



How to stand out on a conference panel

The definitive guide for
conference panelists

Essential tips from the public speaking
experts at Benjamin Ball Associates

How to make a mark on a conference panel

Speaking on a conference panel is a great marketing opportunity. You get recognition and a captive audience. But how do you make your contribution stand out? Follow this essential advice from the leadership communication experts at Benjamin Ball Associates.

Make sure your next conference panel is a success.

1 Above all, entertain your audience

When you plan what to say, ask yourself: what big questions do the audience have? What would they like to ask the panelists? For example, they might want to know the impact of recent regulatory changes, learn about new innovations or get advice on how to be more successful.

Plan debate around those topics. Prioritise subjects where the answers will be contentious, to provoke discussion.

Remember that your audience doesn't care what you think; they want to know what it means for them. So, use relevant examples and the 'you' pronoun extensively so your audience can see how it affects them.

2 Introduce yourself memorably

It's best when someone else introduces you. But, if you have to do it yourself, do it memorably and keep it short. Sum yourself up and introduce your big idea in just 15 seconds (approx. 30 words). For more tips, read *Six Steps to Introducing Yourself Memorably on a Conference Panel* at benjaminball.com.

3 Give your audience practical advice

You will be remembered best for sharing clear and valuable tips.

- **Be useful:** What would benefit your audience?
- **Be clear:** Use big, bold statements; exaggerate
- **Be generous:** Share your best advice
- **Illustrate:** Use relevant examples and stories
- **Prepare phrases:** Use soundbites that will be remembered
- **Take a stand:** Have a strong viewpoint & be prepared to defend it

4 Become an engaging performer

Attract and maintain the audience's attention by using public speaking techniques:

- **Energy and passion:** Speak louder, with added enthusiasm
- **Eye contact:** Look at the audience when you're speaking
- **Smile:** It signals that you are an expert
- **Pauses:** Use plenty of them
- **Sit forward:** Indicate engagement with your body language
- **Be attentive:** When not speaking, look at the person who is talking
- **Practice:** The most natural performances are carefully prepared

5 Adopt the language of great speakers

Choose your words carefully for maximum impact:

- Simplify and exaggerate your opinions and ideas
- Use short words, short phrases and long pauses
- Share stories and examples
- Incorporate metaphors and analogies
- Include powerful verbs and nouns
- Ask rhetorical questions
- Use triads (sets of three), contrasts (not A but B), rhyme and alliteration

6 Namecheck yourself and your fellow panelists

Help your audience remember who's who. Refer to your fellow panellists, e.g. "As Jane said earlier..." and regularly talk about your firm by name, e.g. "At WidgetCo, we always say..."

7 Avoid the mistakes others make

Watch out for these mistakes, which result in a dull experience for the audience:

- **Just turning up:** You need to prepare if you want to engage and impress
- **Violently agreeing:** Instead, find differences for debate
- **All theory, no substance:** Use examples, stories and data as proof points
- **Long, rambling answers:** Keep your comments short and snappy
- **Looking like a fireside chat:** Inject passion and energy into your performance

8 End with impact

Your closing words should stick. The audience will remember the last thing you say. That's why it's important to plan your key takeaway, and deliver it at the end. For example, you could give one final piece of advice. Or, you could close with a memorable statement and a call to action. Alternatively, refer back to what you said at the start.

Great conference panelists make their contributions look effortless. Like a magician performing a card trick, it looks effortless because it is well practiced. Great panelists prepare, practice and refine behind the scenes to ensure a flawless performance on-stage.

That's why Senior Executives who have an upcoming conference panel work with us to ensure they look, sound and act impressively on the day.

We help you refine your messages, strengthen your delivery, and stress-test your performance so you can handle whatever comes your way. Call Louise Angus on **020 7018 0922** or email her via louise@benjaminball.com for more information.

If you want to stand out at an upcoming conference panel, you need to prepare.

We'll help you refine your key messages, strengthen your delivery and stress-test your performance. After just a half day with us, you'll feel calm, confident and ready to stand out.

Our award-winning training, coaching and advice has helped hundreds of CEOs and Senior Executives transform their leadership communications, including pitches, presentations and conference panel appearances.

Start preparing for your conference panel now.

Call Louise Angus on **020 7018 0922** or email her via

louise@benjaminball.com for more information

or to discuss how we can support you.

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Benjamin Ball Associates

1 King Street, London EC2V 8AU

+44 (0)20 7018 0922 | louise@benjaminball.com

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