

How to choose a great emcee

A great emcee:

1. Includes ample consultation before the event

It's all in the planning. A great MC will know all the details of the event. The reason behind it and the outcomes expected. Often events can have high potential to make change or a specific point. Sometimes a MC needs to be sensitive to political issues, controversial moments and will meet with organisers to cover this ground. The MC will research the topics at hand, and fully understand as much as possible about the industry, jargon and current affairs.

2. Is easy to work with (no diva)

We don't have time for diva's! A MC will ensure they are appropriate, in control, calm and working hard for the event. They are in service to everyone who attends, from the venue, speakers, audience and the organiser.

3. Communication skills & Humour

A great MC will hone their communication skills and practice good explanations, clarity of expectations, ask meaningful questions and be able to deal with all manner of people with different styles. Humour and laughing is a must for keeping people on track, opening their learning brain and keeping energised.

4. Briefing speakers

Speakers need clear guidance and to learn the rules of the game at each event. A clear briefing on time, energy levels, key messages and signals from the MC are important before they go on stage.

5. Managing time

Time seems to pass differently when on stage! Organisers and speakers often lose track of time, as they are consumed with tasks or preparing. A good MC will track time, alert any issues and manage the clock with a razor sharp eye (and a smile).

6. Gives advice

An experienced MC will have seen a variety of outcomes at events. Using this experience in pre meetings and throughout the day makes the organisers life a breeze. Making decisions on the fly is common and a great MC will be able to add value this way.

7. Leading panel discussions

Panel discussions can be an unknown. Panel members are often unaware of their tangents, converse views or unable to manage answers to difficult questions. A MC will brief them, cover their expectations and handle any live issues on stage that may occur. A great MC will also prep the audience early on for asking good questions and engage them well before the panel starts to avoid embarrassing silences.

8. Covering emergencies

It happens. Planes don't land on time. Speakers get sick. An outstanding MC will also be a speaker. They can cover at a moment's notice and solve problems with gaps in conference schedules as part of their role.

9. High energy all day

An engaging MC will be able to manage their energy consistently throughout the day. A full day is often 7am – 6pm with no proper break. Managing energy for the audience is imperative. Being on call and answering questions off stage, being on stage and showing consistent vibrancy is a skill.

10. Can cope with fast change

An event is well planned, though it's like any budget 'not an actual'! Things change and a great MC will be able to change in a moment's notice. Order of events, speakers moving spots, lunch being at a different time, the list goes on. Being able to quickly change, positively accept the differences behind the scenes and manage on stage communication is a must.

11. Liaising with AV team

The AV (tech) team are the MC's best friends on the day. It's important that the MC manages the expectations and event order with the AV team. There are many different protocols for microphone management, techniques issues and signals. A great MC understands these technical issues and will work closely with the AV people to ensure a smooth sound and look for the event.

12. Linking key messages

Whilst the event is happening, the key messages from each speaker will be inspiring and engaging the audience as planned. A great MC will be tracking these messages, summarising and adding time for the audience to further their learning.



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