

Most Common Mistakes Made In CSP Applications 2026



We are so excited that you are interested in earning the Certified Speaking Professional™ Designation! The qualifications are specific, and the process is detailed. The CSP is a significant designation and as such is difficult to obtain. This is done intentionally to maintain the integrity of the designation. It is the highest earned worldwide designation for professional speakers – earned by fewer than 10% of all speakers worldwide.

If haven't already done so, please go to www.nsaspeaker.org/csp/ and download the "How to Earn Your CSP Guide." The guide details the requirements and describes the steps in the application process and the timeline.

Unfortunately, many applicants fail on their initial application. To facilitate completion of a successful application, here are the most common mistakes made in each phase of the application process.

GENERAL

• **Violating the Code of Professional Ethics**

- **Intellectual Property:** Using others' stories, material, images, music, and videos without proper credit or permission. Professional speakers must know the legal and ethical requirements for using others' work.
 - **Misrepresentation and False Business Practices:** Asking a client or colleague to pay you to speak and then agreeing to return this fee is a tempting bit of fraud that has tripped up speakers seeking to pad their presentation count to qualify for the CSP.
 - **Requests for Special Consideration:** A request for special consideration, including submission date extensions, exceptions to video policies, and other infractions that could invalidate our process. Asking other members of NSA to intercede in the process on your behalf will also result in denial of your application and may be reported to National as an ethical violation.
 - **Previously Reported Ethical Violation:** If NSA, GSF, or other globally recognized professional speaking organization has a record on file of an ethical violation, you are disqualified from applying for the CSP designation
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- Not completing the required educational sessions **BEFORE** submitting your application
 - Submitting an application that does **NOT** meet **ALL** of the mandatory criteria
 - Not submitting **ALL** of the required elements by the application deadline of Midnight (PST) on January 10th
 - Not responding to questions from NSA staff about your application **within 5 business days**
 - Asking an NSA member of another CSP to contact the staff or the committee on your behalf
 - ***Requesting a waiver of any of the requirements***

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APPLICATION SPREADSHEET

- Not completing the spreadsheet completely – **all columns for each event**
- Not completing the spreadsheet in **chronological order, most recent first**
- Not confirming your **client contact information** – are they still at the organization, correct email address and phone number
- Not indicating **audience size** when below 15 attendees
- Not identifying presentations that are **Live Virtual**
- Not adding **explanatory notes** in Column O when appropriate
- Including product sales from the presentation **after midnight** of the event day
- ***Requesting exceptions of any kind***

CLIENT EVALUATIONS

- Not sending out the client evaluation request in a **timely manner**
- Not sending out enough client evaluation requests – a **minimum of 20 evaluations** must be received. Many applicants send out more than 20 requests to ensure that they meet the required number.
- Not reminding your clients to complete the evaluation by the deadline
- ***Requesting exceptions*** such as a reduction in the number of evaluations or an extension of time to collect evaluations

VIDEO SUBMISSION

The video is the most crucial element of the CSP Application. If an applicant fails in the process, it is most frequently in the video review phase. Your paperwork can be great, but your video can disqualify you. The biggest issues with the video submission include:

- Not submitting your video by the **deadline of January 10**
- Asking to **change** your video submission
- Video is older than **two years** old.
- Submitted video(s) that do not meet the minimum **specified length requirements**
- Asking a voting member of the CSP Committee to review your video before submission
- The video **exceeds the length specified** and you ask the reviewers to only look at specific sections
- Video is not representative of the **current type of speaking** you do – training or keynoting
- Video is not representative of your **current area of expertise**
- Poor sound quality, it is **hard to hear** you speaking
- Camera angle does not show you facing the room **with good lighting**
- **Highly edited**, your video should be raw video of a continuous segment of your presentation
- Video does not show **audience engagement**
- ***Requesting exceptions of any kind***