Creating successful seminar brochures (#10 of 15)

Program developers and coordinators almost always need brochure copy that "sells" their programs. Since not everyone is well versed in the task of writing and organizing brochure copy, the following will provide you with some easy-to-use, helpful hints. It's also a ready-reference checklist of items that are a must for every brochure designed to be mailed, digitally or snail mail, to attract people to a workshop, seminar, conference, short course—any type of educational activity of usually one-session duration.

There are six major components in all successful brochures. By making sure you use all of them in one way or another, you can create copy for your own brochure that will sell your program to its best advantage.

You can explain the information in an easy-to-follow format that leads your reader from one important point to another, which is equally important to the reader and to you. Your copy becomes a sort of roadmap that leads the reader from the mailing panel and cover of the brochure, inside to the descriptive material on program content, audience, speaker credentials, registration and lodging information, and on to an enrollment form that makes signing up easy.

The six components are the 5 W's + H—Who, What, Where, When, Why + How. The answers to these questions provide the solid ground in which your copy is developed. It's easiest to think of a brochure as a basket into which a lot of eggs have been very carefully and deliberately placed. Each "egg" is a copy component that answers one of the six questions.

H, the Easy One

H is the easiest component of your brochure to develop because

it deals with clearly established facts. The H, or **HOW**, egg in your basket provides information on location of program, registration procedures, fee schedule, lodging and meal details, parking availability, and other nitty-gritty details.

The majority of this information is often grouped in a separate section headed "Registration Information." The details are in one place, making it easy for the reader to find and check through. You can adapt the following HOW components to your particular circumstances:

Location: Be specific and include an address and directions to the program site (or note that a map will be sent with acknowledgment of advance registrations).

Registration Procedures: Include the cut-off date for advance registrations; the link, address, or phone number to call for registering by email, shopping cart, or phone; where to mail the registration form; when and where to report on-site to pick up name badges and other materials, and a reminder to sign up for limited or concurrent activities.

Fees: Clear listing of all fees/advance deposits; what they are for; what they include; how fees are to be paid (check, money order, charge card [what kind], or organizational billing); if U.S. funds are the requisite; when fees are due; if CODs are acceptable.

Cancellation/Refund Policy: Date/time when any notification of cancellation must be received for refund; how it can be made (in writing, email, by phone), and information about any service charge for cancellation, if applicable.

Meals: Listing of the refreshments included as part of fees; listing of those optionally available for purchase and their cost; where those "on your own" meals are available.

Lodging: Where it's available, its proximity to the program site, and the needed link or phone number to call; outline of

rates; reservations deadline; notation if special rates for those attending your program are available.

Transportation: General directions on how to reach your program site by car—or how it can be reached my any other means of transportation.

Availability of CEUs or other accreditation.

Issuance of certificates.

Tax Deductibility of Fees.

Affirmative Action/Non-Discrimination Statement, if required by your organization.

Address, website link, phone number for **Additional Information**: Include hours of operation, highlight if the phone number is free.

Registration/Enrollment Response Form: This should be tear-off if your brochure is a self-mailer or it can be a separate piece if your brochure will be mailed in an envelope. If it's a tear-off, make sure the reverse side doesn't contain information the registrant must have. Try to design the brochure so that the mailing label is automatically returned with the registration form. This label that "worked" can help you plan strategy next time. If the response is digital, it should be downloadable, to be faxed or mailed back. The easiest are the writing forms where they can return it completed, with a credit card and the necessary additional information. If you will acknowledge their registration completion and payment, tell them that and how the "receipt" will be sent—and roughly when.

The Five W's

The other five eggs in your basket are the 5 W's. Each one—**Who**, **What**, **When**, **Where**, and **Why**—is answered in several ways in several places within your brochure. In general, the 5

W's address the following areas:

WHO:
program sponsors
audience definition
speaker identification
planning/advisory committee

WHAT:
title (and subtitle) of program
overview
schedule of activities
titles of presentations
description of presentations

WHEN:
date(s) and time(s) of program

WHERE:
location of program

WHY:
program benefits
special features

On the **cover of your brochure**, include four of the five W's. WHAT will be the title (and subtitle, if there is one) of your program, prominently displayed. WHEN will be the date(s) of your program—be sure to include the year. WHERE will be the general location, at least city and state; you can be more specific if the actual site would serve as a major "drawing card." WHO will be the sponsors of the program, an identification tool that serves to build credibility for the program in the minds of potential audience members.

Extra thoughts when creating your seminar brochure:

* Avoid clichés and the newest buzzwords. They can trivialize or mask what you are really trying to say.

* Avoid $120 words. Don't use a word that you yourself don't understand or can't correctly pronounce.

* Write your copy in plain, easy readable English.

* Use the present tense and active verbs.

* Break up long segments of copy with headlines and subheads—or write in outline format.

* Create little sections within the brochure for your various copy components (5 W's + H) and give each a bold headline that "sells."

* Format your copy so that your readers start at the cover and continue through the material in roadmap fashion to the registration form at the end.

* Write copy that involves your readers. Give them a sense of participation just by reading your brochure (since involvement in your program is your final objective in this project anyway).

* As a general rule, keep your copy short. Simple, easy-to-read text is more likely to get read and then acted upon, to your advantage.

* Make sure the reader immediately understands the program's major benefits. What will they get out of it? How can they apply what they will learn?

Some of this blog comes from a brochure used with the permission of Hugo Dunhill Mailing Lists, Inc., 630 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10017.

For more details, hear my four-DVD program called "**How to Set Up and Market Your Own Seminar**." See www.gordonburgett.com. The program includes a downloadable 26-page digital workbook.

Best wishes,

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