

Almost every endeavor requires that there be certain tools at hand. The writer has a keyboard or a pen, the ballplayer has a bat and glove, the teacher has a roll book and chalk. As a speaker, there are many things that may be necessary to make a dynamite presentation.

When a couple are expecting the birth of child, they often take classes offered by a local hospital. One of the topics is always about preparing a bag for the hospital that can be easily picked up on the way out the door. People in a storm ridden area may have an emergency bag that includes safety items that can be grabbed quickly in the event of an emergency.

As a speaker, and particularly if you are a member of a speakers' bureau or if you travel to your presentations, it behooves you to develop a portable tool kit or bag that you can carry easily to each of your assignments. This will give you a sense of preparedness and will also save you time and trouble upon arrival to your destination.

As a member of a speakers' bureau, I often made talks in a variety of settings, from warehouses, to auditoriums, to offices and conference rooms. Each presented their own unique challenges and it was often impractical or even not possible to preview an area before a talk.

Thus, a speaker's kit can be of real service at these times.

What to include?

A couple of your favorite markers in both permanent and dry erase formats

An eraser for the above

Some masking tape

An extension cord

Some duct tape

Paper and pens

Of course, some business cards

You get the idea, and there may be specialized things for your industry, such as samples and devices that you will be talking about.

In my sales training classes, I always include a segment of discussion of what a well-stocked computer bag should hold, as well as a well-stocked automobile trunk. This enables a sales person to meet questions with confidence and enables the customer to see a product, have a brochure, or be left with a data stick with a video.

The speaker can do the same thing with a well-stocked speakers bag. For example, a hospital speaker, making talks about heart health, may have a heart model and may leave behind brochures about heart health.

A final caveat, and those who have read my past articles will remember this. Your audience does not know where you are going with your talk. Therefore, do not apologize to them about a missing piece in your presentation. If you left your heart model in the office, don't mention the fact to your audience. Do your best to describe the heart action with a drawing on dry erase board or paint a word picture. Don't disappoint your audience by making them think that your presentation is incomplete because of an error on your part.

Better yet, have a good tool bag built and ready to go and never be left without your "heart"!