

020 – After You Land

Announcer: Do you dream of making a living as a speaker, writer, or performer? Do you want to learn to communicate with clarity, focus, and power? In each episode you will learn the secrets of dynamic communication so you can make a living doing what you love.

Welcome to the Art and Business of Public Speaking with your host, who, for over 30 years has helped men and women build exciting careers, Ken Davis.

Brian: Hello, this is your co-host, Brian Scheer, for the Art and Business of Public Speaking, where we peek behind the curtain to discover how to create, grow and maintain a successful career as a communicator.

Today we're going to continue on from last week on speaking. Preparing to go to an event (a), and then once you land. Last week we discussed all of the tasks you had to do before you even take off. And this week I'm excited because we're talking about, once the plane has landed, the tasks that you must complete at that point.

Ken: Right. And I'm glad that Matt Brady has joined us again, because on our team, he is it the person that does these tasks. Again, if you're alone, if you go to your speaking engagements alone, don't stop listening now, because the tasks that we're going to talk about are tasks that you should consider. It's going to be more difficult if you don't have someone with you, because you will be doing these tasks, but I guarantee you, if you do these, someday you'll be out there and you will be able to bring somebody with you and these will be the tasks that they'll be assigned to do.

Brian: It all goes back to roles. And Ken, when you first started out, you wore many different hats. You were your road manger. You were your travel agent. Then you hired your wife, which was a good price. I think she did it for free. But then you were your accountant, but then your wife took that over and started doing that.

So remember ladies and gentlemen, this is not about finding people to fill these roles. You may have to do that for a little bit. But once you start creating these systems and have it ready, and you get to the point where you can hire somebody, you can find your greatest need, and you have this system in place to give over to them and say, here are the tasks that I need you to accomplish.

Ken: And just to clarify something, Brian, I was never my own accountant. Had I ever been my own accountant we wouldn't be sitting here today. We wouldn't be able to give advice to anybody. What is that called? Jail. I would be in jail because I don't know how to do accounting.

So today we're suggesting that you can maximize the quality of every speaking event by completing these tasks. And Matt Brady, my road manager is with us again today. If you didn't listen to last week's podcast, be sure you do so. Because in last week's podcast we covered those tasks like Brian said, before the plane takes off. So what do you do after the plane lands? Well, Matt has a checklist that he goes through and I'm going to have him kind of share that checklist with us and explain what's on that list.

And then I'm going to bring up some other things that you should do in addition to that. But Matt, why don't you give us the tasks that are on your checklist.

Matt: This is kind of how I approach the event. Of course, once we arrive, we meander on down to where the rental car is. And I have a few steps that I generally follow for each event. First off, find us our way to the hotel. Drop you off there. Allow you to relax. Get you where you need to be. Say hey, I'll come pick you up at 6:30 or whatever the time is. Next, I head over the venue and find out where I'm supposed to be. As much as you prepare ahead of time, occasionally you'll get to a venue that's a huge conference center and you know you're supposed to be in Salon C but you have no idea where Salon C is. So sometimes finding where you need to be is a challenge.

So I'll walk in, figure out where the actual venue is, figure out where the product tables will be, and then kind of get my bearing and orientation in that space. And then I'll look out for the host or whoever my contact has been and say, hi, I'm Matt Brady, I'm with Ken Davis, and I'm here. And kind of get more details. Just introduce myself. If they're stressed out, try and hopefully alleviate some of that tension. Let them know that we're here to serve them and we're here to help them succeed and have a successful event. And try and lighten the mood if they're at all stressed out, which many event planners tend to be on the day of the event.

Next I'll try and locate the product. Find where the product has ended up. Again, we'll try and track that beforehand to know that it's arrived at the event.

Ken: Hey, can I ask you a question, Matt? When I first started this, the product used to always go to the wrong place, or we would get to an event and no one would know where it was. It seems you've solved that. Can you tell me how you solved that? I can remember so many events where we go there and nobody knew where the product was, or it was locked in a room and nobody knew who could get into that room.

Matt: The thing that I think made a big difference is previously it was being shipped by a fulfillment center. So they might not always have been necessarily labeling the product correctly or putting it to the right attention. I will always, when I send product to the event, because now we do this ourselves, I'll put ATTN: Ken Davis event, or ATTN: name of the event that we're speaking at. And then Ken Davis Product or something like that.

And when I have that call, like we talked about on the previous podcast, I'll alert them that there are going to be 15, 10, 20 boxes appearing and just to let them know to be aware of that. And part of what Brian has that form, we also find out where to ship it. We've had occasion where we've been doing events at just an event center or a civic center and they won't receive product for it. So we have to send it to an alternate location whether that's the offices of the person bringing you in, or that might be the hotel where we're staying. And we just, again, put it to our attention.

Ken: That's very, very helpful because no matter how big your organization is, if you've got even a limited amount of product, that makes a difference. And you want to know you can get your hands on it. Sorry to interrupt you.

Matt: No, it's important, and it's equally important to have the tracking numbers, too. I try and always track the product before we leave, but there will be occasions where we're doing an event, event, event, event. And I get to an event and I can't find the product. It just happened to us the other day. I arrived and somewhere in Washington there was a box missing. And I said, it's got to be here. So I got the tracking number, tracked it, and found that one box had been delivered on Friday. The bulk of the boxes had delivered on Monday. The one box I was missing was at the other end of the church and it was signed for by How, or whatever the name was. And then the other boxes were with me, so I was just missing one box. So having that tracking information when you're there is hugely helpful, too, because you can say, hey, Robert signed for this.

Ken: So there was a guy there named How?

Matt: Yeah, Howie Mandel actually.

Ken: Go ahead with your list.

Matt: And then after I found the product I kind of always try to start setting things up, get things in place, and put our stuff into packages like we do. Organize it and get it laid out. And generally speaking, the tech at the event, the person that's running the sound and lights and video folks will show up a little bit later than I would. If the event starts at 7pm I would turn up there about 2:30 or 3pm.

And then I'll go find that person, like I mentioned before. I kind of develop a rapport with them and just kind of say hey, it's a great day. Love the venue. It's a great space. Great equipment here, even if I don't know anything about it. I just make it sound like I do.

Ken: So you basically lie to the people? What you're doing is setting an atmosphere so that you can communicate and handle any problems.

Matt: And I think, many times, particular I found this a lot when I used to travel production. When you go in and you're working with someone that is used to having all different types of acts come through, whether you're dealing with someone at a venue that's a technical director or you're dealing with crews – if you're in a situation where you have to deal with a union crew – a lot of times they're used to folks coming through that shout at them, that are not respectful, that don't understand them really, and are just there to do the job and they're not nice at all to those folks. And it is so disarming to folks that are used to that to go in and say, hey man, how's it going. Just develop a rapport with them.

Ken: I just want to say this right now, and again, this is an interruption Matt, but it's an important interruption. Our message is a faith-based message. Our message is designed to – it's based around the good news of God's love, and everything. And so it's very important that we don't just speak that message in the show. But it's also important that we live that message in the way we deal with people.

And I want to say to people out there who are considering maybe hiring someone to be a road manager or whatever. The host's view of you is directly connected to their view of the manager. And so I'm grateful for you, Matt, because I always get comments about how you treat people and how well they feel they were treated. I've watched you handle very difficult problems where we came and there were 1,200 people in the room and a guy holding a candle – that was supposed to be the lighting. And you managed to work that around to where they had the right lighting, but you didn't do it in an offensive way.

So just remember that the way you treat the host – you even say this to me, and I'm just inserting it right here. Matt will tell me, remind me what the host's name is before we enter the building. He will also remind me of what my name is because I will sometimes forget that. And he'll give me a little information about what's going on. Maybe about the hard work they've put together. Anybody that's promoted this program.

Matt: Yeah, what radio stations are involved.

Ken: And so it's not just a gimmick to get where we need to be. But it is so important to thank people and let them know how you appreciate them. And let them know that you're grateful for this opportunity to be there with them. You always remind me of that and I appreciate it.

Matt: It really goes back that it's about the audience. In this case, for me, the audience is the host. And our job is to come in and serve them well. And that's what we want them to know. I remember there was an event we did where they came up to you and said – they were asking something that was completely – I don't even remember what the request was. But you said, we are here to serve you. And the look that changed in their face when they understood you weren't just a diva coming in to perform. You were there to make their program as effective as it can possibly be. And I think that was a fundraising event. And the look on their face was like, wow. This guy really is here to serve us. And I try to do that from the beginning whether we're just talking about tech stuff or talking about where product needs to go.

Ken: Right. What else is on your list? Is there anything else?

Matt: Beyond that, after I've found the techs, I'll make sure the lighting in the place is good. Again, there's been occasions recently that we've called ahead of time, gotten specifics of it, turn up, and it's different than they said. And in that situation you kind of have to put your head down, go to work and figure out solutions. If you get into an event and they said they're going to have a certain type of lighting or we've even gotten to events and at SCORRE we talk about the rule of 45, with the position of the lighting. And they position the lighting directly over the stage so you look like a goblin. I'll say, hey, let's move this. Or let's refocus it. There's sometimes you show up to places where you need a little extra work.

Ken: Eventually in that spirit of serving them, eventually when they've done everything they can do, it's still your job to get up there, and with whatever you've got, deliver the best you can possibly deliver. What's next on your list?

Matt: So make sure everything's good with the tech. And then I find the volunteers again, because people provide volunteers for us. I'll train those folks whether they be the ticket takers or the folks ushering people or the people working at our product table. Train them on what they're selling, how to do their job.

And then I go find you because you've probably wandered off somewhere into a corner. And I get you to the event.

Ken: Is that what's on your list then?

Matt: Yeah.

Ken: Okay. Let me tell you some other things that he hasn't talked about. Some other little tasks that he completes. We always try to find someplace where we can kind of rest and gather our thoughts away from the crowd. If you walk into a building and you're trying to gather your thoughts, you're not going to be able to do it because there's people that are excited to see you. They want to come up and talk to you. And I always spend a little time shaking some hands and then we find a room. It's called a green room. That's what we call it. I don't think one has ever been green. Sometimes it's not an easy place to rest. I've been in everything from a choir room to a bathroom that was the green room.

But it is quiet, and it's away from folks. With the exception of the bathroom. Usually we have a little bit of fruit there. Something we can nourish ourselves with because a lot of times we don't get to eat until after the program. So there's a little green room. The food is also something on your checklist that you usually have?

Matt: We'll find out ahead of time. In that green room we usually try to get you some light items for you to snack on that gives you a little bit of energy.

Ken: And bring the host back there and greet the host in a private situation where you can thank them.

Matt: And whoever else might be involved in promoting it, whether that be a radio station or a church or a corporation that has underwritten the event.

Ken: And I use that room. I want you folks to know that I use that room for a specific purpose. In that room is where I collect my final thoughts. Another task that I have, and you've seen me do this many, many times. If there is program preceding me, I want to see at least part of that program. In particular, if we're doing an event where our job is to encourage people to be involved financially in a non-profit organization or whatever it might be, I want to see that presentation so that I can relate my comments and my part of the program to what they're doing.

The other thing that I like to do is come in to an auditorium – we have some other tech people sitting in this room and friends in the room – but I like to go into an auditorium, and I just started this recently, and sit down next to someone. I'll sit down next to anybody. We got a picture from someone, they had bought as a birthday gift to our show. And I sat down next to an elderly gentleman who had no idea who I was. And I asked him, have you ever heard this guy. And he said no, my family did it for my birthday.

And this was my first clue. There was a woman frantically taking pictures of me talking to this man. And I said, I've heard about him, but I'm not sure I'm going to stay. I thought he was good, but one of my friends said he was extremely boring. And this many looked at me really strange, but then I just chatted with him for a second, and the introduction happened, and I went up on stage and his family sent me some pictures and said he went crazy.

A lot of the times I'll go down in the front row. Some of those people have paid higher prices for special seats. And I'll just shake hands with those people. Thank them for coming. The show hasn't even started yet. But personally, part of the checklist is to move myself as far away from that image of the star of the show, the guy who just shows up and disappears, as I possibly can.

And a lot of times I'll go into the back of the auditorium. I'll even come up to the stage from the back of the auditorium. And while I'm back there just say hello to some folks, thank them for coming. I like to find kids. I like to find children, sometimes. Five or six years old. They know who it is. For some reason they know. I don't know whether their parents tied them up and forced them to look at pictures or watch videos or whatever it is.

So that's an important part for me, to make some kind of a personal identification with the audience before I go on. And then that green room is also important to me, Matt, because there's a prayer that I try to say every time. And I don't do it all the time. But the prayer that I try to say is: Help me remember that there's someone out there tonight that needs to hear what I've got to say.

Michael Hyatt, in one of our podcasts, talked about a sequence, kind of litany he goes through in his own mind that takes away all the fear of speaking. I haven't really feared speaking ever in my life. But this does remind me of why I'm there, and what really all of this is all about.

And those are just some of the things that came to my mind.

Matt: You just reminded me of something, I thought it was hilarious. We were standing at an event and there was a woman sitting in the auditorium. This goes to your point about showing up before the show. And she was taking a picture of her friend and I said, you should go photo bomb that. So you did. And she comes over and goes, do we know you?

Ken: That's what she said. Do we know you? Which goes a long way to take that "I'm the star" thing out of your mind.

You know what's interesting about the conversation we've just had, Matt. And I just want to say to the people who are listening. I don't know how to communicate to you enough how important Matt's role is in what happens in our show. I'm getting to the age now where stuff falls off me wherever I walk. At that age you have to have somebody who takes the pressure off of you. I couldn't do what I'm doing right now, I'll put it that way. I could not do what I'm doing right now without your help, Matt, so I really appreciate that.

Matt: Thanks, Ken.

Ken: I've really enjoyed this. We do this almost automatically, and it rarely enters our mind that what we're doing might be helpful to other people. And I hope that those of you who are listening have maybe found some little piece of this that will help you maximize your speaking event. Not only before you take off, but after the plane lands.

I have a tip for today. You want to hear the tip? And oh, this is exciting because I'm going to let Matt back in on this just a little bit because he knows how to do this. This isn't stuff I'm good at. Here's today's travel tip.

When you rent a car, always ask for an upgrade. Now, I have watched you do this over and over and over again. And we get up – of course we're – we have status with our rental company, and so when we go to the desk, this is what Matt asks for.

Matt: I'll usually do it in kind of a nonchalant way.

Ken: I'm the guy renting you a car. Talk to me.

Matt: I'll say, hey! Do you guys happen to have maybe a Ford Explorer? I love the new Ford Explorers so I always just ask that question. And not all times they do, but they'll say, oh, I have a whatever. A bigger size vehicle. Because we, as a previous Road Tip, I think John Branyan said, we stay with the same company. Avis, in this case. And you kind of develop a relationship and then you kind of ask it in a nonchalant kind of way.

Ken: See, this is why he does what he does. I would step up there and go, do you know how long we've been with you? And you give me this little, tiny car? What are you thinking?

Matt: Sometimes they'll say, we can do that, it'll be an extra \$39 a day and I'll say, you know, don't worry about it. And sometimes they'll say okay, and other times they'll say, we'll take care of it.

Ken: That's when they glance down and see the level of participation. You have fun with it. I just start steaming.

Brian: Hey, you know what. This podcast today, and last week's was incredibly enlightening to me to hear all of the things, not only that Matt does after the plane lands, but also I want to stress the point. If you have the systems in place you can operate better and function more clearly and more effectively in what you're doing in communicating with

the people that you're working with if these things are taken care of. You have a plan in action, you can activate it and things will go well.

Now, when they don't go well you make those adjustments and learn from them. All right, today I wanted to wrap this and tell people about our Secrets of Dynamic Communication book that Ken just rewrote and it's revised and updated. And I was reading through it and looking through it and I have a little quote from a friend of ours, Michael Hyatt, who did the endorsement. I just read this and I'm going to read this to you. He brings up four points that this book provides for people and this is something that I really want people to consider picking up.

"Whether you're a professional speaker, pastor, corporate executive, author or just passionate about a message, you can take your communication skills to the next level. Within these pages you will learn how to first, dramatically reduce your prep time. Second, communicate with more clarity and focus. Third, increase your ability to connect with the audience, and finally craft speeches that leave an impact."

Ken: And he's not just saying that because we're good friends. He really has benefited from that, and we have so benefited from the products that he offers. Hey, we were going to give something away today. This list that Matt has. How can people get a hold of that list?

Brian: As always, and for all of our podcasts, if you ever want to go back and review the notes and kind of see what we discussed, and also get these free downloads that we occasionally offer, you go to dynamiccommunicators.com and you'll be able to see the links there that will give you the downloads and also the Show Notes from today's podcast and previous podcasts as well.

Ken: DynamicCommunicators.com And if you listen to the Art and Business of Public Speaking, you too can be a dynamic communicator. See you next week.

Brian: Hey, thanks for tuning in to another episode of the Art and Business of Public Speaking. Be sure to check out the full Show Notes at dynamiccommunicators.com where you can find the resources we discussed today, and a downloadable transcript of the podcast. By the way, if you enjoyed today's episode, we would love for you to rate the podcast in iTunes. This helps us get in front of more people who are interested in our message. Thanks so much for your help, and we'll see you again next week.