

KEYNOTE SPEAKER KIT

Dan Paulson

Keynote Speaker on Owner Dependency, Leadership and Accountability

Author of Escape the Owner's Trap · Creator of the MAAX System

What happens to your business when you can't be there?

In 2025, Dan Paulson was hospitalized twice in a matter of weeks, first for a brain bleed and then for a second medical crisis that followed. For months he could not travel or work at full capacity, and the business he had spent years building came to a stop because everything depended on one person. He rebuilt it using the principles he teaches. Today Dan is fully recovered and back on the road, and his keynotes give leadership audiences the lesson before life tests them: a business that works only when you are present is at risk, and the habits that create that risk can be changed.

SIGNATURE KEYNOTE

The Day I Couldn't Show Up

What a brain bleed taught me about building a business that runs without you

Keynote · 45 or 60 minutes · Opening or closing general session

Why Employees Don't Follow Through

Keynote · 45 or 60 minutes

From Burnout to Buy In

Keynote · 45 or 60 minutes

Behavior First, Systems Next

Breakout or workshop add-on

Past audiences. Dan has delivered keynotes and presentations for professional associations, chambers of commerce and corporate events, including the Wisconsin Health Information Management Association (WHIMA) and Associated Builders and Contractors of Wisconsin at SuperCon and the HR+ Conference.

BOOK A KEYNOTE

608-467-0223

themaaxsystem.com/speaking

FEES

From $10,000 plus travel

Final fee confirmed for your format and date

Scan to watch the reel

KEYNOTES

Topics and Audience Takeaways

SIGNATURE KEYNOTE

The Day I Couldn't Show Up

What a brain bleed taught me about building a business that runs without you

Keynote · 45 or 60 minutes · Opening or closing general session

A headache that would not go away turned out to be a brain bleed, and within days Dan went from running his business to fighting for his health. A second crisis followed weeks later. The illness did not create a weakness in his business. It exposed one. Everything ran through him, so when he could not show up, sales stopped and the work stalled.

In this keynote Dan tells that story with candor and uses it to show how capable leaders unintentionally become the center of everything, why so many companies only work when the owner is in the building, and which behaviors and leadership habits keep it that way. Audiences leave moved by the story and clear on the first change to make before an emergency makes it for them. Based on Dan's book, Escape the Owner's Trap.

Audience takeaways

- Recognize the signs that a business, team or department depends too heavily on one leader
- Understand how everyday rescue behavior trains people to wait for the leader instead of acting
- Choose one leadership habit to change now, while the choice is still yours

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KEYNOTE

Why Employees Don't Follow Through

What leaders can change before adding another policy, meeting or reminder

Keynote · 45 or 60 minutes · Also available as a breakout

Employees do not always miss commitments because they do not care. Follow-through often breaks when expectations remain open to interpretation, finished work is poorly defined, or managers reinforce the standard inconsistently. Dan helps audiences see where execution actually breaks down and where leaders can begin repairing it.

Audience takeaways

- Turn broad expectations into clear results people can act on
- Define ownership and finished work before a commitment is missed
- Reinforce standards in the flow of work instead of relying on repeated reminders

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KEYNOTE

From Burnout to Buy In

Build accountability without pushing every problem up the chain

Keynote · 45 or 60 minutes · Also available as a breakout

Owners and managers burn out when they repeatedly catch work, correct the same issues and make decisions that should be handled elsewhere. This session examines how rescue behavior creates dependence and how leaders can build ownership without adding layers of meetings, reports and oversight.

Audience takeaways

- See how stepping in to help can condition people to move problems upward
- Place ownership with the person or level best equipped to handle the work
- Use systems to support better behavior after expectations and authority are clear

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BREAKOUT OR WORKSHOP ADD-ON

Behavior First, Systems Next

Why good tools fail when leadership behavior contradicts them

Booked alongside a keynote, this working session gives leaders time to apply the keynote's ideas to their own systems.

FOR YOUR PROGRAM

Bios and Stage Introduction

SHORT BIO · ABOUT 50 WORDS

Dan Paulson is a keynote speaker, the author of Escape the Owner's Trap and the creator of the MAAX System. After a 2025 brain bleed kept him out of his own business for months, he rebuilt it around the principles he teaches. Today he helps owners and leadership teams build companies that keep running when they can't be there.

MEDIUM BIO · ABOUT 100 WORDS

Dan Paulson is a keynote speaker, executive advisor and the author of Escape the Owner's Trap. As CEO of InVision Development International and a partner at XCXO, he has spent more than 20 years helping owners in construction, manufacturing, skilled trades and automotive build companies that perform without depending on them every day. He created the MAAX System (Management, Accounting, Accountability, eXcellence) to make that change practical. In 2025 a brain bleed and a second medical crisis kept Dan from working at full capacity for months, and his own business stalled. He rebuilt it using his own method, and that story is at the center of his keynotes.



High-resolution headshots and live-event photos: themaaxsystem.com/speaker-kit

FULL BIO · ABOUT 200 WORDS

Dan Paulson is a keynote speaker, executive advisor, author and podcaster who helps owners and leadership teams build businesses that keep performing when the leader is not in the room. He is the CEO of InVision Development International and a partner at XCXO, and for more than two decades he has advised privately held companies, most often in construction, manufacturing, skilled trades and automotive.

Dan created the MAAX System (Management, Accounting, Accountability, eXcellence), a behavior-first operating method that strengthens leadership, financial clarity and accountability. He is the author of Escape the Owner's Trap, a practical guide for owners who want a company that runs with or without them.

His message became personal in 2025. Dan was hospitalized twice in a matter of weeks, first for a brain bleed and then for a second medical crisis. For months he could not travel or work at full capacity, and his business stalled because everything ran through him. He rebuilt it using the principles he teaches. Today he is fully recovered and back on the road, delivering keynotes that are candid, practical and grounded in what actually happens inside growing companies. Dan also hosts the Books & The Biz podcast.

STAGE INTRODUCTION · ABOUT 60 SECONDS, TO BE READ AS WRITTEN

Our next speaker has spent more than 20 years helping business owners build companies that don't depend on them for every decision. Then, in 2025, he found out firsthand what happens when the person everything depends on can't show up. A headache that wouldn't go away turned out to be a brain bleed, and a second medical crisis followed weeks later. For months he couldn't travel or work at full capacity, and his own business stalled. He rebuilt it using the same principles he teaches, and today he is fully recovered and back on the road. He is the CEO of InVision Development International, the creator of the MAAX System and the author of Escape the Owner's Trap. Please welcome Dan Paulson.

EVENT PLANNING

Formats, Fees and Logistics

Where Dan delivers keynotes

Conferences and associations
Opening and closing keynotes for owners, executives, managers, HR leaders and operating teams.

Company leadership meetings
Keynotes for annual meetings, leadership summits and kickoffs.

Executive retreats
A keynote followed by a facilitated discussion with the leadership team.

Keynote plus workshop
Pair the keynote with a breakout or half-day workshop so participants apply the ideas to a current problem.

Keynote fees

Keynote fees start at $10,000 plus travel. The final fee depends on format, length, location and whether the keynote is paired with a breakout or workshop. Share your date, audience and budget, and Dan will confirm availability and a fee for your event.

Past audiences

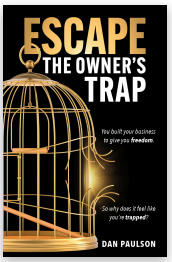
Dan has delivered keynotes and presentations for professional associations, chambers of commerce and corporate events, including the Wisconsin Health Information Management Association (WHIMA) and the ABC of Wisconsin HR+ Conference.

Audio and visual

- Wireless lavalier or headset microphone, so Dan can move while he speaks
- Projector and screen with an HDMI connection at the front of the room for Dan's laptop
- Wireless slide advancer
- Confidence monitor facing the stage, if one is available
- A small table or lectern near the screen for the laptop and water
- Sound check and room walk-through 30 to 60 minutes before the session

Good to know

- Slides are available in advance if your AV team needs them.
- Dan is glad to join a short planning call to learn about your audience and goals.
- Signed copies of Escape the Owner's Trap can be added for attendees.



Escape the Owner's Trap
by Dan Paulson. Available on Amazon.



See Dan on stage

Speaker reel, 4 minutes 52 seconds, filmed at a live HR and leadership conference.
youtu.be/Xff0OAvARjM

Check keynote availability

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INQUIRY	themaaxsystem.com/speaking
WEBSITE	themaaxsystem.com