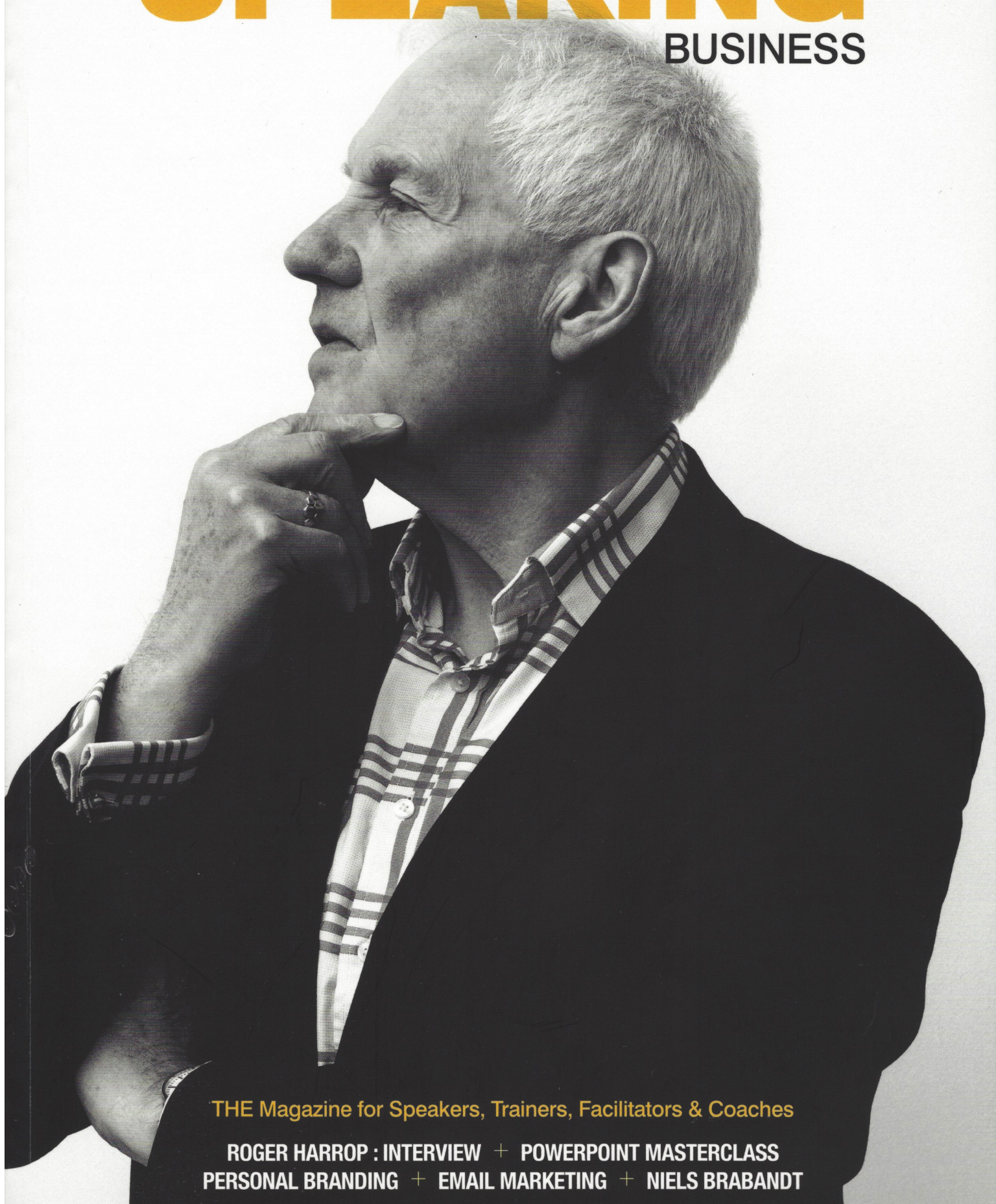


THE  
**SPEAKING**  
BUSINESS



THE Magazine for Speakers, Trainers, Facilitators & Coaches

ROGER HARROP : INTERVIEW + POWERPOINT MASTERCLASS  
PERSONAL BRANDING + EMAIL MARKETING + NIELS BRABANDT

ARE YOU  
BUILDING A  
SUCCESSFUL  
PERSONAL...



**Lesley Everett** (FPSA, PSAE), Author of 'Corporate Brand Personality' provides some hints and tips on how you can take control of your personal corporate branding and, as a result, build a strong and consistent reputation and drive your business forward.

If you don't treat your speaking or coaching career as a true business you will quite likely be missing some crucial points that will get in the way of creating a strong brand that sets you aside from your competition. Running a business means being focused on profits and cash flow, forecasting, investing and remaining relevant. But it also means being consistent with your brand to such a level that all your stakeholders (clients, employees, sub-contractors, suppliers, speaker colleagues) know what you stand for and what you do, and find it easy to talk about you behind your back in a way that you are in control of as much as possible.



**Lesley Everett** is an International Keynote Speaker and thought-leader on personal branding and executive reputation management. She is also a Past President of the Global Speakers Federation. More information is available from Lesley's website at: [www.lesleyeverett.com](http://www.lesleyeverett.com)

It's all too easy to think of your brand as an innovative new logo, a website or speaker sheet. But in reality, the strongest element of your brand is what your clients say about you to their contacts. This is most likely to come from how you personally make them feel and how easy you are to work with. This could be the difference between a referral from a client or colleague, or a 'don't touch with a barge pole' response. Your brand is on show 24/7 and from 360 degrees, so let's look at ways in which you can manage this effectively to gain more speaking bookings and maximise relevant exposure.

As with any brand, your personal brand is a collection of the powerful and clear ideas people have about you when they think of you. But what about the 'unconscious' layers we're adding to our brand, 24/7? We're never 'not' selling – how often are you letting your guard down? Our brand reputation often precedes us in business, and certainly builds without us always being aware of exactly how.

Let me share with you some top tips for building a consistent brand as a speaker that I've learned over the fifteen years as an international speaker as well as running a training and consultancy business.

### 1. Be clear about your personal values and be consistent

Your speaking business is YOU, and it has never been more important to fully take that on board than now. If you want to be considered as easy and professional to work with, you need to be consistent with your behaviours and those of your entire team. If you present inconsistent messages then you create confusion in your brand and it can easily dissipate into a fog of ambiguity, making you unremarkable.

Being consistent is only possible if you're authentic – trying to be somebody you're not is hard work! If you want to be seen as an authentic speaker, you have to make sure that everything you do is aligned with the values you stand for as an individual, and everything that others do for your business is also in sync. Discovering that authentic core is crucial. Know what you truly stand for and stick to it.

I recently pulled out of an event because my values had been trampled all over and the trust and respect had long gone. I could no longer stand on a stage and talk about the importance of a corporate brand personality when the client had contradicted all my basic principles. I would not have been true to myself. This was a tough decision to make but nonetheless the right one. It's the hardest thing sometimes to say 'No' or turn something down because it doesn't quite fit your values, but be strong and think of the longer-term, bigger picture for your brand. It will pay off.

Consistency should flow through your materials too – have you revisited your proposal template recently? Is it a plain Word document or does it have your personality and branding stamped all over it? Make your proposals stand out and look like they belong to your brand.

### 2. Look the part and walk the talk

In our current, refreshing business environment where people are generally 'allowed' to be much more individual, and acceptable business dress is a healthy balance of personal choice and corporate expectation, it is easy to become blasé about our appearance and make excuses in our minds for individual sloppiness or, worse still, not even consider that appearance is important anymore. It should absolutely be at the top of your list when you present and go about your business. Wardrobe choices are still a powerful insight into the way we are perceived to go about our business and they show respect for the people we are with.

In addition, walking the talk should be top of your list. For example, if you speak about customer service, make sure you deliver consistently world-class customer service yourself. Evaluate your team and make sure they do too, every time. Ask your clients what experiences they get from you and your team – how do they sum that experience up in a few words. You'll learn a heap of useful information from asking this question.

### 3. Don't follow the norm - mediocrity rules!

In our business we are finding corporate manners are slowly but surely going downhill. Phone meetings arranged are cancelled at the last minute, proposals are not acknowledged, people don't take responsibility for seeing through an action or sorting a challenge and a blame culture is being created where people don't apologise for a mistake or oversight. Apologies now appear to be seen as a weakness and rarely happen when they should do. It is so easy to get swept up in this disrespectful world and behave as others do – but please don't. Stick to your values whatever the other person does or how they make you feel, and know when to walk away. Stand out by doing the things that others generally are not doing anymore in business.

### 4. Build your social media personality footprint

Social media provides us with a brilliant opportunity to express our personality to a wide community and give others a window into who we really are. Provided, of course, you manage it correctly and ensure negative layers are not added. That one ill-informed post or unconsidered rant could do more damage to your brand than you can imagine. People talk. Think about how many people you talk about and what words you use? Take note – others will be doing this about you too!

Take a look at all the social media platforms you use – do the header photos and images all look like they belong to the same brand and person? What about your YouTube channel too?

If you are using a tool for your marketing campaigns such as InfusionSoft, do make sure that every single email that is sent has your personality all the way through it. A very well known US speaker lost a huge amount of credibility with me recently when he clearly had not checked this. One of the automatic follow-up emails to get me to buy his set of videos was abusive and over-the-top pushy to a level that I unsubscribed from all his communications immediately.

My view of his brand has been badly tarnished. Furthermore when I pointed out to him that he may want to review his wording, I had no reply. An isolated incident but it serves to remind us to check everything that leaves our office for brand consistency.

---

## Being consistent is only possible if you're authentic – trying to be somebody you're not is hard work!

---

### 5. Be visible

Always be thinking about ways in which you can be more visible than you are already. I'm a great believer that everything has a shelf life and that we cannot afford to get complacent that people will continue to refer us in the same way that they always did, if we do nothing different.

Do you attend events that your target market attend and write articles for publications that your ideal clients are likely to read? How about being seen at speaker events and conventions around the world if you're wanting to speak more globally? I got one of my biggest (and most enjoyable) contracts to speak in India and Hawaii from a speaker colleague who saw me speak in Canada at a speaker convention. Sometimes our colleagues do refer us.

How about helping others and referring people yourself? Whilst we don't do these things necessarily to get something back, it tends to work that way. Others will talk about the things you do to help them and how you make them feel. Every week I make sure I do something to help other speakers for example. The speaker community has given me so much over the years, I like to give back where I can.

Overall, don't forget, you have a personal brand whether you have cultivated it or not. Make sure you do everything you can to take control and make it something you are confident in and proud of.