

Checklist of Items to Take to Your Next Speaking Gig or Book Signing Event

When you're invited to speak at an event, you are usually offered a display table where you can sell your books (and if you aren't offered one, be sure to ask!). Here is a checklist of items to bring along to ensure you're prepared.

- ✓ **Large rolling suitcase** - This makes it easy to store and transport everything.
- ✓ **Plenty of books** - As a rule, bring enough for 40% of the audience to purchase.
- ✓ **Order forms** - If you have multiple books, consider bundling them together at a discount (people love these!). You may also want to offer special discounts on consulting, training programs or other products and services. Order forms also come in handy in the event that you run out of books.
- ✓ **Credit card processing** - You will miss out on sales if you don't have a way to process credit cards. If you have an iPhone, check out www.squareup.com, which gives you a credit card swipe device for your phone. You can also collect credit card information on your order forms and process them with Paypal's Virtual Terminal service.
- ✓ **Business cards** - Bring more than you will need, along with a card holder for display on your table.
- ✓ **Table cloth** - This gives your table a distinctive look. You may want to bring a second table cloth along and use it along with your book boxes, turned upside down, to add height to your table and create an eye-catching display.
- ✓ **Bookmarks and marketing collateral** - Bring along any handouts, postcards, or other items that you want attendees to have.
- ✓ **Book easels** - Simple folding book easels allow you to display books upright. Check out www.displays2go.com for options.
- ✓ **Mailing list sign-up** - There are several ways to approach this. You can have a sign-up sheet on your table or a way for attendees to drop in a business card. I like to use a small folding gift bag since it's easy to transport and still looks attractive on the table. Also make sure to offer some incentive for signing up by holding a drawing for a prize (free book) or give away a report or ebook.
- ✓ **Signage** - You don't have to go overboard, though a professionally printed sign can be used over and over again. You can have a banner created with grommets that can be tied up behind you in a trade show booth. Or you can print a large foam-core poster to be showcased on a small easel.
- ✓ **Tape and scissors** - It's amazing how often these items come in handy.
- ✓ **Pens** - You'll need a nice pen for autographing books. It's also helpful to have a few extra pens on hand, plus a Sharpie in case you need to whip up a sign.

Of course you can add to this list and bring promotional items (pens, mugs, squishy balls), a bowl of candy, a bouquet of flowers, or anything else that will add appeal to your table. But the above list gives you the basics while keeping things simple, yet professional. Good luck!