

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.

From Gordon Burgett's **How to Set Up and Market Your Own Seminar** (audio CD version, 2009, with digital workbook and audio text summary). Produced by Communication Unlimited / 185 Shevelin Rd. / Novato, CA 94947 / (800) 563-1454 . For further information, see www.gordonburgett.com/order3.htm.

A fetching seminar description is a must! (#8 of 15)

However you book your seminar, the sponsors and participants must know what you will talk about; thus, a concise description is your most important calling card.

It must be written around the benefits that participants will receive from (lovingly) hearing your orations. "What's in it for me?" is what the readers ask themselves. And "Is it worth the time, hassle, and cost?" Then mix in the who, what, why, where, and how—plus prayer, if you are so given.

Since the description is usually part of a catalog or like announcement that explains the program's location, the time, and ways to register, your job is to explain why the readers' registration would reap hard-to-find benefits from a person with tested qualifications and experience.

A much-used format is to begin with a lead, a catchy opener, that tells why they should attend, what valuable information or skill they will learn, and how long the program lasts.

Segue into a short, bulleted list of the most important take-

aways. Three to five items are best, and asterisks are much better than numbers or letters separating the benefits in the list. (This list is the biggest drawing element of the description, so do it!)

If the registrant will receive a workbook, describe what it contains and if it is free. Often the presenter's qualifications are part of the closing copy, which reinforces the benefits already shared.

Very important is that the seminar-giver adhere to the description length required to be posted, so part of the gilded message isn't unkindly clipped or compressed before it is shared with potential registrants. Very often the maximum length is four compact paragraphs, including the list of benefits. Make certain the sponsor will not change your title or alter the text without informing you.

What follows is a much-used description sample about this very topic that I used throughout California for more than 20 years. Study closely the other descriptions in the seminar catalogs the sponsor sends to see what will make your topic unique and sought by likely participants needing what you are sharing.

HOW TO SET UP AND MARKET YOUR OWN SEMINAR

Want to earn a healthy income selling your know-how to others? Or convey knowledge to clients or prospective customers at free, informative, image-enhancing gatherings? Seminars meet the bill. In four hours you will learn the essential ingredients of seminar success:

- o how to give your first seminar with no financial risk
- o why topic definition and the right title are crucial to success
- o which key words most titles should include
- o what promotional strategies work

o why program length is more important than cost
o what four key questions seminar-givers must be able to answer about sponsorship or selection

A 24-page free workbook includes an organizational calendar, a current bibliography, two sample news releases, and a model evaluation form, plus guide sheets about publicity, mailing lists, locations, flyer/brochure preparation, budget, content and organization, and how to get scheduled at colleges and universities.

Even more, Gordon Burgett, California's most prolific seminar-giver with over 100 offerings annually, will explain what he is doing as he does it, tying together form and content in one fact-packed program designed to provide you with the basic information and tools needed to get you speaking (and banking) quickly, confidently, and permanently.

(This information accompanies the description and is used by the booking office for their records.)

SEMINAR LENGTH: 4 hours

MINIMUM COST: \$50, including workbook

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Best wishes,
Gordon Burgett

From Gordon Burgett's [How to Set Up and Market Your Own Seminar](#) four-cassette CD seminar program, including a digital workbook and audio text summary.