

Posted On: 9/11/2008

Recycle that brilliant speech

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YouTube videos, op-eds, white papers, podcasts—lots of options for getting more mileage out of exec speeches

Your CEO's speech has just wowed the crowd - take a second to pat yourself on the back. Now get back to work and figure out how to get more mileage out of that speech or presentation you crafted. Executive communicators offer their suggestions for repurposing speech content, and spreading those brand messages around:

Record and reuse: "Take a digital recorder with you to every speech," advises Ian Griffin, executive communications manager for HP. "Send off the recording to a transcription service." You can clean up the text a bit, says Griffin, embed it in some PowerPoint slides, and post it on the corporate Web site. And of course, you can use the audio file to create a podcast.

Create an online freebie: "Turn it into a whitepaper and offer it for free download," suggests Victoria Hurley, founder of Helicon PR & Marketing in Los Angeles. "The trend these days is to not ask people to register or give their contact information in exchange; just let them have it. Drive people to the landing page by writing a press release that ties the whitepaper into a relevant trend or event."

Teach the value of stories: Put the cart before the horse, in a sense. If you teach speakers and speechwriters to liven up their presentations with storytelling, you'll have the meat necessary to use the presentations elsewhere, says Henry Ehrlich, a freelance writer and speechwriter in Brooklyn, N.Y.

"I'm doing a speech for a big European company for whom narrative, story-telling oriented PR is alien," says Ehrlich. "Their marketing people seem unable to shake the idea that every story is based on numbers. As the first outside speechwriter ever hired by the CEO's office, I have a lot of cachet to pull stories out of these people's heads. So by teaching the headquarters support staff how much fun it can be to tell stories in speeches, they are learning that stories can have derivative PR value."

Tie to news trends: Adding stories with news value helped Sharon Geltner, communications director for nonprofit agency Ruth Rales Jewish Family Service of South Palm Beach County, Fla., propel a speech into a news cycle. The speech by Dr. Jaclynn Faffer, CEO of the agency, was delivered at a press conference held by Congressional Rep. Ron Klein.

"We are still getting mileage on our CEO's speech about, believe it or not, mileage," explains Geltner. "She spoke about trying to help our community's most vulnerable residents, in light of spending more for gasoline." The speech included anecdotes about volunteers who could no longer drive seniors to medical appointment because of high fuel prices, and how the cost of delivered food to seniors' homes has also skyrocketed.

"The speech has taken on a life of its own," says Geltner. It's gotten picked up by MSNBC.com and the local paper, and Geltner is still fielding calls about it. She also plans to use parts of the text in her fundraising letters.

Make news on YouTube: "If you have someone in your firm with broadcast experience or the skill set, take the original or re-recorded speech and edit it into news reports, exactly the same type of story packages you'd hear on radio or see on television," suggests Gayle Lynn Falkenthal, president of Falcon Valley Group in San Diego. "Place them in the newsroom section of your Web site and on YouTube. If there really is news in the speech, like a big announcement of some kind or great stats about the industry, send out these audio or video clips as news releases to your local media and professional associations."

Create blog posts: "Turn portions of the presentation into multiple blog postings," advises D-D Flannery, founder of Flannery PR in Rochester, N.Y. "Comment on other people's blogs that are relevant to your topic using content from your presentation. This will help to not only drive traffic to your blog, but will help gain recognition within the blogosphere."

Get a foot in the door: “A speech can open the door for an editorial board meeting,” says Bob McEwen, VP at Nicholson Kovac in Kansas City. “It could also be adapted as an op-ed piece or expertise article for a trade publication.”

Build search-engine visibility: Use speech video to add flavor to online campaigns, suggests Megan Schwartz, PR and marketing manager at Magnify360 in Los Angeles. “Adding the video to the landing pages of paid search campaigns provides you with greater credibility to potential clients, and also provides potential clients with more information on the company, its services and the executives behind the company,” Schwartz says.

Article comments:

Wednesday, September 10, 2008_10:12:45 AM_by_jcadmus

I've had a bit of success getting speeches published in a small monthly magazine called Vital Speeches.

It runs major addresses by heads of state, C-level executives, prominent academics., etc., so the standard is pretty high.

It has a small but influential circulation government officials, academics, speech writers, etc.

Wednesday, September 10, 2008_10:43:11 AM_by_Anonymous

These are great ideas...we've recycled the material from speeches in other ways - employee comms, external website, op-eds, talking points, other execs' presentations...the messaging finds its way into everything else we do, which is great, because it means we're staying on point.

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