Successful Seminar Selling, Part 2: Illuminating Lumens

PEOPLE REMEMBER about 20% of what they hear and 50% of what they see. Therefore, it is not surprising that more pictures and graphics are being used in seminars these days. As they say, a picture is worth a thousand words.

Some people are auditory learners, while others are visual, and still others learn better by writing because they are tactile. Some producers spend considerable time trying to implement these auditory, visual, and tactile elements into their seminars. Some believe they have found exactly the right mix. Others never have given these elements a second thought. Unknowingly, however, most producers use all three of these learning methods to some degree in every seminar or presentation they give.

In the early days, slide projectors were the mainstay of any good corporate seminar. Technology has continued to evolve, and the expense and time requirements of developing slide film are long gone. Today, computers displaying PowerPoint or Lotus Freelance Graphics presentations have replaced that technology. Video projectors themselves are an integral part of sharing information visually. With that in mind, let us take a closer look at the primary tool a producer may use to enhance his seminar's visual side.

Similar to my advice in last month's article on the use of audio, the producer should understand some basics of video projectors, computers, and other related equipment before running out and purchasing or renting them for his presentation's visual aspects

Projecting 101

Lumens and resolution are not prospects that the producer would invite to a seminar. They instead are two important words a producer will want to remember when he is in the market.for a video projector.

Selecting the proper projector is by no means an easy task. Not only is there a dizzying array of selection and prices, there are many other

considerations the producer needs to take into account as well. Will the equipment be used in a setting where there are bright lights? How far from the screen will it be? How large is the audience? What is the video source's resolution?

To simplify things, let us look at the producer who will store his PowerPoint or Freelance Graphics presentations on a laptop. Today's standard laptop has a display resolution of 1028 x 768 pixels. To project the best picture definition onto a screen 20 feet away, a good rule of thumb to follow is that the projector's minimum resolution should match that of the source.

Some projectors advertise compressed resolutions. This means a projector that has a true resolution of 800 x 600 pixels is capable of taking the next image size up (1028 x 768) and converting it to the lower level of resolution. While this image compression does not change the image drastically, the image's quality starts to deteriorate. I strongly recommend using true resolution.

The second item to look for in a projector is its brightness, measured in ANSI lumens. In general, the higher the number of lumens a projector is rated, the brighter the images it projects. If seminars are held in brightly lit rooms, the producer will want to pay extra for a higher ANSI lumens rating. The general rule is to purchase the brightest projector for which the budget will allow.

Many projectors use metal halide bulbs and more recently, ultra high-pressure (UHP) bulbs. Despite their increased cost, UHP lamps are becoming popular because they last longer, use less power, and produce more light. No matter which kind of bulb the producer uses, he always should have a spare available, particularly if he relies heavily on visual aids.

Another feature for which to look in a projector is keystone adjustment. Keystoning occurs when the image appears wider at the top or the bottom as a result of the projector being positioned somewhere other than the center of the screen. A keystone adjustment corrects this image distortion (within reason).

Overhead projectors still are a popular tool and are useful in personalizing a presentation. I have attended several seminars where the presenter used a video projector on one side of the screen and an overhead projector for handwritten notes on the other. There also are LCD panels that may be used with an overhead projector to allow for an almost perfect combination of presenting a show and being able to write on the slides as the presenter speaks. The downside to this approach, however, is that overhead projectors usually are not as bright as a video projector.

Another alternative is to use the latest in white board technology. Digital whiteboards enable a presenter to write on a white surfaced

board with dry erase markers and have that information digitally transferred to a projector for display.

Having the proper equipment will aid in the seminar's look and feel. Bright, bold, and easy-to-understand images will make it possible for the audience to follow even the most complex presentation.

In the Mood

The lighting in a seminar has a big effect. Bright projected images in a slightly dimmed room is the most desired effect. This keeps the audience's attention focused on the information the producer is sharing, yet leaves enough light to allow for taking notes. If the seminar is large enough, a follow spot also should be used. Bright classroom-style settings may be cold and unfriendly, especially in larger scenarios.

I Can Do Magic

A final additional feature that the presenter will want to use in his seminars is a wireless controller. Many projectors come with them standard, or the producer can purchase one separately. By using wireless microphones and controllers, the speaker is free to move about the room, never again trapped standing by the podium to control the images on the screen. These controllers' sophistication varies greatly, so the producer should do some research to find one that is appropriate. Here again, it cannot be said enough times: Don't forget the batteries!

Dodging bullets

A common mistake I see at many seminars is what I call ''bullet dodging.'' A presenter will put together a nice presentation and include highlighted bullets, only to ignore them or worse yet, simply read them and keep on going to the next subject.

Bullets are a visual aid meant to inform. Why have a laundry list of important features if the presenter is not going to take the time to explain their benefits? That is like having the automobile salesman tell me the car that I am contemplating purchasing has a V8 motor, airbags, and anti-lock brakes.

Well duh! So does every other vehicle at which I am looking. What makes this vehicle stand out? Why is the salesman selling this particular product? That is what I as a consumer want to know. In a car, the salesman can give me the bullets, but he also should pause and tell me how the driver enjoys the power of that V8. He should tell me how the side impact air bags and anti-lock breaks can help save my life.

In insurance, the presenter should tell the attendees how the policy

will protect them. The presenter should list the features, but also take the time to tell the audience how the features will work for them. That is why a prospect attends the seminar. Just telling prospects that they need long-term care is not enough.

Pardon the pun, but I think every seminar should be illuminating. Illuminatingly educational, illuminatingly entertaining, and yes, even illuminatingly illuminating!

The producer should rehearse with the equipment, and should practice the visual items as well. The producer should repeat slide segues, stories, and information until he has mastered them. Using the proper equipment, the producer easily should be able to implement auditory, visual, and tactile elements into his presentation. ''Did you hear what I said?'' ''Look at this,'' and ''Write that down'' all should be Standard terminology to highlight items the producer wants a prospect to remember. The sale is not always immediate, so reaching out and touching the prospect's ''learning centers'' will help him better remember the presenter, the expert, when the time is right.