



## Successful Seminar Selling, Part 3: And Now Presenting

**AFTER COVERING** some of the audio and visual aspects of seminar selling in previous articles, we now can roll up our sleeves and go to work on some ideas for the presentation itself. In all seminars, there are some basic items about which to think. How does the producer attract suspects? How should it be presented? What is the best way to register attendees?

As I mentioned before, a seminar does not simply happen. It takes many hours of planning, thought, and preparation. Some of the ideas presented here and in the previous articles may assist the producer with his or her upcoming seminars.

To proceed with proper planning, the producer first should know who his target audience is. This is important and will aid in planning everything from the advertising to knowing if cheeseburgers should be served. A seminar geared to young adults would not be effective for a long-term care presentation, which might be targeted to a more mature audience. Knowing who the audience is can assist greatly in planning a more effective seminar and setting the proper ambiance.

The seminar's ambiance often is overlooked. Ambiance is more than only the room lighting and setup; it includes such items as the establishment's atmosphere, the quality of the linens and seats, and the silverware's cleanliness. Every detail of a seminar makes up the whole ambiance. Paying particular attention to it will help the producer present a more professional image. After all, what does it say about the producer who hosts his seminar in a facility with stained seats or dirty silverware.

I was taught long ago to look at my business from the customer's perspective. I therefore use the "what would I think if" approach in many aspects of it, including my seminars.

### **What's My Name?**

I do not dislike nametags, but I find them limiting and therefore do

not use them. Instead, I prefer to use tent cards. What is the difference between a nametag and a tent card? A nametag is pinned or stuck onto the seminar attendee, you know, those "Hello, My Name Is... tags. In contrast, a tent card is a folded piece of cardstock with the attendee's name on it that may be used as a tool in the seminar.

After an attendee is registered at a seminar, the producer or staff can give him a personalized tent card and instruct him to place it in front of him on the table where he sits. The tent card then serves three purposes: 1) Like a nametag, it enables the presenter to address suspects by name. 2) If the attendee has a question, he places his tent card on end, from the horizontal to the vertical position. The presenter then can answer questions at his leisure and not have the attendees raise their hands and distract others. 3) Questions and feedback to the presenter may be written on the back of the tent card and handed in at the seminar's conclusion for simplified follow up. This also provides for a more personal manner in which a suspect may ask questions.

### **Turn Up the Radio!**

I like to keep the WII-FM radio station in the back of my mind, especially when planning a seminar. WII-FM is not a real radio station, it is an acronym for "What's in it for me?" I remind myself that suspects attending a seminar want to have this question answered. Aside from the free meal they might be getting, they should receive seminar content designed to educate and let them know exactly why they need the producer's product.

Keep it simple! (K.I.S.) is another catch phrase. Taking a complex subject such as LTC and explaining it with TLC so that everyone understands how it works and what it does is not an easy feat. Making the subject easy for the suspect to understand, however, should be a seminar's primary goal.

Overall, the audience should enjoy what the producer is saying and trying to convey. A clear focus with planned fluctuations in tone and pace should be part of the script. A seminar that keeps the same pace and energy level throughout only will bore the attendees.

### **Impress Me**

Have you ever had a first impression and then found out it was wrong, perhaps months later? In a seminar, first impressions count and it is difficult for the producer to overcome a bad first impression. The more a suspect likes the producer from the outset, the more likely that suspect is to purchase something from the producer. A first impression is made in the first few minutes. Therefore, the presenter should rehearse and refine his introduction and the seminar's opening. A comfortable opening is another key to hosting a successful seminar.

I have discussed with myself and others the subject of handouts and their contents on several occasions. I know producers who provide only paper and pens for note-taking during a seminar. Others put their whole presentation in written form and hand it out at registration.

I use elements of both strategies. I provide paper and pens with my firm's name and address on them during the seminar, then hand out a condensed version of my seminar along with some additional marketing materials at the end. I find that providing attendees with too much information at the outset creates distraction.

### **Tactfully Tactile**

As with all aspects of his seminar, the producer should ensure that the materials he hands out reflect his professionalism. Poorly made copies or type-written notes do not indicate professionalism. The producer can tap into the resources of his companies to ease greatly the burden of trying to accumulate proper materials. After all, the companies benefit from the producer's seminars and in most cases are willing to assist. It never hurts to ask.

With the price of color laser printers now starting at about \$1,000, there is little excuse for the producer not to have one. In addition to being able to produce stunning color handouts, a color laser printer may be used to produce almost everything required for a seminar. Tent cards, feedback forms, personalized brochures, and even nametags may be generated. Additionally, services from a printing company like Kinko's or Sir Speedy also may be used.

While beyond the scope of this article (online seminars will be the focus of a future article), I want to mention online seminars. This kind of seminar could be used in two ways. The first is to host a seminar online, enabling attendees to watch from the comfort of their homes. The second, less traditional way, is to allow a presenter, perhaps an expert in his or her field, to address the producer's seminar attendees from a remote location. Video conferencing the speaker in or using such technology as [www.webex.com](http://www.webex.com) now easily enables this.

Along with exuding an air of professionalism and implementing the proper ambiance, the producer should remember that the recipe for successful seminar selling lies in his key ingredients: the auditory, visual, and tactile aspects of learning. When properly mixed, a successful seminar will enable the producer to convert more suspects into prospects and more prospects to clients, and we all know what that means.