

2026 Keynote Speaking Trends Report: What's Shaping the Future of Events

New analysis of 1,568 UK events finds 68% of keynote briefs now start with a business objective before a speaker name.

LONDON, UNITED KINGDOM, June 9, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [The Motivational Speakers Agency](https://www.einpresswire.com/) has released its 2026 Keynote Speaking Trends Report, based on analysis of 1,568 UK events handled so far in 2026.

The analysis reviewed speaker enquiries, confirmed bookings and client briefs across corporate conferences, leadership events, awards, internal company events and workplace programmes.

The agency's analysis of recent speaker enquiries and client briefs found that 68% of keynote requests now begin with a business objective before a speaker name is mentioned.

The findings indicate that organisers are placing greater emphasis on the purpose of the session before selecting a speaker.

The report also found that 54% of recent corporate keynote briefs referenced audience engagement, internal communication or post-event value as part of the booking requirement.

According to The Motivational Speakers Agency, this is changing the way keynote speakers are judged. The agency said speaker selection is increasingly being assessed against topic relevance, audience fit and the intended use of the session after the event.

[Jack Hayes](#), Director of The Motivational Speakers Agency, said:

"Clients are becoming more specific about what they need from a keynote session. Speaker profile remains relevant, but organisers are placing more emphasis on audience fit, subject relevance and how the session supports the wider event."



The graphic is a promotional image for the report. It features a green and white color scheme. At the top left, it says 'THE MOTIVATIONAL SPEAKERS AGENCY'. The main title is '2026 Keynote Speaking Trends Report' in large green font, with the subtitle 'What's Shaping the Future of Events' below it. A 'PRESS RELEASE' badge is in the top right. The background shows a speaker at a podium in front of an audience. Three key statistics are highlighted in green boxes: '1,568 UK events analysed' (with a calendar icon), '68% of keynote briefs now start with a business objective before a speaker name' (with a target icon), and '54% of recent briefs referenced audience engagement, internal communication or post-event value' (with a group of people icon). At the bottom, it says 'Source: The Motivational Speakers Agency analysis of speaker enquiries, confirmed bookings and client briefs, 2026 to date'. The bottom text of the graphic reads '2026 Keynote Speaking Trends Report: What's Shaping the Future of Events'.

The report identifies artificial intelligence, leadership under pressure, future skills, workplace resilience, sustainability and employee engagement as the themes setting the pace for 2026.

The report also reviewed category-level demand across AI, cyber security, leadership, female speakers and teamwork and motivation. In 2026 to date, Nina Schick, Sarah Armstrong-Smith, Jez Rose, Jo Salter and Sir Steve Redgrave were among the speakers most frequently requested or booked through the agency across these areas.

AI showed the largest year-on-year increase in the agency's analysis. The Motivational Speakers Agency found that [AI related keynote enquires](#) rose 237% year-on-year, with clients asking for sessions on workplace adoption, ethics, productivity, judgement and the effect of automation on teams.

This fits with wider event-sector data. Bizzabo's 2026 State of Events Benchmark Report found that 95% of surveyed organisers expect their organisation's use of AI in events to increase, while 40% still report difficulty proving event ROI.

Leadership has also become more direct. The agency recorded a 29% year-on-year rise in leadership and change keynote briefs, with clients asking for speakers who can address pressure, trust, decision-making, communication and the reality of leading teams through uncertainty.

The report found that 46% of recent briefs asked for a speaker who could connect their subject to practical workplace behaviour. The Motivational Speakers Agency says this is most visible in leadership, resilience, future of work, wellbeing and sustainability bookings.

Jack Hayes added:

"Many briefs now define the audience need more clearly at the start. Organisers are asking how a speaker can help explain a subject, support discussion and make the session relevant to the people attending."

The format of the keynote is changing too. The report found that 41% of recent speaker briefs referenced interaction, audience participation, follow-on content or internal use after the event. Buyers are asking how the session can support discussion, manager communication and employee engagement once the conference ends.

Bizzabo's 2026 research also found that 95% of respondents consider experiential learning important, which points to stronger demand for event formats where the audience does more than listen.

Cvent's 2026 event trends report makes a similar point, stating that events are being shaped by intentionality, operational AI, trust, relevance and measurable outcomes. It also notes that

audiences are becoming more selective about the events they attend.

For keynote speakers, that raises the bar. The report says corporate buyers are asking sharper questions before booking: why this topic, why this speaker, why now and what should the audience do with it?

Sustainability and hybrid delivery are also affecting event planning. Booking.com for Business reported that 83% of organisers factor sustainability into event design, 80% run hybrid events as a permanent model, and 58% are actively using AI to manage event costs and complexity.

The Motivational Speakers Agency says these pressures are making speaker selection more disciplined. Event organisers still want energy, story and presence. The difference in 2026 is that those qualities now have to sit behind a clear purpose.

The report concludes that keynote speakers will be booked less for broad inspiration and more for their ability to frame the issues already sitting inside organisations. AI adoption, leadership pressure, skills change, resilience, sustainability and employee engagement are not side themes for event agendas. They are becoming the reason the event is being built.

Jack Hayes said:

“A good keynote should give the room a sharper way to think. A great one gives the organisation a shared language after the event. That is where the market is heading.”

The Motivational Speakers Agency has supplied motivational speakers for more than two decades. The agency states that it delivers speakers to more than 3,500 events every year, with 125 agents and support staff working across 50+ countries.

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