

Checklists for organizing your own seminar (#7 of 15)

Here is a checklist, in rough chronological order, of the key steps to organizing and programming your own seminar:

(1) Write a one-sentence topic for a seminar.

(2) Concerning that topic, write answers to the following:

Who cares?

What problems will it solve?

How and where else can the same information be found?

How much time or money would the participant save by attending your seminar?

Why else would people attend it?

Do other seminars about your topic exist?

What do they cost?

What's their approach?

How long do they take?

How often are they given?

Where/how are they booked? Subsidized?

(3) Write a seminar description that includes objectives, benefits, who should attend, and why.

(4) Write a dozen titles. Select the best.

(5) Evaluate the resources for your seminar preparation. While checking the resources, compile a bibliography for your workbook. Later, in using the resources, select the best and annotate them.

(6) Prepare your budget: itemize expected costs and anticipate when the money will be needed; list the possible unexpected costs by source and date; list anticipated income and when expected; plot your income and costs on a calendar; evaluate

your need for a reserve fund, the amount and when needed; list your financial reserves: amount and when available; list the ways to increase income and reduce costs; determine the method(s) of participant payment: pre-registration only, discount for pre-registration, higher fee at the door, cash, or credit cards, etc.

(7) Determine the minimum payment you will accept for offering the seminar, factor in the cost for its presentation, then establish its cost to the participant.

(8) Plan your speaking schedule: dates, hours, cities, sites; check feasibility of travel as scheduled; contact sites, book facilities, make hotel/motel reservations.

(9) Plan your promotional campaign: list target audience, from the most to least likely to attend; list ways to best appeal to each potential audience; establish an operational budget for the most effective promotional approaches; prepare the time/method list for promotional activities; implement your campaign.

(10) Determine who will be your local contact at sites; establish responsibilities, method of reporting results; devise a method for recording and posting names of registrants to your mailing list; provide all needed promotional materials to your contact; determine who will handle/help with door registration and product sale, etc.

(11) Determine the kind/amount of non-promotional printed material needed: workbooks, evaluation sheets, door registration forms, receipts, product sale forms; set up a production schedule: writing, typing or typesetting, paste-up, printing.

(12) Prepare your seminar; plan, integrate audio-visual aids into the presentation; arrange for and schedule any outside speakers; evaluate the need for your own microphone, amplification, projectors, etc.; practice your presentation,

opening and closing remarks; break the seminar into segments, including breaks.

(13) Plan and purchase speaking attire that visually reinforces the seminar's objective.

(14) As the day approaches for final cancellation of facility fee for full/partial refund, decide if the seminar will be given.

(15) Review all promotional activities as the presentation day approaches.

(16) If scheduled, give radio/TV and newspaper interviews.

(17) Check the presentation site, the day before if possible; review the activities and provisions needed for the site personnel.

(18) Arrive at least an hour before the seminar, set up equipment, review the activities and responsibilities of the helpers, dress.

(19) Smile, take a deep breath, and give a super seminar!

(20) Read the evaluation sheets to see how the next seminar can be given better.

SOME ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR YOUR SEMINARING BUSINESS

(1) Select a business name.

(2) Complete the fictitious business statement process.

(3) Get necessary city/state licenses; if selling a product, get resale number from state taxing board.

(4) Open a business bank account.

(5) Check into credit card use at a bank for registration/sale of products.

- (6) Stock business stationery and needed supplies.
- (7) Investigate joining business or professional associations.
- (8) Familiarize yourself with single proprietorship and receipting responsibilities.
- (9) Keep records and receipts for all income and expenses.

SOME CONSIDERATIONS WHEN SCHEDULING THROUGH ACADEMIC EXTENSION

- (1) Contact colleges/universities at least four months—six is better—prior to the start of the quarter or semester to present your seminar(s) and yourself for possible inclusion in the next program, sending the title and description plus an outline of each seminar, a list of likely participants (by kind, vocation, description), and a resume—with a cover letter.
- (2) Offer to assist with promotion: news release preparation, radio/TV spots, etc.
- (3) Coordinate your workbook preparation with the extension office.
- (4) Prepare the necessary paperwork for later payment.
- (5) Maintain contact with each school prior to traveling there to offer the seminar(s).
- (6) Familiarize yourself with door registration procedures and evaluation forms.
- (7) Return all funds and forms to the sponsoring school promptly after offering your seminar(s).

Use all three categories as appropriate and needed. Because it is impossible to know all of the elements necessary for all seminars, or the exact order of elements needed for any seminar, the three components should be used as a guideline, with items moved, deleted, or added as exigency dictates.

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