SPEAKER INVITE TIPS & SAMPLE SPEAKER LETTER

Inviting a speaker/s to give a talk during Cybersecurity Career Week (CCW) exposes attendees to real-world life experiences from the position of someone who has been there. Audience members gain insight and perspective of the guest speaker's particular field.

Where can you find prospective cybersecurity professionals to speak at your event? Below are a few suggestions:

- Local Chamber of Commerce
- Local Economic and Workforce Development Authorities
- Local Technology Councils
- Local Technology Incubators
- Local 2- and 4-Year Institutions of Higher Education (IHE) o Each campus will have a public relations office
    - o Each campus will have a career development office
    - o Check which college or school offers a cybersecurity or cybersecurity related program
    - o Many IHE's have student cybersecurity clubs
- National Centers of Academic Excellence in Cybersecurity (CAE)
- Local Hacker Groups, Associations, or Meetups
- Local Women in Cybersecurity/IT Organizations
- LinkedIn
- NICE

When planning your event, make sure to invite a diverse group of speakers. As a curator and an organizer, it is your obligation to provide a platform for bringing non-homogenous perspectives to your audience.

If you're unsure about a potential speaker, instead of sending a formal speaker invitation, reach out informally, explaining that you would like to learn more about their work and explore the idea of having them present at an upcoming event. Call, video chat, or meet in person, and assess from there.

Once you have determined the speakers you would like to invite, send out a formal speaker invitation. Basic components of a speaker invitation should include:
- The name, date, and location of the event
- The purpose of the event
- The attended audience (type and number)
- The purpose of the speaker's presentation (keynote, panel)
- Why you think they would be a great speaker for your event
- How and why it could benefit them
- How they can contact you

Speaker Invitation Example

[Your event logo placed here as header, if you have one]

Dear [Name of speaker],

On behalf of the XYZ and the XYZ Organizing Committee, we are honored to invite you to speak at the XYZ event celebrating Cybersecurity Career Week (CCW). The event is scheduled for [date], from [time-time] in [location].

The XYZ event is a [full-day/half-day] program being curated by [insert organization name or titles/affiliations], with an audience of about [#], made up of [audience type/educators/high school students/parents]. Our goal is to build awareness of the broad array of career opportunities in cybersecurity available to students and adults. Your discussion on [topic] will be a great addition to our event.

We believe your voice would be a critical addition to the XYZ stage. Please let us know by [date] whether or not you would be interested in speaking. Thank you in advance for your consideration, and we very much look forward to hearing from you.

Best,
[Name]
XYZ Event
Website URL

Invitation Schedule

It is always a good idea to create a schedule for inviting your speaker/s, in case some of your first choices decline your invitation. Sending out your invitations in phases, not all at once, is recommended.

Below is a suggested four phase process:
1. **First Section/First Batch.** The first round of invites should go to your top choices of speakers. Indicate a date to reply yes/no by.

2. **Wait for replies.** Give yourself a designated amount of time for replies. If you need to follow up with anyone, send a gentle reminder that you are following up to the earlier speaker inquiry and you are available to answer any questions about the event.

3. **Assess next steps.** Once you've received responses from your first potential speaker/s, look at your list and replace speakers who have declined with second choices to invite.

4. **Send another batch and repeat!**
When a speaker says no...

If an invited speaker says they are not available or are not interested in speaking at your event, be graceful and thank them for considering the opportunity. If it feels appropriate, you could also ask them if they have any recommendations for other speakers.

Your speaker has accepted! Now what?

Once a speaker accepts your invitation, you will want to follow-up by phone, video conferencing, or an in-person meeting to give them more information about the event and discuss the content for their talk.

The goal of your conversation is to communicate the following:

Conference Purpose
- This conference will cover XYZ topics to celebrate Cybersecurity Career Week
- The specific learning objectives are …..
- Most attendees will be of XYZ background, working in XYZ places of employment…… etc.

CCW Key Messages

- Cybersecurity has something for everyone! ***Skills are needed from a diverse range of backgrounds***.
- Cybersecurity is a dynamic field so you will never be bored. ***Cybersecurity evolves quickly so you will always be learning and developing new skills***.
- There is a high demand for a talented cybersecurity workforce. The Department of Labor predicts ***that IT and cybersecurity will be among the fastest growing and best paying jobs over the next decade***. • Cybersecurity plays a vital role in the lives of all and the cybersecurity workforce makes a difference in our world. ***Building a global cybersecurity workforce enhances a nation's security and promotes economic prosperity.***

Presentation Requirements
You are being asked to [present a lecture/ be on a panel/ moderate a discussion] on XYZ topic… If the speaker is serving on a panel, you will want the panel moderator to set up a call with all the panelist to walk through the content

Conference Purpose
- This conference will cover XYZ topics because of the following professional practice gap…..
- The specific learning objectives are …..
- Most attendees will be of XYZ background, working in XYZ places of employment…… etc.

Other Logistics to Consider • Who
   will register the speaker?
- Directions/map

- Parking arrangements/parking pass
- Hotel or other travel arrangements
- Travel itinerary
- Contact information (speaker cell phone number/POC phone number for speaker) • Will they need AV equipment? Intent access?
- Do they need to send you a bio and head shot?
- Do they need to send presentation slides ahead of time?
- Do they need to sign a photo release form? Disclosure form?

What to Do Next?
A week or so out, send out a reminder email with all the logistics and other details in one message.

After Event
Send a thank you message thanking the speaker for sharing their expertise and time.