

Being transparent (or, not making assumptions)

There is a women's networking group here in Maryland that offers some nice events every couple of months. For April, they had been touting a well known health expert as the speaker to their event. This speaker was a huge draw. Yesterday, I decided to register. When I went to event page, lo and behold, the speaker is not listed. Instead, there is a panel of speakers (none of them "famous") who will discuss health issues.

Is this a bait and switch? Did the speaker bow out due to an unforeseen circumstance? Why the change in speakers?

I have no answer because this group has not addressed it. Instead, they proceed as if nothing has changed.

They are making an assumption that people will want to attend the event regardless. They are making an assumption that you will get it. They are making an assumption that they don't have to provide an explanation.

Don't make assumptions! Be transparent. Be clear. All that needed to be said in this case was: We had scheduled speaker x for this event, but due to (reason) she is no longer available. Instead, we are presenting a fabulous panel....

This type of thing is what irritates people and turns them off. Say you signed up a month ago expecting the original speaker. You get to the event and she is not there. Don't you feel ripped off? Disappointed? Or maybe you are just uninterested in the panel.

Don't assume your audience will follow you if you don't explain. Be transparent. Be honest. Be upfront.

Rant over.