

invited to speak at the company sales meeting to 500 young store managers. His challenge was to inspire the managers to get their employees to contribute money-saving ideas.

I suggested he walk on stage, look at the audience, and say, “We are here to talk about heroes.” In seven words, he proved that this was not another dull corporate speech. “They may be you, in-the-trenches heroes!”

He then added some Hollywood drama with a character—an everyday hero—and dialogue.

He talked about a young man in the shipping department who noticed that he was shipping seven newsletters to the same location on the same day in separate packets. This mailroom hero asked if he could package them together with a note requesting distribution on the other end. His idea saved the company \$200,000. Relating the money to something specific, the speaker explained, “\$200,000 is 18 miles of shelving.” That added specificity and color to the story. Most speeches need statistics, but statistics will not stick if they are not compared to something memorable.

#### **Weave in a flavor scene.**

Good movies open with a “flavor scene,” which grabs your attention and positions you to listen for what is to come.

Most sales teams start their presentations with “My name is Jane Smith. I am with the ABC Company.” The audience is thinking: “So what? What is in this for us?”

Don’t sound the same as everyone else. Create a “flavor scene” that the audience is interested in and use a topic that they know about. It should make an impact from the beginning and tie in to what follows.

#### **Create captivating characters and construct vivid dialogue.**

Just as the retail executive included a character and dialogue in his speech, and so do scriptwriters, you can easily do the same. The sooner you do in your speech, the sooner the audience gets emotionally involved, which is important when you are trying to get your point across.

Nobody cares what you say about your product and service. They would rather hear from other flesh-and-blood characters who have overcome the same obstacles they now face. So add a backstory to your speeches by always using the client or character’s dialogue to talk about their situation, which tugs at your audience’s emotions.

#### **Remember scene changes.**

Films move from point to point, maintaining interest by changing settings and emotions, so you should do the same in your speech. Each time you move from story to story or example to example, this is a scene change. With each scene change, weave in something that makes your speech unique. So sometimes you are funny or serious. You’ll tell stories and use statistics. You’ll stand still and then move. These are all elements of variety that are going to keep your audience awake.

#### **At the end of your speech, provide a lesson learned.**

All great films—and speeches—have a message. When action and thrills serve a compelling story with a message and finish up with a heart-tugging or eye-opening conclusion, you have what makes an unforgettable movie or speech.

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## Simply Irresistible

By Marshawn Evans

**LEARN HOW BECOMING AN EXPERT IN YOUR INDUSTRY HELPS YOU STAND OUT FROM THE CROWD.**



Branding is the most important business skill that any executive or entrepreneur can possess. In a message-overloaded society, learning how to effectively position yourself as an expert in your industry is more critical now than ever before.

Knowledge and ability are not enough. Another’s perception and appreciation of your knowledge is what creates power. It is time for you to embrace the power of your expertise and thought-leadership.

After all, everyone is an expert at something. Your skill may be planning exciting events or designing beautiful stationery. The question is not if you have an expertise, the question is whether you recognize, value and position it. Becoming an expert only requires three things.

• **First, perspective.** This is the unique viewpoint and approach that you specifically bring to the marketplace. It is a by-product of the struggles, successes and strategies you’ve learned personally and professionally.

• **Second, proof.** Your experiences, skill set, accomplishments and ability to get results are each bricks that build your platform of credibility. People only know what you tell and show them. Speak confidently about your proven abilities in order to cultivate buy-in from others.

• **Third, passion.** Your personality, drive and purpose, when combined with passion, inspire others to believe in you and open doors for you. Today is the perfect day to awaken and activate your dynamic brilliance by establishing yourself as an expert in the marketplace. All you have to do is give yourself permission to be who you already are.

*Reinvention strategist Marshawn Evans equips women to unleash their purpose, potential and influence. She authored S.K.I.R.T.S. in the Boardroom (Wiley 2008) and is founder of ME University® The Ultimate Branding Bootcamp. Visit [marshawnevens.com](http://marshawnevens.com).*