



Ideas for Using Guest Speakers at SIB Meetings

Sisters who use their valuable time to attend committee meetings want to “take away” something useful. One way to provide a useful “take away” is to invite a guest speaker. Below are some Topics where guest speakers might be appropriate as well as some other information to consider.

A. Topics for Guest Speakers

1. Career Advancement
2. Diversity Training
3. Harassment Training (EEOC)
4. Shop Steward Training
5. Ergonomics
6. Personal Fitness
7. Health and Safety on the Job
8. Labor Law
9. Volunteering
10. Political Advocacy
11. Team Building Skills
12. Communication Skills
13. Leadership Skills
14. Time Management Skills
15. Union Labor History
16. Financial Planning
17. Walking Architectural History Tour

B. Types of Guest Speakers to Consider

1. Training directors
2. Training instructors
3. Architects
4. Politicians
5. Contractors
6. Project managers
7. Forewomen
8. Foremen
9. Trustees or other individuals who serve on union committees/boards
10. Sisters who have expertise from neighboring SIB committees
11. Representatives from community organizations
12. Representatives from non-profit organizations
13. Representatives from women-focused organizations

C. Where to Locate Guest Speakers

1. Community sources (hospitals may have outreach who can provide speakers on health and the workplace)
2. Regional council (e.g., area standards campaign, benefits office, continuing education department, political education committee, shop stewards)
3. Local unions within your regional council
4. Local unions in other regional councils
5. Neighboring SIB committees
6. Area colleges, technical institutes, or other types of training centers
7. Non-profit organizations (e.g., Habitat for Humanity, Girl Scouts)
8. Women-focused organizations (e.g., Women in Trade)
9. Pension fund committees, health trust committees, or other union committees

D. Factors to Consider when Choosing Guest Speakers

1. **Cost.** While some guest speakers may not charge for their time (e.g., community leader to talk about a project where help is needed), others may require a speaking fee. There may also be charges for travel or room accommodations, depending on the distance the speaker needs to travel. Additionally, there could be costs for items such as “handouts” the speaker may ask you to copy in advance of the meeting. So, consider these factors before you make the invitation. Then, verify everything regarding cost very early in the conversation.
2. **Location.** If your speaker has to travel a long distance to get to your location, this may prove costly for your committee or difficult for the speaker. So, consider this factor when selecting your speaker.
3. **Topic.** Your speaker’s topic should be timely and relevant to your Sisters. Listen to what Sisters say they want to learn or what to know more about. Maybe there is interest in upcoming union political campaigns and Sisters want to learn more about how to become involved. Or, perhaps there is some interest in managing finances during good or bad times. In the end, you want to make sure that your guest speaker will be talking about something your Sisters want to hear.

E. Things To Do After your Speaker is Confirmed

1. **Confirm your agreement with the Speaker.** Send a follow-up “confirmation” email or written letter immediately after the conversation with the speaker. Be sure to include all the particulars regarding the upcoming meeting and your discussion about the meeting:
 - a. Time of the meeting
 - b. Location of the meeting
 - c. Topic the speaker will cover
 - d. Time the speaker will be presenting

- e. How long the speaker will talk
 - f. Agreement regarding any audio-visual needs
 - g. Agreement regarding the need for copies of handouts
 - h. Agreement regarding speaker's fee, travel, or room accommodations (if relevant)
2. **Advertise the Meeting.** Do everything possible to ensure good attendance at your meeting. Send your regular emails or make your usual announcements. Then, do a lot of follow-ups and consider different approaches as well (e.g., telephone calls, texts, Facebook). If the speaker takes his/her time to attend your meeting, you want to have someone there to listen.
 3. **Remind the Speaker.** Do a follow-up email and/or telephone call a week before the meeting date. Verify that everything is still confirmed and ask the speaker if she/he needs anything more from your committee prior to the meeting.

F. Things To Do After Your Speaker has Presented

1. Send a personal Thank You card and/or email. Let the speaker know how much you appreciated his/her time and talk.
2. If you choose to have the meeting attendees complete an evaluation form, ask the speaker if she/he wants to see copies of the feedback.
3. Provide some sort of feedback to your meeting attendees about what the speaker said. This might include a summary of the presentation or merely a discussion during an upcoming conference call or face-to-face meeting.