EMILY COHEN

**helping you design
your business**

SPEAKING TOPICS

2019

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The following document outlines the variety of speaking topics I've presented at various national conferences and smaller events.

SPEAKER BIO

A brutally honest consultant, Emily Cohen has been honored to consult and work with many leading design firms across the United States and Canada. Through these experiences, she has developed, tested, and curated key business insights and strategies that have helped firms become more effective, profitable, and fun to work at. Emily conducts strategic business planning retreats and provides confidential, best-practice insights and advice on staff, client, and process-management strategies. She loves sharing her expertise through speaking engagements, guest posts, her Skillshare class, webinars, industry activism, and, most recently, in her new business book for creatives, **Brutally Honest**, No-bullshit business strategies to evolve your creative business. Emily Cohen is also fast-talker, a designer by degree, an avid reader, a trend-spotter, a connector, and her client's advocate.

PROPOSED TOPICS

For more detailed descriptions of each topic, please refer to the next four pages. This list is meant for inspiration and I'd be happy to develop a new talk or update one I already have.

Strategic Topics

It's Your Fault

Building the Love into Your Business

Best Practices Any Design Firm Should Know

Rock the Boat, Baby! The Art of Saying No

Where Do We Go From Here? Questions to Inspire You to
    Envision Your Team's Future

Staffing Topics

The Staffing Rule Book

Staffing and Managing Your Team for Success

Managing Different Generations and Behavioral Types

You Just Don't Understand: Managing Creatives in a Left-Brain Culture

Tactical Topics

Effective Pricing and Proposal Strategies

Advanced Pricing Strategies

Case Studies – Demonstrating Value and Success Metrics

Creating Winning New Business Presentations
    (Capability Pitches)

Creative Briefs – Aligning Expectations and Measuring Results

Pursuing and Qualifying Clients

New Business Development Sucks, Or Does It?

Managing Projects and Clients for High Impact

STRATEGIC TOPICS

IT'S YOUR FAULT!

Do some or all of your clients misbehave? Do you do great work but feel under-appreciated, undervalued, and/or or underpaid? Well, perhaps it's your own fault! Yes, clients can be challenging and difficult. Duh! But, if we truly look deeply at ourselves and our industry, the bigger and more important question is: What can we do about? Instead of trying to hit our heads against a brick wall by blaming our clients or accepting the situation as status quo, perhaps we as an industry and as individuals need to step up to the plate and rethink how we engage with, and even train and educate, our clients. This talk is meant to inspire designers, whether they are working in-house or within a creative agency, to take back control of how they manage and communicate with their clients as well as how they position themselves and the industry as whole. What can we all do better to improve the situation? The first step is to own up to our mistakes. This talk will shine a light on those mistakes and provide solutions for how we can all improve so that we can move beyond the blame game.

BUILDING THE LOVE INTO YOUR BUSINESS

Love? In Business? Yes! If your business is lovable, clients and employees will come running toward you with the best projects and great referrals – possibly even arms full of chocolates and roses. But, love isn't a box full of beautifully packaged chocolates or fine wine. It's not a fun poster or even a unique giveaway. It's less tangible and something you give your clients and staff all year long. In this inspiring talk, you'll learn why infusing love across all aspects of your business is important to your long-term success as well as the top 12 strategies I've curated for building and sharing the love.

BEST PRACTICES ANY DESIGN FIRM SHOULD KNOW

Are you curious what other design firms do to succeed? Do you wish you could be a fly on the wall to understand their inner workings? After working with hundreds of leading creative/design teams over the years, I have curated and compiled an evolving list of smart business strategies that define successful firms. This session highlights those top business practices across different areas including organizational structures, staffing strategies, pricing, client and project management, marketing, and new business development. This session provides very practical and actionable strategies that can easily be implemented and are often the foundation of truly great creative teams.

ROCK THE BOAT, BABY! THE ART OF SAYING NO

Is your workload constantly increasing and piled high with deadlines and obligations? Do you struggle with pushing back clients, employees, executives, and strategic partners when they have impossible requests or expectations? Do you often take on more than you can chew? The art of pushing back, saying no, and even being honest with your professional relationships are critical skill sets that many creative lack. We worry about what other people want, think, or need and spend a lot of time doing things for others, often at the risk of hurting ourselves and our own team. We love being the nice guy and are notorious conflict-avoiders. This session will focus on the who, when, where, why, and how of saying "no" to clients, staff, and projects. Learn how to identify opportunities to push back and say no more effectively, without damaging relationships.

STAFFING TOPICS

THE STAFFING RULE BOOK

Don't you wish you had a simple, easy-to-follow rule book for how to hire, organize, manage, and review your team? Are you ready to refine or rethink your team and overall team management to take it to the next level? This talk covers the hard and fast rules for staffing and staff management culled from the mistakes and successes of other creative teams. These rules will help you strategically plan your organizational structure and roles, improve how you hire and manage your team, conduct more effective performance reviews, and much more. Some rules discussed will seem obvious but are often overlooked while other rules may be a bit controversial or push buttons. Either way, the rules will stimulate a robust conversation!

STAFFING AND MANAGING YOUR TEAM FOR SUCCESS

Wondering how to leverage and build your team and better optimize creativity, profitability, and operational systems? In this session, you will learn organizational and inspirational management systems and structures that are the foundation of motivated, dedicated, and empowered teams. Learn how to build the right organizational model for the present and future of your business as well as the key internal creative and operational roles and attributes required for different models. Beyond internal roles, we will also explore the best ways to develop and build mutually beneficial relationships with external strategic partners that enhance organizational structures and can even grow core service offerings.

MANAGING DIFFERENT GENERATIONS AND BEHAVIORAL TYPES

Is there a deep divide between the different generations within your team? Do you struggle with managing members on your team that have very different expectations of what "working" is? Managing a team with widely varying ages and experiences doesn't have to be a communication nightmare. This session focuses on the core qualities of three generations — Baby Boomers, Gen Xers, and Millennials (or Gen Y) — and explores the inherent challenges of managing each group. The goal of this session is to explain the context in which your employees respond in the workplace, so that you can improve communications and mitigate potential cross-generational conflicts. You'll leave this session with information on key characteristics and styles of each generation as well as cross-generational management skills and tips on effectively communicating with each group.

YOU JUST DON'T UNDERSTAND: MANAGING CREATIVES IN A LEFT BRAIN CULTURE

Does your team struggle with getting creatives and analytical, operational staff to communicate and work well together? Many right-brained creative types report to, or collaborate with, left-brained operational managers. Learning the necessary skills to work well together is often elusive but nonetheless essential to running a seamless and efficient organization. This session will help you understand the behavioral and personality differences between left- and right-brain types. In addition, you'll learn best-practice strategies that improve how creatives and operational teams can better communicate, work with, and manage each other.

TACTICAL TOPICS

EFFECTIVE PROPOSAL AND PRICING STRATEGIES (can be tailored to focus only on pricing strategies)

Do you want to want to write less proposals and win more engagements? How do you even go about pricing a project? Is there a magical number? During this session you will gain insight and expertise on writing winning proposals that effectively communicate your services, qualifications, voice, and vision as well as creating smart pricing strategies that will help you get paid what you and your team are worth. Learn the steps needed to pre-qualify clients, define objectives, communicate project parameters, and customize your proposals. Discover the common mistakes made and ways to structure and communicate project information and pricing structures that capture your client's attention and interest.

ADVANCED PRICING STRATEGIES

Are you comfortable with pricing, but want to evolve your thinking and take it to the next level? Do you have long-term clients that you want to turn into retainer clients? This session will reveal new insights and important (yet sometimes subtle) strategies and techniques that will improve how you present and negotiate your fees, including retainer relationships and value-based pricing. Learn how to take current efforts to the next level with a focus less on winning all projects, but winning the most qualified and profitable engagements. Learn ways to refocus attention away from price as a key selection criteria and more towards expertise and value.

CASE STUDIES – DEMONSTRATING VALUE AND SUCCESS METRICS

How do you sing your team's praises and truly demonstrate your team's worth and value? Case studies! Yet, most case studies, by in large, miss the mark and aren't written in a way that fully leverage their potential or appeal to prospects. They are essentially just a written dog and pony show, with little substance. This session will explore how to frame the value of your design solutions in a way that resonates with potential clients and demonstrates your team's full value. Learn the ideal framework for successful case studies, including an exploration of various formats and different value-based success metrics that can be used to demonstrate your design team's worth. If written well, case studies are one of the most critical tools in your marketing and new business development arsenal.

CREATING WINNING NEW BUSINESS PRESENTATIONS (capability pitches)

Learn the essential components of a successful new business presentation exploring the who, what, where, when, and how of the all-important new business meeting. This session walks you through the step-by-step processes in planning, organizing, and running a successful in-person capabilities presentation. The best practices presented are culled from both designer and client feedback on experiences with the good, the bad, and the ugly of new business presentations. Learnings include: ways to engage with your client, how to avoid common pitfalls, and the best ways to talk about and present your work and your firm.

CREATIVE BRIEFS – ALIGNING EXPECTATIONS AND MEASURING RESULTS

What is a creative brief? Why do you need one? When do you write one? Learn how to improve how you collaborate with your clients to develop smartly-crafted creative briefs that achieve results. Creative briefs are typically repetitive, long-winded, over reaching, and, at worse, a manifestation of corporate politics and insecurities. The best creative briefs provide a clear set of expectations and define measurable objectives to guide the progress and success of a project. As an added benefit, the creative brief and the development process can express and support the value and power of thoughtful, strategic design in achieving creative and results-driven solutions.

PURSUING AND QUALIFYING CLIENTS

Do you rely on referrals for most of your new business? Are you allowing existing clients to shape your firm's direction? In this session, you will learn tips and tools for pursuing, not only attracting, the leads you want. You will gain an understanding of the step-by-step processes of qualifying prospects and identifying opportunities to ensure they are the right fit for your firm. You will learn to streamline the intake process so that the opportunities pursued fully support and enhance your business model.

NEW BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT SUCKS, OR DOES IT?

Do you avoid new business development like the plague? Do you define new business as "cold calling," "sales," "marketing"? Are you ready to transform how you think about new business? This session will focus on strategies for building authentic, one-to-one relationships with prospects that take time, focus, ongoing nurturing, and a change in tactics. But, when done well, can be a fun, challenging, and a rewarding aspect of any successful business. In this session, you'll learn why you need to change your thinking about what new business development really is and better ways to do it.

MANAGING PROJECTS AND CLIENTS FOR HIGH IMPACT

Are you in reactive mode when you manage clients and projects? Are you overwhelmed and constantly fighting fires? In this session you will learn how to move from a reactive management process to a more proactive, planned management process. Whether you work within a creative agency/firm or in-house, this session will explore key communication tools and strategies that result in better managed, long-term, and mutually rewarding client relationships. You will be guided through the entire relationship cycle, from project initiation to project close out, with a focus on high-level best practices that facilitate a more seamless client and project management process. The presentation will focus on common client and project management challenges and you will learn effective best practice solutions for a variety of client-designer relationship challenges.