

Sample newspaper releases for a public seminar (#12 of 12)

Here are two typical newspaper releases I sent simultaneously to every newspaper within about 50 miles of the location, usually addressed to the city editor. They were sent about 2 1/2 weeks before the program. (I have altered some of the numbers.)

Item 1:

NEWS RELEASE

HAROLD SMITH

Communication Unlimited

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Web site www.gordonburgett.com

(800) XXX-1454

Release date: by Sept. 7

"How to Set Up and Market Your Own Seminar" will be given at the Sheraton Santa Barbara next Tuesday evening, Sept. 8, from 6-10 p.m. by Gordon Burgett, who presents 100+ seminars a year throughout California.

Gordon focuses on the key requirements for seminar success, marketing, pricing, scheduling, promotion, content, and follow-up. Program participants also receive a step-by-step, 26-page workbook. For specific registration information, call (800) XXX-1454.

"There's still plenty of room for the beginner in the field," says Burgett, a Novato writer and former university dean with 1,700+ articles and 43 books in print, "particularly if they can clearly present 'how-to' information that others need and

want. In fact, it may be the only multibillion-dollar industry where the average man and woman can still get a firm, profitable toehold. Most just need to know how to get started." Gordon has given 2,100+ paid public presentations.

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I also included in the same envelope a short one-paragraph insertion for use in the daily or weekly activities section. Very often if Item 1 wasn't used, Item 2 was—and many times both appeared.

Item 2: to use in the "Calendar of Coming Events" section:

NEWS RELEASE

"How to Set Up and Market Your Own Seminar," by Gordon Burgett, Sheraton Santa Barbara, Sept. 8, 6-10 p.m. For specific registration information, call (800) XXX-1454.

Why did I use the name Harold Smith in the return address? A newspaper editor, and friend, told me early on if I sent the press releases in my name about my own programs they wouldn't be used! So I invented a press agent, Harold Smith. The very rare times that someone from a publication called to speak to Harold Smith I just said, "Thank you..." and answered the questions. I guess Harold and I sound alike.

This 12-unit blog program is excerpted from "[How to Set Up and Market Your Own Seminar](#)," an audio CD four-tape program with a digital workbook and an audio text summary. More details are [here](#).

Best wishes,

Gordon Burgett (or is it Harold Smith?)

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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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:

* how to give your first seminar with no financial risk

- * why topic definition and the right title are crucial to success
- * which key words most titles should include
- * what promotional strategies work
- * 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

Gordon Burgett, 185 Shevelin Rd., Novato, CA 94947

www.gordonburgett.com / (800) 563-1454

Soc. Sec XXX=XX-XXXX

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).

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.

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 seminarizing 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](#).

“How to Set Up and Market Your Own Seminar,” blog #1 of 15

Somewhere about seminar 200 three attendees independently asked me if I could tell them how to set up their own seminar. I was flattered—and surprised that there was nothing in print

at that time about the topic, though seminars bloomed in profusion nationwide, on week nights and weekends.

So I created a four-hour audio cassette program at about the 250th seminar called "How to Set Up and Market Your Own Seminar." Three cassettes were me explaining the process orally. The fourth was the guidebook (workbook) divided into the sections you see below, in downloadable text should the person wish to read it as they listened.

While I was at it, I also co-wrote a book called **Speaking for Money** (long out of print) with Mike Frank, the former President of the National Speakers Association. In it I mostly wrote about seminarss. It seems that the process worked because I gave my 2000th paid seminar several years ago. (What did I talk about at the seminars? How to sell 75% of your freelance writing, travel writing, niche publishing, writing comedy greeting cards, how to self-publish, empire building, and lots of derivatives!)

I know. Who cares? And why am I using the public airwaves to brag about it?

It dawned on me a few weeks back, as I was packaging an order for the \$50 program, that I had never shared the workbook publicly. So that's what I'll do in about 15 blogs this spring, probably one a week or so (with another blog about something else also about a week apart).

I will update the workbook's contents as I go along, although I'm always surprised at how much the basic components remain about the same, as technology rushes by and there are many other ways to share the context than on audio cassettes or DVDs!

Why not start with a guideline, then an agenda, a roadmap of what you can expect this spring?

One guideline for success in seminarng is:

“Sell hard-to-find but easy-to-apply information to participants who perceive that it will meet their need.”

And an agenda I will follow:

1. Introduction
2. Brief definition and overview of seminars and the potential income
3. Eight kinds of seminars; three that we will focus on here: public institutional seminars, private business/corporate seminars, and public self-sponsored seminars
4. How do you find a subject?
5. The guideline above and how that seems to help
6. Feasibility study: learn from others
7. Writing a description
8. Creating a title
9. Identifying a market most likely to pay to attend
10. Selecting the most appropriate sponsor—or doing it yourself
11. Income boosters, like B.O.R. sales
12. Workbooks
13. Booking, price, time, location, and promotion
14. What you do before your listeners arrive
15. What you do after they have left

If you're still interested, I hope to “speak” with you next week. (You are invited to tell friends about it too.)

Best wishes,

Gordon Burgett

Excerpted, modified, and expanded from the workbook for 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, P.O. Box 845, Novato, CA 94947. (800) 563-1454 or info@GordonBurgett.com/order3.htm.