



THE PORTLAND  
CREATIVE CONFERENCE

## SPEAKER GUIDELINES

The Portland Creative Conference is a speaker-driven conference focused on the creative process and creativity across various creative industries. This is NOT a "Nuts & Bolts/How To" workshop, but it IS focused on:

- your creative process
- your influences, inspiration, motivation
- how you overcame challenges
- samples of your work

Therefore, the main attraction and ultimate **success of the Conference lies with the speakers themselves -- their experiences within the industry, their force of personality, their passion, their process, their perseverance, the information they are willing to share, their storytelling technique and their ability to inspire, influence and motivate those in the audience.**

These guidelines discuss just some of the many ideas and approaches that could be taken to discuss creativity and one's own creative process. If you have questions after reading this document, please contact Steve Gehlen at 503-819-6219 or [steve.gehlen@gmail.com](mailto:steve.gehlen@gmail.com)

Attendees will be drawn to the Conference because of familiarity with the featured speakers and their work. They will come armed with a certain set of expectations: a desire to be educated, to be entertained, to feel they now have a firsthand understanding of you and your work, your problem-solving techniques and creative process, what inspires you creatively, how you overcome challenges and what makes you tick as a human being. Mostly, they will want to come away from the Conference feeling they have just participated in a very unique, intimate, **inspiring experience they could not have had anywhere else.** If our presenters take this approach, attendees will be re-charged and motivated, inspired with fresh ideas for how to approach their own life and work. This is what sets the Creative Conference apart.

Many speakers might wonder how to talk about creativity at a conference. See below for some examples. Presentations that are focused on the creative process in a personal way (e.g. not "corporate") are always well received, and in large part the success of the event lies in the diversity of points of views and experiences of the speakers. Talks and presentations will range from 30 to 40 minutes in length, including a "Question & Answer" section where you interact with the audience. Your event host will let you know the length of your specific time slot in the program.

**Rich media such as images, video clips and audio clips are important to this experience. Please plan to leverage them to illustrate your work and the points you are making. We can accommodate digital file playback via computer and DVD.**

You are free to discuss and show anything you wish that relates to our theme of creativity and the creative process. However, the conference isn't intended to be an opportunity to promote a

commercial project just for its own sake. There is sometimes a natural (and perhaps healthy) struggle between art & commerce. We are exploring the “art” side of the equation here.

In order to assist you and help narrow the broad range of topics and speaking possibilities, here are ideas for some questions that you could address during your time on-stage (don't worry about answering all of them, this is just to help you think through what you might talk about):

- How do you define creativity?
- How would you describe your creative process (on your own or in a team)?
  - Describe the relationship between creativity and inspiration and the craft, or technical, part of your work. What do you do when you get blocked? What gets you through a dry spell?
- What do you like best about your own work? (illustrate with rich media)
  - What can you take from your successes? How do you grow from your past success? What did you learn from failure and/or rejection?
- What inspires you to work in your industry? (illustrate)
  - Who/what inspires you? What motivates you? How do you self start? Who/what do you learn from?
- Who were your creative guides and mentors? (Why? Give examples)
- How have you overcome challenges in your work? (Give an example)
- Talk about how you got started/persevered. Were you ostracized by peers? What mistakes did you make? What are you hoping to achieve creatively?
  - What's your definition of an artist? What are his/her responsibilities as an artist (to oneself and the audience/consumer)?
- What intrigues you about a particular project, moves you to select it over another?
  - What personal philosophy governs your creative choices? What do you believe in? How do you maintain integrity? Where does compromise fit into creativity?
- Even if you aren't the originator of an idea, how do you make it the best and most creative in the face of commercial guidelines?
- Artistically, where have you come from and where are you heading? Your goals? (Illustrate your growth or change over the years from project to project)
- How has your sense of your particular industry changed over the years?
  - What new industry trends are influencing new directions?
- What words of creative inspiration can you leave with us?

Of course, there are many other topics and ways to approach such a speaking engagement that you, with your own set of experiences and point of view, are familiar or comfortable with. Again, we are trying to AVOID making these "Nuts and Bolts/How To" sessions and instead have the event focused on creativity, the creative process, influences, inspiration and motivation.

You can view some of our past speaker sessions and promotional videos on our YouTube channel at <http://www.youtube.com/cre8con>

Finally, we appreciate your interest in participating as a speaker at this unique event. You will be in wonderful company, as our speakers are top creative forces in their respective fields. In fact, the Portland Creative Conference promises to be as valuable and inspirational to the speakers as it will be to the attendees.