

# Stage Set-Up Tips

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## 1. Riser size and height is important.

Choose a height for your stage that is considerate of audience sight lines. Risers should be at least 12" high off the ground and this height is especially good if you have a small (under 100) audience where intimacy is important.

For larger (350-1,000+) audiences, large fundraising events or fashion shows, elevating your stage as high as 3-4' high off the ground will give good sight lines to all of your guests.

For the riser size, consider how many speakers or panelists you will have on stage at one time. Increase size if you have multiple panelists in large soft chairs. Alternatively, one speaker at a lectern on a massive stage will dwarf the speaker and minimize the impact of the presentation. Also, allow easy access to your riser with stairs on at least two sides.

## 2. Select the right lectern.

Consider who your speakers will be and how they might like to be seen from the audience perspective. If you have speakers who are outgoing and tend to walk around the riser, you might be ok using a clear, acrylic lectern. If so, ensure it's spotless and clear of scratches from all angles of the audience.

If you have speakers who are more comfortable standing behind something, choose a strong and wide lectern with plenty of surface space to spread out their personal items. A lectern light and small shelf for water hidden underneath are generally important additions.

## 3. Pick the right lighting and audio.

Lighting is critical to ensure your attendees can see everyone and everything on stage, even if the people and objects are at varying heights. A lighting designer can help you recommend an appropriate stage wash that will adequately light your stage and speakers.

Lighting a stage after the sun goes down is also very important, so consider the time of day that the sun will set to ensure your speaker doesn't go dark before the presentation is done.

Select microphones based on speaker preferences. Wireless lavalier mics allow speakers the freedom to move around the stage or room as needed. Stationary lectern mics give speakers who like to stay put the grounding they might need. Having a mix of mic options is typically the best bet.



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#### 4. **Keep stage décor simple.**

Keep it simple. Elaborate stage décor and sets are expensive and typically create a distraction from what you really want your audience focused on. Simple is more – clean layouts, great lighting and good audio are all you really need to create a visual for the audience that translates well live, in video or on camera still shots.

#### 5. **Best Practice – Speaker Rehearsals.**

Plan time in your program for all speakers to do a run-through of their remarks or presentation from the main stage. This allows your speakers to get accustomed to the overall staging, lighting and audio and prevents surprises should they not be veteran presenters. This also allows your audio-visual team an opportunity to make your speaker look and sound as best as they can come show time.

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