

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 is either part of the opening correspondence to get booked at a business or corporation, to explain the kind of program or training you can offer, or it is part of your submission process when offering public or school presentations, where the attendee pays for the opportunity to hear you speak.

In either case, 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.

Corporate or business presentations will be serving a different master. "What's in this for the company or sponsor?" is the orientation of their description.

For public programs the description is usually part of a catalog or like announcement that explains the program's location, the time, and ways to register. You must add to that why the readers' registration would bring them hard-to-find or hugely desired benefits from a person with tested qualifications and experience.

A much-used format in a public description 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-five items are best, and asterisks are much better than numbers or letters separating the benefits in the list.

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 of each description, 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.

The sample that follows is a college extended education description about this very topic that I used throughout California for more than 20 years. Study closely the other descriptions in sponsor's seminar catalog to see what will make your topic unique and sought by likely participants who need to know what you are sharing.

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(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 four-CD program, [How to Set Up and Market Your Own Seminar](#) , with digital workbook and audio text summary).

Giving your own very profitable seminars (#6 of 15)

Let's see how offering seminars on your own differs from offering seminars with academic sponsorship, where you give up about 40-50% of the gross income paid by attendees in exchange for the school listing your title and description in a catalog, providing a room, and giving very little additional promotion.

Nobody else must approve where you offer your own seminars, when you do it is up to you, and you will never suffer because the institution can't tell the difference between a news and a jail release.

That's because you do all the work yourself or hire somebody of your own selection. There's nobody else to blame. You also get to keep 100% of the money, after paying only the expenses necessary to make the program work.

The ORGANIZATIONAL CALENDAR (the next blog in this series) will tell you, roughly, what is done when. The toughest and most important thing you must do in advance is pick your topic, write a tight and alluring description, create a title that the interested "must" attend to hear more about, and then find the market that you can reach with your limited resources.

Choosing a site, a date, and setting up the structure are the easy parts. Getting others to pay and attend to hear what you have to say, plus, you hope, buy some of your back-of-the-room products you sell later, are harder. They might be even harder

for beginners because they start, probably wisely, in their home town where others know them.

Promotion is how you fill the hall. It can cost you more than you'll make, it may not work, and you must pay for it up front. That is made harder for newcomers because too often they cringe at having to laud their virtues in public print, particularly if they haven't given their program yet and they aren't quite sure what those virtues are. There's no cure for this dilemma short of plunging in, planning with prudence and common sense, being frugal and showing boundless enthusiasm when selling the worth of your offering to others. Make it clear that you want to help them define and solve their need. Exude confidence, and others will help pass it on.

We will discuss using the media in coming blogs; use it wisely. One of the best things about putting on your own seminars is that you can aim specifically at those most benefited by your program, almost personally directing quality promotion at them. Study telephone selling. Talk to local groups, speak with directors and supervisors, tell your friends, get on a radio talk show, speak with the feature editor at the newspaper and show why what you have to say will interest his/her followers—in short, you have a chance to do far better on your own because you carry the promotion, mostly in person, to those who will most profit from hearing what you have to say.

Not much else differs from the college seminars: content, handouts, actual presentation, BOR sales. Whatever the sponsorship, you must show your professionalism as you grow into it. Wear the suit until it fits. The nicest thing of all? It's your suit, every thread of it. You created and caused the success. And there can be plenty of reward—for plenty of work.

But it's a real risk to start your speaking career by first giving seminars on your own. You can earn a bundle or you can lose your shirt. It probably makes more sense to begin

seminaring through institutions, like colleges or hospitals. Or offering workshops to and through businesses. (I tell more about each later in this series.)

Best wishes,

Gordon Burgett

From Gordon Burgett's **How to Set Up and Market Your Own Seminar**, the audio CD version, with digital workbook and audio text summary. Produced by Communication Unlimited, P.O. Box 845, Novato, CA 94947, (800) 563-1454. There's more information [here](#).