

Speaker “Sandwich”

Having a guest speaker at a union event can be educational (and interesting) if you “sandwich” the speaker between audience discussions. Use this simple process to engage your audience and help them learn.

Duration: Flexible, and will depend on the length of the whole event. Remember that it’s boring to sit and listen for a long time, so the ideal is that the speaker and discussion last no more than 30 minutes

Number of people: Unlimited

Equipment and room set-up:

- A good sound system so everyone can hear
- A laptop computer with MicroSoft PowerPoint or equivalent
- A data projector and screen
- It’s best is to have people seated at tables so they can discuss together but if that’s not possible, arrange the chairs so it’s easy to turn and face others
- If it’s a very large group, you will need hand-held microphones for the discussion period

Before the event:

1. Recruit these volunteers: a facilitator for this portion of your event, someone to operate the PowerPoint slides, and several others to move the hand-held microphones around the audience
2. Meet with the guest speaker:
 - a. Give them clear instructions about how long you want them to speak and describe who will be attending
 - b. Brief them about the discussion process (below) that you will use
 - c. Ask them to identify the three main points they plan to make and send them to you in written form, along with their name, title, and subject of their talk. Explain that you will be projecting these on a screen while they speak
3. Put the speaker’s name, title, speaking subject, and three main points on PowerPoint slides

4. Together with the facilitator, think of one good, open-ended question to ask the audience before the speaker talks and one or two questions for after. Put the questions on PowerPoint slides. Some suggestions are:

Before:

- What has our Local Union done recently on this subject? OR
- What do you know about this subject?

After:

- What's your reaction to what you heard? AND
- What is one question you would like to ask the speaker?

At the event:

1. Show the slide with the speaker's name, title, and speaking subject.
2. Facilitator welcomes everyone and briefly introduces the speaker.
3. Show the slide with the first discussion question.
4. Facilitator asks the audience to discuss the first question at their tables or with others sitting near them, turning their chairs as necessary.
5. Facilitator asks for a few volunteers to report briefly on their discussions, using the hand-held mikes being distributed by helpers.
6. Speaker gives their talk. Show the slide(s) of their three key points.
7. Show the slide with the two final discussion questions.
8. Facilitator asks the audience to take 10 minutes to discuss the two questions at their tables or with their informal group.
9. After 10 minutes of discussion, helpers distribute hand-held mikes and facilitator takes comments and questions three at a time, with the speaker responding. Repeat until time is up.
10. Thank the guest speaker and the audience.