABOUT
STORYTELLING?**



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WRITE DOWN A TIME WHERE YOU:

- Experienced pain, loss or rejection
- Messed up
- And get into specifics! Journal the sights, sounds, smells, people involved
- Write down the lessons learned & what you'll pass on



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A FUCK UP
TURNS INTO A
GOOD STORY



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WHERE TO SPEAK AND HOW TO FIND THE RIGHT EVENTS



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DEFINE YOUR AUDIENCE

FIND THE PEOPLE WHO NEED YOUR HELP AND ANSWER THE QUESTIONS:

- * Who can benefit the most from the information you have to offer?
- * What does the audience need to know about? Why should the audience care? What pain points do they have? How can you solve them?
- * What industries and domains would be best served with this knowledge?
- * No matter what your topic is, start by speaking for a beginner-level audience



**EVERYONE CAN
HELP SOMEONE.**



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START SMALL

START SEARCHING.

- * Search for events on Eventbrite, Meetup.com, and Papercall.io that are targeted towards a beginner audience - these are usually free events
- * Create your speaker profile on Eventbrite, Meetup, SpeakerHub, and other speaker sites
- * Google the search term “Call for Speakers”, pair it with keywords from your field, and see what you find!
- * Don't be picky - no audience is too small



**THE SIZE OF THE AUDIENCE
DOES NOT MATTER.
WHAT'S IMPORTANT IS THAT
THEY'RE LISTENING.**



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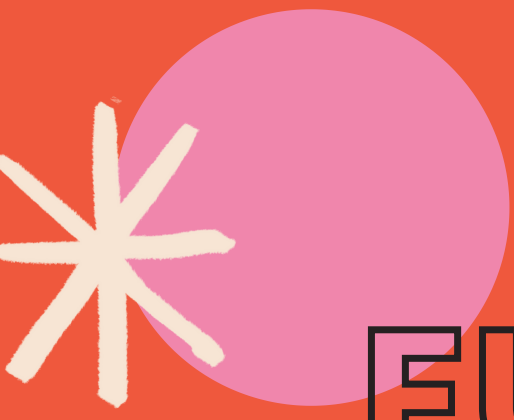
LEVERAGE YOUR NETWORK

SHOW AND TELL!

- Start communicating that you're interested in sharing your knowledge with trusted friends, peers, and mentors - the more radars you are on, the more chances that an opportunity will pop up
- What groups and/or organizations are you already a part of? Let the leaders and organizers know that you're willing to offer your time and share knowledge with your fellow members
- Use LinkedIn and Twitter to candidly and genuinely communicate your motives and goals around seeking speaking opportunities



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FUN FACT

**THIS IS HOW I GOT
RECOMMENDED FOR THE
FIRST MEETUP I EVER
SPOKE AT 8 YEARS AGO,
AND THE TED TALK I DID
LAST YEAR!**





**HELP THE PEOPLE IN
YOUR NETWORK AND
LET THEM HELP YOU.**



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HOW TO CRAFT A COMPELLING PROPOSAL

THE CFP

CFP STANDS FOR CALL FOR PROPOSAL, AND IS AN OPEN INVITATION FOR SPEAKERS TO APPLY TO A CONFERENCE.

- Large conferences use a formal call for speakers and call for proposals process
- After applying for and speaking at over 50 conferences across the globe, I began to see similarities in the application requirements
- I've distilled the common requirements into a template that you can use for all of your pitching
- Whether it's an email to a Meetup organizer or submitting a formal CFP, this proposal template will serve as a guide you can continuously refer back to, reuse, and iterate upon



THE PROPOSAL TEMPLATE

COMPRISED OF THREE CORE COMPONENTS:



TITLE

ABSTRACT

KEY
TAKEAWAYS

Most of this information should already be loosely defined from the "How to Choose a Presentation Topic" exercises that you completed earlier (see earlier slides).

In the next three slides, we'll dive into each of these components!

PART 1: THE TITLE

AS A BEGINNER/FIRST-TIME SPEAKER, IT'S IMPORTANT TO:

Keep the title clear and concise 10 words max is a good rule to follow

Avoid jokes, puns, and colloquialisms

Provoke curiosity

Check out "Kickass Headline Generator" tool if you're stumped - it's totally free and super fun

PRO TIP:

ALLITERATION WORKS LIKE A CHARM FOR MEMORABILITY



PART 2: THE ABSTRACT

THE ABSTRACT SUMMARIZES THE SCOPE OF YOUR TALK

Many conferences use the abstract as the description of the talk in the agenda - with that in mind, your target reader is the conference attendee who is reading the agenda

Think of the abstract as your value proposition - the value that you will acknowledge, deliver, and communicate

Keep your abstract to 4-5 sentences

- Pose the problem your talk will provide a solution for
- Explain why it is important and of value
- Define the benefits the attendee will gain

Keep in mind: a shallow introduction to many things is not as interesting as an in-depth introduction to one thing



PART 3: THE KEY TAKEAWAYS

A TAKEAWAY IS A TACTIC

- * This is a simple, bulleted list of 3-5 learning objectives
- * Key takeaways are tips can the attendee put into immediate use
- * It should inform "next steps" for the attendee to take after he/she/they listen to your talk

- * Use the following format: "Session attendees will learn:" followed by bullet points containing your learning objectives
- * Defining key takeaways goes a long way in helping reviewers and attendees better understand the point and potential value of your session



YOUR NEXT STEPS

YOU ARE READY.



Proofread, proofread, proofread



Have a trusted friend, peer, and/or mentor review your proposal template



Submit as many proposals as you can



Always ask for feedback on rejected talks, and use those suggestions to improve your proposals and try again at other events



Find contact information for organizers of smaller conferences/meetups, and reach out to them directly



Sometimes conferences will accept a proposal that was rejected at a similar conference - other times, the same conference will reject a proposal one year, and accept it the next

YES, YOU ARE EXPERIENCED ENOUGH.

YES, YOU HAVE VALUABLE STORIES TO SHARE.

YES, YOU CAN GET ACCEPTED.

YOUR NEXT STEPS

- Start your mind map
- Follow along on Instagram for more tips, templates, upcoming workshop info
- Spread the word and wisdom to other women

HOW TO BREAK INTO THE **TECH** **CONFERENCE SPEAKER CIRCUIT**

SEPTEMBER CONTENT SERIES | TUNE IN EACH TUESDAY THIS MONTH!

SEPT 8:

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT FOR WOMEN TO HAVE
A PRESENCE ON THE SPEAKER ROSTER?

SEPT 15:

HOW TO CHOOSE A CONFERENCE
PRESENTATION TOPIC

SEPT 22:

WHERE TO SPEAK AND HOW TO
FIND THE RIGHT EVENTS

SEPT 29:

HOW TO CRAFT A
COMPELLING PROPOSAL



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IF YOU FOUND THIS CONTENT HELPFUL AND/OR INSIGHTFUL:



Tune in right here every Tuesday of this month, where I'll be sharing tips for women in tech on how to break into the conference circuit



Continue learning with next week's post:



How to Choose a Presentation Topic



Share this post with others who may benefit



Follow along for news on my upcoming workshops



Comment below with what you'd like more guidance on



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**ARE YOU
READY TO
KICKSTART
YOUR
(VIRTUAL)
SPEAKING
CAREER?**



a speaker accelerator for women

Gain the skills, confidence and experience to craft and deliver a powerful presentation.

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