

A special report by:
VICKIE SULLIVAN

The Thought Leader's
Next Adventure:

COMPLETING THE HERO'S JOURNEY



THE THOUGHT LEADER'S NEXT ADVENTURE: COMPLETING THE HERO'S JOURNEY

By Vickie K. Sullivan, President, Sullivan Speaker Services Inc.

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CONGRATULATIONS. YOU DID IT. YOU'VE MADE THE BOLD MOVES, TOOK THE RISKS, AND IT ALL WORKED. THIS PART OF YOUR CAREER IS OVER. SO WHAT'S NEXT? MENTORING? COACHING? SPEAKING?

IN JOSEPH CAMPBELL'S "THE HERO'S JOURNEY," THE HERO ISN'T FINISHED UNTIL HE OR SHE RETURNS HOME IN GLORY TO ENCOURAGE OTHERS TO START ON THEIR OWN QUEST. FOR MANY CHANGE AGENTS AND PIONEERS, SHARING WHAT YOU'VE LEARNED CAN BE A GREAT WAY TO HELP OTHERS ON THEIR JOURNEY.

IT CAN ALSO LAUNCH YOUR NEXT BIG ADVENTURE. BEFORE YOU STEP INTO THE SPOTLIGHT, LET'S STEP BACK AND STRATEGIZE THIS MOVE. HERE ARE 6 WAYS TO GET MARKET TRACTION FOR THIS ENDEAVOR.

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{1} GO INTO UNCHARTED TERRITORY.

You know that going back to basics got you through it all. But this view at 30,000 feet won't get the market's attention. Why? Between internal coaching and the Internet, the basics are covered. We've heard it before. And while your stories will pique our interest, they are not enough to keep our attention.

Your experience has given you a unique perspective to drill down into uncharted territory. Do it. Create nuggets of wisdom you learned in those pivotal moments. Make them short, pithy and memorable.

The market defines change agents as those who not only have vision but also the power to make big things happen. Your results prove that you can do that. Now your job is to translate your experience into a perspective we can't get enough of.



{2} CREATE A CAMPAIGN.

The difference between experts and thought leaders lies in what they focus on. The former showcases their thinking. The latter applies their thinking to a cause we can rally behind.

Your experiences have given you a viewpoint, a prism through which you see the world's true colors. Use that lens to develop a consistent manifesto. What do you stand for?

Create your flag, then wave it. Define your cause, reveal what needs to be done, then give next steps. A manifesto brings clarity to your campaign – and positions you to apply your unique viewpoint in a broader context.



{3} GET SERIOUS. GET HELP.

Launching a campaign that leads a revolution means risk. The marketplace of ideas has too much white noise. Judgment is swift and sure for those who phone it in or get it wrong.

Even the sharpest knife cannot carve its own handle. Many thought leaders are too close to their own situation. They don't see all the options or can determine which campaign is the best. And the wrong move can take months – and a lot of money – to fix.

Do what top celebrities do – get a team of advisors. Those who not only have your best interest at heart but also the market intelligence to see what you don't.

There are a lot of ways to get help. Just get the help. Don't do this alone. They are called blind spots for a reason.

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{4} JUST SAY NOT YET.

If you are already known, there will be many opportunities to “get out there” with your new idea. In your quest to give back, you will be tempted to accept every opportunity that comes your way. But don't.

Without a strong strategy, writing articles, giving speeches, and media appearances are common black holes in time and effort. It's easy to wake up one day and say “hey, what happened to the last six months?”

Know which opportunities advance your cause and forego everything else. Saying no is never fatal, because your answer isn't permanent. People can (and will) come back and invite you again. And don't buy into the “it's good exposure” argument. Everyone says that.

{5} LEVERAGE CREATES MOMENTUM.

Don't expect the world to change just because you wrote a book or gave a great speech. Life – and the internet – is filled with too much information, and your efforts to “get out there” are never effective in a vacuum.

You have to do things before, during and after every opportunity to create momentum and keep attention on you. This is not the time to re-create the wheel. Systems are everything here.

Get clear about what you want, and list specifics on what you are willing to do. And create a plan that allows you to implement easily. You have to be able to take full advantage of every endeavor, every opportunity you say “yes” to.

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{6} BE RUTHLESS ABOUT YOUR MOTIVES.

Take a long look in the mirror and be crystal clear about why you want to share. Do you have “fire in the belly” for a particular message? Do you love the limelight? Or do you want to make more money doing something more “fun” and less labor intensive?

The root of all false expectations is the lies we tell ourselves. It's great to give back. It's also OK to get something in return too. Just be clear on what you want. And why you want it.

Being clear on your motivation will help you answer the next question: what are you willing to do to make this big adventure happen? It won't be effortless. You have to make a transition. And get help (see #3 above). Your motives will drive how far you're willing to go.



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After the celebration of your journey on the road less traveled, you (the hero) have an obligation to encourage, to teach, and to share the lessons with others. A few strategic moves will make a difference between being a thought leader with a viable campaign and a “former” who seemed to fade away. May these strategies help your next quest get traction in a very crowded marketplace. Go forth to serve the greater good!
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VICKIE SULLIVAN

President, Sullivan Speaker Services Inc.

Vickie Sullivan is internationally recognized as the top market strategist for experts. Specializing in branding for high-fee markets, she has launched thousands of thought leaders since 1987. Ms. Sullivan is a popular speaker throughout the U.S. and Canada on why buyers buy in lucrative markets and strategies that position experts for those opportunities. Her market intelligence updates are distributed to experts in the U.S. as well as 17 other countries.

Ms. Sullivan has served twice on the editorial board for Professional Speaker Magazine, and currently serves as contributing editor for RainToday.com, a prominent community of 120,000 service professionals. Her articles have been published in other publications such as Presentations and USA Today magazines and the Handbook of Business Strategy. Ms. Sullivan has also been quoted in mainstream media such as Fortune.com, The New York Times, and Investor's Business Daily. Her work and views have appeared in books such as Bright-Sided: How Positive Thinking is Undermining America by Barbara Ehrenreich, Secrets of Six-Figure Women by Barbara Stanney, and Getting Started in Consulting by Alan Weiss.

Ms. Sullivan's groundbreaking work has earned her an appointment on the Women's Leadership Board for the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard. As a former member of the mentoring committee, she has given three presentations to the student body there on personal branding and prominence. She also serves on the international advisory board for SpeakerFile.com, the fastest growing network of corporate and professional speakers.

The first in her family to graduate from college, Ms. Sullivan earned her bachelor's degree in Journalism, Public Relations emphasis at the University of Oklahoma. She lives in Tempe, AZ with her husband Larry, her favorite geek.



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OTHER RESOURCES

All of these products are available for purchase through Vickie's online store.

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VICKIE SULLIVAN'S SPEAKER SUCCESS KIT: AN EXCLUSIVE 3-CD SET

Your ultimate, need-to-know source to start playing the speaker's game. In these three CDs—jam-packed with winning content and offered together for the first time—you'll get the pre-eminent scoop from Vickie on the common mistakes and pricey pitfalls you can avoid in starting your speaking career. The CDs include *Get Those Bookings: Marketing Strategies for Professional Speakers*, *Speaking in the Strike Zone: How to Get in Front of a Buying Audience*, and *Speak to Sell: Using Public Speaking as a Marketing Tool*.

YOUR POSITION OF POWER: PACKAGING YOUR EXPERTISE FOR HIGH-FEE MARKETS

Ready to make yourself P.O.P. in the marketplace? You can with Vickie's four CD set that shows you how to flex your own unique Position of Power. Here, she provides a strategic, step-by-step approach to positioning—and communicating—your expertise in ways that will make you a must-have speaker... and draw in your most profitable customers.

TALKING TO STRANGERS: EFFECTIVE SALES CONVERSATIONS FOR EXPERTS WHO SPEAK

In this amazingly comprehensive 7-CD set Vickie down-loads the info to make every conversation count so you can turbo-charge your success...right now. She breaks down—CD by CD—how to make every phone call more effective, how to communicate how valuable you are, how to respond to budget-blues excuses, and how to implement top-tier closing strategies.

Vickie's masterful approach will have you summoning your innate courage to speak to strangers... and command the highest fees possible.

SPRINGBOARD MARKETING

Looking to create currency with a business that prominently plays up your intellectual capital? In this CD set, Vickie enthusiastically unspools a winning consultant program previously revealed only in pricey one-on-one sessions. It plots out the plan to build an infrastructure—driven by speaking—that sets your expertise apart, fine-tunes message development and turns a single speech into a powerful, revenue-generating machine.

GET THOSE BOOKINGS: MARKETING STRATEGIES FOR PROFESSIONAL SPEAKERS

In this CD, you'll find out what to know before you market yourself, how associations and corporations select speakers they pay for, and how you can influence the committees that decide which speakers get hired.

SPEAKING IN THE STRIKE ZONE: HOW TO GET IN FRONT OF A BUYING AUDIENCE

This fast-paced CD features Vickie giving the very latest on market expectations and how you can tailor your format for the highest return.

SPEAK TO SELL: USING PUBLIC SPEAKING AS A MARKETING TOOL

Specifically targeted to those who want to give presentations to sell products, procure clients or promote their ideas, this CD offers a tested, systematic approach to create captivating topics that sell.