

ULTIMATE SKO GUIDE

Chip Eichelberger, CSP



Chip Eichelberger

We understand planning a successful SKO is tough, but it doesn't have to be.



According to Forrester Research, while 88% of key decision makers your sales team calls on find them knowledgeable about your own products and services, only 24% feel like their business needs are understood.

Even worse, only 15% of your CUSTOMERS believe their meetings or calls with salespeople are valuable.

This is especially true for a tenured salesforce. They often rely on relationship-based selling and do not spend time adequately preparing for meetings like they should—ultimately leaving business on the table. They do not obtain and review “game film” or acquire quality feedback and deliberate practice.

To maximize every sales opportunity, making your next SKO as valuable as possible is paramount.

A successful Sales Kickoff (SKO) Meeting generates momentum and sets the tone for the entire year. It is a large investment and a difficult task to surpass your past events and create a valuable experience your team will rave about and remember.





Chip Eichelberger, CSP

My name is **Chip Eichelberger, CSP**. I have been speaking professionally for almost 30 years—six of which were invested alongside Tony Robbins as his international point man throughout the US, Australia, and the UK. Clients just like you have hired me to be **THE** energy source for over 1,000 successful events and **over 400 SKOs** for clients like Comcast, Lennar Homes, Chicago Title, Apple, Motorola Solutions, TD Bank, Ford, and Lenovo. My goal has always been to be a **true partner** and not a “rental speaker.”

**EVERY SUCCESSFUL SKO
SHOULD FOCUS ON
THREE MAIN ELEMENTS:**

01 MOTIVATION

02 EDUCATION

03 CELEBRATION



01



MOTIVATION

Your sales kickoff meeting is all about challenging and motivating your team to **reevaluate and recharge** their vision, mindset, and strategies. Typically, this is done through a combination of professional speakers and key company leaders and trainers. The best investment you can make to energize your SKO is the right professional speakers. *Warning* - I have seldom seen a justifiable ROI from spending \$100k on a sports icon or celebrity.

History tells me that most speakers from within your organization can be more effective by presenting for **30-45 minutes** rather than 60. Avoid the **DEATH BY POWERPOINT** norm, and the ONE-WAY presentation with little to no audience interaction.

The tendency for most SKO presenters is to create their presentation on the plane ride to the event.

Require them to submit it for review at least two weeks out. Ideally, have them practice it, videotape it, and review the “game film” before the event. *Companies often hire me to virtually coach their presenters in advance.*

Ask the presenters to **get the audience involved** through questions, a simple interactive handout, and/or live audience polling through an SKO app.

Planning an activity that gets the audience involved will create memories and engagement. It could be a charity project (building bikes/wheelchairs or packing school supplies/military care packages), or a team-building activity like bowling or Top Golf. My **Breaking Barriers - The Board Break Experience** activity is the ultimate experience to get your sales team committed to their goals and end any convention.



02



EDUCATION

Educational sessions are essential to any SKO. **My advice is LESS IS MORE.** Due to the pandemic, most of the SKOs I have been hired for since June 2021 were for teams who had not been together in a few years. To make up for lost time, most try to jam in too much material. Be sure to focus on the most relevant and important information reps need to be successful right now.

Survey your salespeople ahead of time with SurveyMonkey to see what they need and want to learn. Your team will want to hear how the **BEST PERFORMERS** smashed their goals. Let your President's Club leaders prepare mini case studies in advance and share **how they became the best.** What do they believe? What are their success habits? What are their best sales strategies for organic and new growth?

03



CELEBRATION

Celebration is the final piece of your SKO puzzle. Make sure to recognize big wins and top performers from the previous year while incorporating team-building activities and fun. After all, the goal of an SKO is to energize your team and make them feel special. Invest in quality **SWAG BAGS** and **room-drop surprises.** Select **quality** logo apparel, tech items, drinkware, or snacks.

If you are giving out awards, **be unique.** The winners will likely display them in their office for the next 20 years or longer! Do not give the award or the bonus check **WITHOUT** a **personalized note from a key leader.** They will cash the check once but keep the card forever if written well.



"I was **SHOCKED** by the amount of energy Chip was able to instill in our group of manufacturers reps."
You delivered on your brand promise: you ARE the energy source!"

Anita Samatas (MR Program Manager) (Motorola Solutions)



MOTOROLA SOLUTIONS



CHIP'S 4 STEPS TO ACHIEVE SKO SUCCESS

01 Invest in the SKO environment.

Think about the **energy** you want to inspire through presentations and match that with the space and location you choose for your SKO. A few things to consider:

- G** Lighting - a “stage wash” is a must to make people on stage pop! In general, light equals energy. Do not have a dark room. Projectors are so good now that darkness is no longer needed.
- G** AV - invest in a quality setup and AV company.
- G** Music - create a high-energy playlist that relates to the overall theme. What song will play as you open the doors for the opening session?
- G** Invest in an inspiring stage setup and design.
- G** Layout of the room - correct chair/table setups, stage-height and screen set-up are crucial. This link contains a goldmine of best practices - [Room Set-Up Suggestions to Maximize Energy](#)
- G** Room Temperature – remember, when you get 400 people in the room, the temperature will go up four degrees from body heat. Start cooler. A warm room will make people sleepy.

Cultivating a great SKO environment is an **investment**. Although the sticker shock of lodging, meals, transportation, speakers, and activities can be alarming, think of this as a two-way street; your sales team will be inspired to invest in your company throughout the year if you invest in them now.

Make smart choices to optimize audience energy levels. Try not to have a party that runs late and then have a 7 a.m. breakfast. Make sure morning meals are not too heavy – have plenty of fruit available. The same applies to lunch and snack breaks. A heavy lunch or snack will weigh them down in the afternoon and lower their energy. Have healthy, hydrating drinks available, not soda.

To encourage people to meet each other, have assigned seating for meals with table numbers. Instead of a typical opening cocktail reception with people just standing around, get them involved. Here is a **simple game** you can have them play to maximize interaction and **gamify** the reception.

The conference organizers and team should identify themselves by wearing hats, t-shirts, badges, etc. that reflect the theme. Because they can flip, print the name tags on **BOTH** sides. Make the first name bigger and **BOLD** to make it easy to see. Their names are more important than the conference name or logo – they should already be familiar with those.

Hire some **great local talent** to entertain: local or college bands, jazz combos, choirs, etc. A fun musician, magician, or comedian can be a bonus and liven up your cocktail parties or meals.

Don't skimp on location, food, refreshments, SWAG, activities, or speakers.

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*“I have witnessed countless business & motivational speakers over my career of 34 years. **Chip Eichelberger is flat-out top of the charts for his ability to connect and interact with his audience to generate positive change.** His prep work and customization before the event with these ELITE award winners was spot on.”*

Randy Waddell (SVP Sales & Marketing) (Comcast)

The Comcast logo, featuring a red circular icon with a white 'C' inside, followed by the word 'comcast' in a black, lowercase, sans-serif font.



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02 Create and communicate an effective theme and agenda

Executing a successful event requires a lot of work and strategic planning. Choosing the right theme to build around is essential and difficult. **Let me help you make that task easier** with constructive advice and over 100 proven theme ideas. **Get Switched On!, Own It!, and Breaking Barriers** are popular themes for events where I am speaking.

An engaging and well-thought-out agenda should be high on your priority list. Remember 30–45-minute presentations are better than 60. Breaks need to be longer than 15 minutes. Develop breakout sessions according to **specific, predetermined sales training needs**. Survey in advance to determine key needs.

2:00 PM - 2:10 PM	Break	
2:10 PM - 2:55 PM	Industrial Cybersecurity and Technology Updates Presenter: Gabe Authier	Smart Buildings Fiber and Copper Re-Tiering Updates Presenters: Dwayne Crawford & Vinoo Thomas
Time	Wednesday, February 17	
10:00 AM - 11:00 AM	Global Sales Processes Presenter: Steve Ronneberg	
11:00 AM - 11:10 AM	Break	
11:10 AM - 12:10 PM	Customer Innovation Center Update Presenters: Vinod Rana & Kevin Holley	
12:10 PM - 12: 20 PM	Break	
12:20 PM - 1:05 PM	Solution Selling Presenters: Scott Landis & Lou Szabo	Channel Sales Process Presenter: Ryan Dodd
1:05 PM - 1:15 PM	Break	
1:15 PM - 1:45 PM	Sales Enablement Tools Presenters: Kim Spiegel & Zach Garrett	
1:45 PM - 2:00 PM	Break	
2:00 PM - 3:00 PM	2020 Awards Ceremony Presenters: David Deitz & David Geon	
Time	Thursday, February 18	
10:00 AM - 10:40 AM	Customer Service Transformation Presenter: Michele Warner	
10:40 AM - 11:40 AM	Global Partner Program Introduction Presenters: David Geon & Jessica Wibawa	
11:40 AM - 12:00 PM	Break	
12:00 PM - 1:15 PM	Get Switched On - Reevaluate and Recharge Closing Experience Presenter: Chip Eichelberger	
1:15 PM - 3:00 PM	Regional & Departmental Breakout Sessions	

If possible, share your agenda in a wave of short, engaging messages. It is common now to put everything into an app the attendees can download. **Get them excited about the agenda and theme prior to the SKO.** Have your professional speakers create teaser video messages to send out in advance.

Always remember to negotiate. Often, vendors can sponsor and help cover various expenses. What else can they offer you? What else is possible? Vendors can donate an iPad or other cool gifts. Hotels can give a free meeting room or meal discounts...ASK!

A great question to ask your keynote speaker is how else they can add value. Perhaps they can lead a breakout or give you the recording rights to their session.

A clear agenda and compelling theme are a must to maximize your SKO investment.

03 Secure proven, compelling speakers and trainers

Selecting proven pros to open and/or close your event is the best investment you can make. Look for members of the National Speakers Association who have earned their Certified Speaking Professional designation—CSP—like I have. It is difficult to achieve and shows a commitment to excellence.

Check out their **demo video** and **testimonials** to see their record of success. Often, I will “bookend” the SKO by opening and closing. It gives continuity to the event and a tremendous outcome for my clients by guaranteeing an awesome opening and closing experience.

Invest in quality speakers and trainers to make a compelling SKO experience.

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Chip far exceeded our expectations when **he opened day one AND closed day two at our SKO! Chip's preparation leading up to the conference significantly increased his impact** as his content was engaging, entertaining, filled with energy and relevant to our audience. The closing **Board Break Experience** was a great way to send people back into their markets energized and fired up. The picture says it all. When Chip got off stage the AV producer told Chip, **'You blew last year's speaker off the stage.'** **We had to agree."**



Kevin Stitt - Current Governor of Oklahoma (CEO & Vice President) (Gateway Mortgage Group, LLC)



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04 End on a positive note with a clear call to action.

You did what it took to put on a great SKO. **Now deliver a strong Finish!** Everyone should remember the closing. Many SKOs fizzle out and don't end on a high note that leaves your sales team feeling motivated to charge out the door ready to take on the year.

It takes a **special speaking skill** to motivate, engage, and entertain the SKO at closing after many sessions and long days and nights. That happens to be my specialty. I closed 1,300 events promoting Tony Robbins **before** my 1,000+ corporate events. A typical speech at this point will fall flat.

That is why I customize an interactive “workshop-style” program. It gets the audience involved and committed to reevaluate and recharge their performance. I often include the **Board Break Experience** as the final surprise.

Also, schedule an **integration session**. Often the sales team comes to the SKO, attends every session, and **never looks at the material again**. Have someone lead the participants through a process to clarify their goals and reflect on the best ideas they received and how they will implement them. Why will they use them? What impact will they make? Bring them to a clear call to action **before** they leave.

Also, **follow up and follow through**. Generate and sustain momentum by ensuring your teams have access to resources and content shared throughout your SKO. Just as you expect your sales team to follow up with prospects, follow up your SKO by sharing valuable resources and your team will be well on their way to crushing quotas.

A great closing and CTA is essential to complete the SKO experience.

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*We hired Chip as the closing experience to our semi-annual Professional Services SKO meeting and **he did an awesome job!** Chip did his homework, he talked to some of our employees prior to the event and researched our industry to **ensure that his presentation was spot on**. His energy and excitement were contagious."*



Wilhelmina (Willie) Miller, PMP - Director, PSO Project Management (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt)



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I trust you found this valuable. My goal is to make you look like a genius for finding me.

————— **CONTACT ME AT** —————
865-300-2742 OR CHIP@GETSWITCHEDON.COM

so we can set up a call to find out if I am a good fit or to recommend someone who is.

