

# Speaker Program Training

## Key Tips and Suggestions

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Life sciences compliance leaders and regulators alike seem to agree that speaker programs are fraught with the potential for risk and compliance violations. Industry conferences feature sessions dedicated to the off-label, kickback and false claims risks of the programs and the trend toward transparency puts the marketing dollars data out there for anyone to review. With the public and regulatory spotlight shining brightly on speaker programs, the need for updated and effective training has grown exponentially. With that in mind, we present the following list of suggestions to keep in mind when building and deploying your speaker program training.

### One training does not fit all

From speaker evaluation and selection, through program organization and execution, different employees, with varying responsibilities, are involved with speaker programs. Those different roles and responsibilities demand different training requirements. For example, Medical Affairs personnel serve a different role at the speaker programs than their colleagues in the commercial group and in marketing. The core foundational training should be customized with content relevant to each of the groups to make it relevant and maximize the effectiveness.

### Integrate real-life situations

Speaking of relevancy, your speaker programs training needs to extend beyond the reciting of rote concepts and policy. To make the training stick, include the situations the employees are likely to face during the programs. For the commercial team, don't just tell them the FDA's rules on product promotion apply to speaker programs, include knowledge checks that feature speakers veering off the approved slide deck to discuss anecdotal, unsubstantiated product claims. The same rules that govern their interactions with HCPS also apply to the speaker's conduct and in their role as program host, sales representatives need to know how to react when it happens.

### The devil is in the details...expected and otherwise

Don't stop at the obvious when outlining the topics to be covered in your training. The exceptions can be just as problematic as the rule

and should be covered in the training as well. On the attendee front for example, commercial representatives need to understand the rules for government employees from agencies like the Department of Defense and Veterans Administration, and what is acceptable for their participation.

### Don't forget the vendors

Since collaboration drives shared ownership and desire for success, partnering with business stakeholders is critical. When designing your training, meet with leadership members of your intended audience to share your vision and ask them about typical customer types and discussions. Seek feedback on the draft content. Are the examples and scenarios relevant and easy to apply? Do business leaders feel confident providing feedback during coaching sessions? Make sure the sales training department is part of the conversation as well. Collaboration helps stimulate pull-through.

### Make the program training continuous

Speaker program training should not be a one and done event. Studies show that learners forget up to 80% of what they have learned quickly after the completion of the eLearning module or live training event. To raise retention levels and increase the transfer of the knowledge before and during the programs, follow the foundational learning with continuous nuggets of training. These can take the form of brief assessments, contests, and sprints focused on specific details, delivered across the learners' timelines.

### Conclusion

Speaker programs offer companies the opportunity to provide healthcare professionals with education and training on the safe and on-label use of their products, delivered by one of their peers. Engaging, effective and on-going training on the coordination and execution of those programs lowers the potential for risk and strengthens a company's compliance culture.

*To learn more about the PharmaCertify Compliance Foundations eLearning module, Managing Speaker Program Risk, contact Dan O'Connor at [doconnor@nxlevelsolutions.com](mailto:doconnor@nxlevelsolutions.com).*