

Nominee's Name

## Lesley Everett

### Opening personal statement

I am privileged to be submitting this application for the position of GSF Vice President (2011-2012) (Presidency 2013-2014). I am very much committed to the exciting future of international speaking and to the GSF providing an outstanding level of quality support and value to our member Associations.

My views on the leadership for GSF and my goals as President are simple, clear and realistic. Firstly, of course, in my term as President I would be focused on carrying on the great work and initiatives that the Executive Council and Executive Committee have done so far and will continue to do. The GSF needs to become a very visible and clearly defined organisation in terms of its values, resources and membership structure. It needs to position itself to evolve and develop as markets and economies change and as the international speaking profession faces new and exciting challenges.

I am grateful for this opportunity to apply for the position of GSF Vice President.

### 1. Qualifications:

#### *Brief personal history, education, career*

I grew up in a small Suffolk village on the East Coast of England, where I was educated to A Level, studying English and languages. I started my working life with the Magistrates Courts in the UK, training as a legally qualified Court Clerk. I then realised that Law wasn't for me after 3 years and moved into IT within the Criminal Justice arena. This eventually took me into corporate life with an IT supplier where I started developing my presentational skills in a pre-sales environment presenting to UK Government on multi million pound projects.

I left corporate life in 1994 as a full-time employee and set up my own business in corporate image and personal branding, having discovered a niche that nobody seemed to have yet fulfilled. The subject was also a huge personal passion. Then the move to professional speaking from here. I combined both passions – that of exploring world cultures and new places, and brand image. I can honestly say now that my ambition is being met with my role as an international speaker and my active involvement with the GSF.

#### *Experience in the speaking business*

My professional speaking career started in 2001 and I joined the PSA UK in 2002. I have delivered keynote presentations for multi-cultural audiences in 18 countries and 4 continents to date with the

largest audience being 1800 delegates and an average keynote audience of approximately 150 delegates over the past 7 years.

To provide an idea of my *international* experience in speaking, the last 4+ years have looked like this:

### **2007**

Speaking Association Conventions attended:

PSA UK – Breakout session

CAPs Canada (Halifax, Nova Scotia) - Keynote Presentation

In addition, I spoke in the following countries (some more than once during the course of the year):

France

Dubai, UAE

USA - Los Angeles and New York

Mexico

### **2008**

Speaking Association Conventions attended:

PSASA South Africa (Durban) - Keynote Presentation

NSA in New York

PSA UK (London) – Keynote Presentation

In addition, I spoke in:

India (Mumbai and Bangalore)

South Africa – Johannesburg

USA – New York, Hawaii and Los Angeles

### **2009**

Speaking Association Conventions attended:

PSA Holland (Antwerp) – Keynote Presentation

PSASA South Africa (Cape Town) - break-out session

NSA USA (Phoenix, Arizona)

CAPs Canada (Toronto) - break-out session

In addition I spoke in:

USA - Los Angeles and New York

Dubai, UAE

South Africa - Johannesburg and Cape Town

### **2010**

Speaking Association Conventions attended:

NSA USA (Orlando, FL)  
GSA Germany (Cologne) – break-out session  
PSA UK (London) – Meet the Pros session  
CAPs Canada (Montreal) – break-out session

In addition, I spoke in:

USA - Miami, Los Angeles, Seattle, North Carolina  
Hungary – Budapest (3 times)  
Dubai, UAE  
Guernsey, Channel Islands

**2011 (to date and scheduled)**

Speaking Associations attended:

PSA Holland and GSS – Keynote Presentation  
PSASA (Cape Town) – Meet the Pros session

In addition:

Hungary – Budapest  
South Africa – Cape Town and Johannesburg

Will be attending/speaking:

USA – Los Angeles (NSA)  
GSA Germany – Munich  
Iran

CAPs Canada – Toronto  
Canada - Montreal

I have attended all 4 GSS events so far - Singapore, Dubai, Cape Town and Holland, presenting at each one and keynoting in Holland.

***Experience in leadership in home association***

I have served on the PSA UK Board since 2006 as the GSF representative. In 2008 I was appointed one of 4 Guardian (Legal) Directors of the PSA. This position does not allow me to become President of the PSA UK. It was a conscious decision to take this role and dedicate the time I have for leadership internationally while still providing support to our members at UK level.

In these roles I have enjoyed providing support in a number of ways to the PSA and its members, including keynote and many break-out sessions at Conventions and regional events, 'Meet the Pros' several times and the mentoring of members regarding in particular their branding and development as a professional speaker, and member to Fellow of PSA.

***Awards, honours, earned designations***

FPSA – Fellow of PSA UK (CSP equivalent designation) – awarded 2007  
PSAE – Professional Speaking Award of Excellence – awarded 2010  
Treasurer of the GSF (2010-2011)  
Secretary of the GSF (2009-2010)  
MISMM – Member of Institute of Sales & Marketing Management  
ILM – Member of the Institute of Leadership and Management

## **2. Responses to nomination questions:**

### **Why do you want to be President of GSF?**

My absolute passion and motivation to travel and speak in different cultures and countries has led me to focus on building my business internationally over the past 7 years in particular. I knew that, for me, international speaking was the way forward. In 2006 it became very clear to me that the GSF (IFFPS at that time) represented the inspirational direction I needed and I very quickly made the decision to become involved and provide whatever help and support I could to make a difference to the future of international speaking, as well as learn from the wealth of experience around me.

I became GSF representative for PSA UK in 2006 and attended Executive Council Meetings from that point. I was elected Secretary of the Executive Council (2009-2010). Since 2010 I have sat on the GSF Executive Committee in the role of Treasurer.

I have enjoyed actively contributing to the GSF for the past 4 years. I now feel ready for the challenge of being on the leadership team for this dynamic and evolving organisation working with the amazing team we have in place. I feel my wide international experience with clients and with the GSF and GSS can provide helpful insights and guidance to the GSF moving forward and the challenges which lie ahead for our profession.

### **What skills and experience do you have that qualify you to lead GSF successfully?**

In addition to the above:

- Attended and spoken at all Global Speaker Summits since 2005
- Attended many GSN events around the world since the start in 2005
- Sat on the GSF Executive Council since 2007, with Secretary and Treasurer roles since 2009
- Active role on GSF Executive Committee since 2010
- Held a PSA Board position since 2006
- Worked in 18 countries and 4 continents to date, and many cultures as a speaker
- Held management positions in local government and in business, including leadership and project management roles for multi million pound Criminal Justice projects.
- Much work with Boards and Executive Teams of large global organisations experiencing leadership styles in diverse cultures

**How would you describe your style of leadership?**

Dynamic, responsive and pragmatic. I get things done and will not procrastinate over issues and decisions. Above all, my style is inclusive, collaborative and consultative - the Team collectively has the diversity of experience and skills to lead the GSF to where it needs to be, and this pot of knowledge must be utilised and tapped into in its fullest in order for the GSF to continue thriving, evolving and providing the best possible resources for its global members. My experience of management and project management has allowed me to develop a style of leadership that can effectively recognise and allocate resources to get projects and initiatives delivered within agreed timescales.

**What positions of responsibility have you held in your home association?**

See above, but in summary:

Legal Guardian Director (Board position) of PSA UK – since 2008  
GSF Representative for PSA UK – since 2006

**What are the three most important lessons you've learned from the positions you have held?**

1. Giving back and supporting others as they grow as a speaker, is highly fulfilling and enjoyable and is a key element of PSA UK and each member organisation globally. In my international roles to date I have enjoyed providing guidance and advice wherever possible and requested, often to speakers in countries outside of the UK.
2. That there is a significant and diverse mixture of expertise, wisdom and experience in the speaking industry globally, and in the UK alone, that if tapped into in a structured and appropriate way provides a powerful collective force to pave the way for a highly effective organisation.
3. That dealing with leaders and speakers from diverse cultures around the world at GSF is both a challenge and a wonderful opportunity to learn and develop my own leadership skills.

**What languages do you speak?**

None fluently, except English.....!

**What will the GSF look like at the end of your presidential term?**

We will build on all the great work that has been carried out to date and the GSF will be a well respected, widely known and recognised organisation that has clearly defined values and resources that in turn will encourage new member Associations to join our global community.

The role of the GSF will be clear and visible:

- On-line - including keeping the website an up-to-date and easy to use resource, containing valuable information for our members
- Use of social media to promote the benefits, such as Twitter, Quora, and Linked In discussion groups
- Communication both ways will be transparent and effective

In addition, each member association will have absolute clarity on what the GSF offers its members so we have a consistent and concisely defined brand.

GSN will provide the utmost value to members and be seen as the 'must-attend' event if you are an international speaker. Currently the value, structure and messages of the GSF have been less than clear and these need to be sharpened up and communicated effectively.

### **What concerns you about the future of the GSF?**

We need to be aware of competitive associations - for example [www.speakersite.com](http://www.speakersite.com) and other smaller organisations with international reach, that may be more prominent and seen to provide greater levels of information to their members than GSF, with better and more clearly defined resources. We should also be aware of social media sites such as Linked In and Facebook where international groups already exist.

We have to keep on top of what our members want and provide it, *quickly*. My concerns lie with not reacting to what is needed in fast enough timescales. The speaking profession consists of highly talented speakers who are experts and thought-leaders in their field – for us to stay ahead of the game in our subject and be the best we can be, we need to move quickly and respond to changing economies and markets. Our international federation needs to therefore react in a similar fashion.

The Executive Council meet only once per year and an Executive Committee has been put in place to 'meet' on Skype once per month to address more urgent issues and needs. The role of this Executive Committee is vitally important for keeping the Federation moving and responding to necessary changes. It should be transparent in terms of the discussions and issues it is addressing so that member Associations can feel that progress is being made and we are evolving in line with a changing world and economy. This is starting to happen and we have to establish if the information put out is useful for our members in the form it is in.

### **What are the greatest opportunities available to the GSF?**

We have the ability to be the most respected and recognised organisation for international professional speaking, globally. We have an unmatched pool of experts and thought leaders that are members of the GSN and we should be encouraging them to provide their input (via their member Association) to raise the Federation to this status so that collectively we create a first-rate, un-precedented organisation that attracts media and corporate interest globally.

We also have an opportunity, and I suggest a need, to move towards a globally recognised speaking designation at the highest level, bringing together the US CSP, the Australian CSP and the UK FPSA. This process has started and will take a while to complete. It is a challenge, but a worthwhile one. The global designation will position us as the only organisation that awards international speakers for their contribution and level of expertise and experience in the international speaking industry and therefore making it desirable to become involved in the GSN and GSS events.

**What role should the Council play in creating opportunities and how would you facilitate this role?**

1. Proactively looking for other potential member associations to join and grow GSF and supporting them in their application process.
2. Continually updating information on the website in relation to international speaking news, issues and challenges and encouraging member Associations to provide relevant information to us on a regular basis.

It is important that as a Federation we have a clear vision – what are we trying to achieve in a 5-year plan. This vision should be clear to all Executive Council members and all member Associations. We need to ensure we have clearly defined actions from the Executive Council meeting and each Executive Committee meeting and then ensure that regular communication is in place for achieving these actions in the agreed and published timescales. My role as President would be focused on making sure this simple process is in place and works.

Whilst we are not focused on making a profit as an organisation, it is important for us to create surpluses that can be re-invested in creating resources to benefit our member Associations, and of course ultimately our individual GSN members.

**What would you propose to increase the value of GSF and GSN membership?**

Much of the increased value in GSF and GSN for members lies in providing high quality and easy-to-access central on-line resources – a website that is easy to use and has the ability to simply access relevant and up-to-date information. A speakerwiki for example may be a good way forward to capture up-to-date and relevant information.

Dan Poynter's wonderful GSN Newsbrief could be provided with audio and video also, making it more dynamic. We should encourage input from a wider community of expertise other than just the Executive Council.

We need to continue to sharpen up the format and agenda for the GSN meetings and provide more information and advertising in advance of each event. This will illustrate to GSN members and prospective members that there is real value in joining and attending. A skeleton format for a GSN meeting should be published by the GSF for each Association to use for their own conventions and meetings. This would provide an easier way for Associations to incorporate an international GSN event, sometimes only an hour long, at their meetings. It also serves to advertise and market the value of GSN membership more widely.

We need to ensure that member Associations have the appropriate and relevant resources to be able to communicate to their members the value of the GSF and GSN. This is currently missing.

**What is your strategy for better utilizing technology to connect and communicate with the GSF members?**

We must focus on GSF being a central on-line resource for information relating to speaking professional internationally. To this end the website needs development in the following ways:

1. Central database of the do's and don'ts in different countries and cultures. Information should be encouraged from member Associations and the database updated regularly (speakerwiki perhaps)
2. A regular on-line magazine with downloadable video, audio and written articles with an international flavour.

**What is the priority work of the GSF that needs to be addressed within your leadership term?**

Of course, in the 2+ years prior to my Presidency there will be a number of initiatives that are already be in place to work through, and some new ones will be brought in. However, in my leadership term in addition to working through those initiatives, I would be keen to ensure the following:

1. Absolute clarity on the vision of the GSF and a defined strategy for the next 5 years to achieve this objective.
2. A continually evolving and first-rate website and central on-line resource that effectively serves our global community
3. Focus on delivering high quality GSN events and the GSS event that falls within my year in Vancouver December 2013.
4. The encouragement of additional countries to join GSF as members and a proactive approach to develop this.

**How can we serve our Associations so that they provide quality professional development and make sure their organisation is relevant?**

We should ensure communication is improved both ways from GSF to members and vice versa in listening to their ideas and input. GSN meetings are a good way to achieve this.

As a GSF Executive Council we need to provide clear written information to member Associations as to the work and value of the GSF so that this can easily be communicated to the wider speaking community in each country. There is still some confusion amongst members of country Associations as to the role of GSF, GSN and the GSS. We have to find a way to better communicate this.

We should encourage Executive Council members to actively provide input from their countries as to the challenges, issues and opportunities in their local areas that would be useful and perhaps vital to speakers going to that area. Speakers having worked in these areas can then add their experiences to create an all-rounded information resource.

In a nutshell, clearer and more transparent communication as to the benefits that GSF provides to our members is paramount. We are making progress in this respect and it needs to continue.

In summary...

I have a natural drive, enthusiasm and passion to be a central and influential part of this exciting future and to be a part of the dynamic Executive Council and Executive Committee moving forward, to provide significant value and support to our global members. GSF is the future of international professional speaking and I would be glad to do what I can to support and develop this.

I would be truly honoured to serve as GSF President 2013-2014.

Lesley Everett

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