



# Most Wanted

The hottest speakers on the circuit right now

By Terence Baker

Mark Twain once said, "It takes more than three weeks to prepare a good impromptu speech." While even the most gifted presenter has to work at it, some are naturals at the podium, quickly capturing the crowd's attention and leaving a lasting impression on every listener.

Because speakers with such talent are all too rare, their reputations spread quickly, and their calendars fill just as quickly. Who's at the top of the game right now? M&C asked some of the nation's leading speakers bureaus to name their hottest presenters. The result is a selection of in-demand speakers to suit a range of inter-

ests and budgets. A bit of advice: Book early. (Note: Many speakers are represented by multiple bureaus.)

## The Afterburners

Contact: National Speakers Bureau

Libertyville, Ill.; (800) 323-9442

[www.nationalspeakers.com](http://www.nationalspeakers.com)

Standard fee: \$12,500 and up

It's surprisingly easy to draw parallels between the worlds of business and supersonic military aircraft. Thus

the success of seminar sensations The Afterburners, a carefully culled group of the nation's top aviators, men and women who know what extreme pressure really feels like. The group brings Top Gun training to the often just-as-ruthless corporate world.

As a management training team, these fighter pilots put attendees through their paces with solid advice and simulated, interactive combat missions that demonstrate how to assess risk, implement a mission plan and



Stacy Allison

practice strong leadership. Talks focus on building teams, prioritizing tasks and embracing change.

**Stacy Allison**  
**Contact: Speakers Platform**

Santa Barbara, Calif.  
(877) 717-5327  
www.speaking.com  
Standard fee: \$7,500 to \$12,500

Climbing Mt. Everest is not easy, and the few who have scaled it say getting safely back down is even harder. Stacy Allison knows this firsthand: She is the first American

woman to stand on top of the world's highest mountain, all 29,028 feet of it.

Now, from a far safer height, she talks to groups about how to reach beyond self-imposed limitations. Having written a book on her adventures, *Beyond the Limits: A Woman's Triumph on Everest* (Bookpartners Inc.; www.bookpartners.com), Allison says her message applies regardless of whether the mountain is physical or metaphorical.

**Tony Brigmon**

**Contact: American Speakers Association**  
Houston, Texas; (800) 636-2722  
www.americanspeakers.com  
Standard fee: \$3,500

Tony Brigmon once took a huge leap into the unknown and presented the president of then-emerging Southwest Airlines with a novel way of increasing marketing efforts and sales. From that daring move came a new post at the airline, and a now-flourishing career in public speaking.



Tony Brigmon

Initially working in Southwest's customer care and employee development areas, Brigmon became the self-styled Ambassador of Fun, rebuilding the corporate culture to reward humor and creativity. His interactive presentations show there's a place — even a need — for levity in any business situation. Audiences learn to stay focused under stress, build team spirit and morale, and increase productivity.

**Funky Business**

**Contact: International Speakers Bureau**  
Dallas, Texas; (800) 842-4483  
www.ISBspeakers.com  
Standard fee: \$60,000

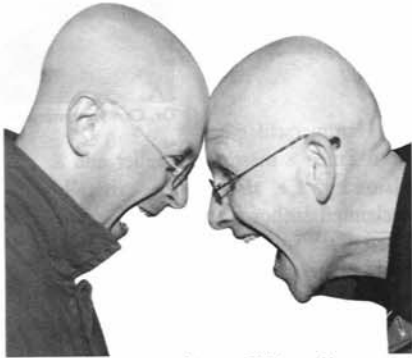
As individuals, Kjell A. Nordström and Jonas Ridderstråle are two Swedish professors at the prestigious Stockholm



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School of Economics; together they are Funky Business, management gurus who eschew suits and bring their zany, egghead world to U.S. conferences and events. Among recent words of wisdom:



Kjell A. Nordström and Jonas Ridderstråle

“Organizations with lousy infostructures will look like 65-year-olds competing in the Olympic marathon wearing high heels and evening gowns.”

Nordström advises Swedish companies on global strategy, while Ridderstråle’s research focuses on the new organizational forms and leadership styles needed in the information age. As a team, these two bald-headed professors wrote *Funky Business: Talent Makes Capital Dance* (Financial Times Prentice Hall; www.phptr.com), which they call a “manifesto of what our time requires from business firms and their leaders.” The book has been translated into 13 languages, with eight more due by year’s end.

### Frank Furness

Contact: Professional Speakers



Frank Furness

Association  
London, England  
(011) 44-208-742-7788  
www.professional  
speakers.org  
Standard fee: \$5,000 to  
\$10,000 (includes  
return air fare to U.K.)

If something can be sold, chances are very good that Frank Furness

can sell it. This native of South Africa delights his audiences with autobiographical stories and practical ideas. His colorful show has made him a star in his adopted country, England, but his goal this year is to bring his ideas to the home of capitalism, the United States.

Furness is no ordinary Type-A overachiever. His first memory is of abandoning his childhood home when a massive sinkhole developed underneath his South African town. He went on to become a drummer of note, keeping beat for such visiting divas as Whitney Houston. On determining that sales would be more profitable than music, he

became one of the world’s most successful salesmen (in 1996 alone, he earned \$750,000 in commissions selling financial services).

It’s no surprise others want to know the secrets of his successes, and Furness will tell all, for a price.

### Amanda Gore

Contact: National Speakers Bureau  
Libertyville, Ill.



Amanda Gore

(800) 323-9442  
www.nationalspeakers.com  
Standard fee: \$9,000

No relation to the former vice president, Amanda Gore is a neurolinguist, versed in the science of how people communi-



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## MOST WANTED

cate, think and process information. A native Australian now residing in Dallas, she helps audiences make sense of the delicate relationship between one's personal and professional life.

Gore specializes in a topic that hits home for a range of audiences: manag-

ing stress in today's hectic business world. Another hot button is communication. Complains Gore, "We are taught to talk, not to communicate." She delivers her insights with a distinctive mix of passion and trademark Aussie humor.

### Dr. Carl Hammerschlag

Contact: Key Speakers Bureau

Corona del Mar, Calif.  
(800) 675-1175

www.keyspeakers.com  
Standard fee: \$5,000 to \$10,000



Dr. Carl Hammerschlag

Dr. Hammerschlag has been called a master storyteller and a visionary. He also is the critically acclaimed author of titles such as *The Theft of the Spirit* (Fireside; www.simonandschuster.com) and *Healing Ceremonies* (Perigee; www.penguinputnam.com). A Yale-schooled psychiatrist, Hammerschlag preaches about psychoneuroimmunology, the science that studies links between health, mind and body.

No New Age Johnny-come-lately, Hammerschlag worked for six years as general medical officer to the Native American Pueblo tribes along the Rio Grande in New Mexico and for 14 years ran the psychiatric department at the Phoenix Indian Medical Center. In his vivid presentations, he shares the ancient remedies and practices he learned in the field to help heal some of today's common ailments.

### Gerri Jewell

Contact: Great Women Speakers

Portland, Ore.  
(888) 962-5888

www.greatwomen  
speakers.com

Standard fee: \$4,000  
(negotiable for non-profits)



Gerri Jewell

Gerri Jewell came to fame in the TV sitcom *The Facts of Life*, in which she appeared as Cousin Gerri from 1981 to 1984. With that show, Jewell became the first performer with a disability to hold a regular starring role on television.

A consummate comedienne, Jewell

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now uses her cerebral palsy, a chronic condition affecting muscle control and coordination, as a platform to foster awareness of disabilities in general and appreciation for the talents of people facing physical challenges.

By changing our attitudes toward others, Jewell says, it is possible to see ourselves in a clearer light, a message that has attendees describing her presentations as warm, motivating and thought-provoking.

### **Dr. Jerri Nielson**

**Contact: Nationwide Speakers Bureau**  
Beverly Hills, Calif.; (310) 273-8807  
www.nationwidespeakers.com  
Standard fee: \$25,000

Last year, Dr. Jerri Nielsen's battle against breast cancer, in what arguably is the world's loneliest and most unforgiving spot, the South Pole, gripped the nation. Penned in by adverse weather (average temperatures hovered around minus 58 degrees Fahrenheit) and growing sicker by the day, Nielson, a research scientist at the National Science Foundation's Amundsen-Scott South Pole Station, became both doctor and patient, undergoing four months of largely self-administered chemotherapy,



**Dr. Jerri Nielson**

often with advice e-mailed by cancer specialists in the United States.

In *Ice Bound: A Doctor's Incredible Battle for Survival at the South Pole* (Talk Miramax Books; www.talkmagazine.com), Nielson presents a powerful account of her ordeal and the lessons learned from it — how to overcome fear

and take control. She also speaks on how the South Pole team came together to solve her dilemma.

### **Tavis Smiley**

**Contact: Black Speakers Online**  
Inglewood, Calif.  
(310) 671-7136  
www.black-speakers.net  
Standard fee: \$25,000

Until recently the host of Black Entertainment Television's talk show BET Tonight, Tavis Smiley is a widely respected social commentator, radio personality, author and political pundit. Once an aide to former Los Angeles mayor Tom Bradley, Smiley also



**Tavis Smiley**

is the author of *How to Make Black America Better* (Doubleday; www.randomhouse.com/doubleday). He has established various programs that advise, assist and nurture children in America's inner cities.

Smiley is widely known for his tough interviewing technique; his interview subjects have included President Clinton, Pope John Paul II and Fidel Castro, among others. He is just as forceful speaking on social, motivational and inspirational issues, in lectures with such titles as "Making America Better," "What Is the Black Agenda?" and "The Black Think Tank." ■



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