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Getting paid for public speaking

BY MILDRED L. CULP

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It's not just former Presidents and talkative celebs who cash in on the lecture circuit — everyday New Yorkers with specialized knowledge and a passion for sharing it are getting paid to talk, too.

Good communication skills and expertise in an interesting subject are a must. But to get paid for speeches, you also must know how to market yourself, according to T.J. Walker, former president of the [New York City chapter of National Speakers Bureau](#).

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Your Money asked three New Yorkers who get paid to give speeches to share some secrets.

Olivia Fox Cabane
Murray Hill

Six years after leaving [Paris for New York](#), Olivia Fox Cabane, 29, pulls in speaking fees of \$8,000 to \$10,000 and coaches rising stars and senior executives.

Her topic? Charisma.

"Charisma is a science. It's well-studied and documented, applying behavioral science to business," said Cabane, who created a company called Spitfire Consulting.

Cabane, and the folks who pay her to speak, believe she can help people become more persuasive, influential and charismatic.

Her first speaking engagements in this country were free, first at [MIT](#) where a friend invited her to speak, then at [Harvard](#) and [Yale](#).

She gained credibility from her work at these institutions, and described the content of her speeches as "translating behavioral science into bottom-line results via charisma."

She continued giving free talks, before crowds such as chambers of commerce, before finding herself hired to be a keynote speaker. Now, her \$8,000 to \$10,000 keynote fee is a long way from her first check for \$1,500.

Her best marketing tool comes from word of mouth and satisfied customers.

"People call me . . . to ask me back," she said.



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Jeff Cannon*Chelsea*

Most authors would kill to talk about their book before a crowd. Jeff Cannon got paid to do it.

Cannon's first speaking gig came through a reader of the book that Cannon co-authored in 2004 with his brother, [Navy Lt. Cmdr. Jon Cannon](#), "Leadership Lessons of the [Navy Seals](#): Battle-Tested Strategies for Creating Successful Organizations and Inspiring Extraordinary Results."

Speaking solo, Jeff Cannon received \$5,000 to talk in [San Diego](#). He then got invited to [the Pentagon](#), and netted \$7,500.

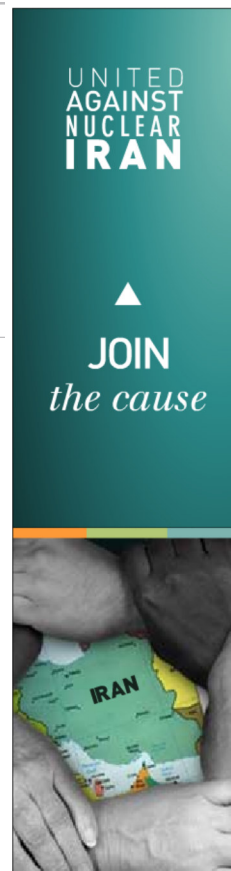
"Writing a book is a great way to get into public and private speaking engagements," he said. "That's where the money is." He now charges \$10,000 per keynote speech.

Cannon, 43, spends about four hours a week marketing himself for speaking engagements. He targets his market, scours the Internet and e-mails presentation packages. The rest of the time, Cannon runs a communications firm that works with clients on branding and sales team development.

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