

How to Market Your Business Successfully...

Via Seminars

By June Davidson

One of the most exciting management tools has come of age, that of successfully marketing businesses through the \$300 billion seminar industry. The seminar platform is a natural medium capable of reaching many prospects instead of one. The dynamics of group presentations is contagious and, if done properly, can influence the immediate purchase of products and/or services.



Marketing is an exact science but results vary widely depending on a number of factors. Here are some very basic steps to assist in putting a winning program together"

1. **Know Your Business.** Gather information pertinent to your endeavor; this should include books, newspaper/periodical articles, research information, and "did you know that" trivia. As a seminar leader, you have an obligation to your audience to be an information entrepreneur.
2. **Scout Locations.** It is vital to select the right location. You must narrow down a choice of cities where your product/services will be of interest. Hotels offer meeting rooms but they may prove costly and, by no means, are they the only choice. Adult learning centers, churches, chambers of commerce may be able to accommodate your group. Get creative! I conducted outstanding real estate seminars in an automobile dealership showroom; the facility was free of charge and the dealer welcomed the opportunity to participate.
3. **Seek out other Seminar leaders to share costs.** Join forces with two or three related businesses, which will broaden the appeal while sharing in the costs of promotion. For example, if you own a shoe store that specializes in running shoes, do a seminar on how to run a marathon. Partners might be local fitness centers, running associations, private trainers, and companies selling nutritional supplements, even bottled water. This offers them an opportunity for exposure and minimized costs for all participants.
4. **Design Promotional Data For Specific Audiences.** After you selected the meeting date, a location and allied partners, combine brochures and mailers. By partnering, exposure to the community is dramatically increased, costs are reduced, and the seminar will appeal to more diverse groups.
5. **Determine Time Frame for Each Module.** It is important to allocate the amount of time and order of presentation for each discipline. Be sure to tie all modules together in a humorous manner. A little humor interspersed with facts can do wonders in marketing any product or services.
6. **Practice...Practice...Practice.** In the seminar industry, you can never be "too well prepared". Good speakers are always in demand, especially speakers who are knowledgeable about matters of community interest. Approach local civic clubs about making a presentation to their group; not

only will this allow you to practice, but will also bring you in contact with potential attendees to your seminar.

7. **Target your market.** Do your homework! Are there running courses or walking clubs in your area? Post fliers/brochures there, in local podiatrist offices and at the senior citizen centers. Marathons are a favorite of charitable groups raising money; go after the market. Call local newspapers and ask to include your upcoming event in the calendar section, a community service provided at no cost. Propose a feature story about a senior citizen who is sold on the multiple benefits of running. Be innovative in your efforts to create enthusiasm in the community.
8. **Follow through on promotional efforts.** Without proper follow-through, you might as well save the time and expense involved in putting on a seminar! Exposure is vital to your chances for success. Make phone calls to past and prospective clients; ask your partners to do the same thing. Share your plan of action with them, don't take for granted they know how to do this. If there is a charge for the seminar, make sure credit cards can be used. If there is no charge, promote this as a community service.
9. **Back-of-the-room services/products available.** Have books and tapes pertinent to the seminar for sale at a discount. If you are selling running shoes, promote this merchandise by having the line on display and available for purchase. Print discount coupons for seminar attendees, this is an inexpensive method off advertising and can be a means to encourage additional purchases for family members.
10. **Early set-up.** Be at the seminar location at least two hours before it starts to assure everything is properly set-up and in place. Locate banners and posters in conspicuous places with the name and room location of the seminar. Check out all audiovisual equipment to assure proper functioning. Be there to meet and greet your attendees as they arrive.
11. **Start and complete the seminar on time.** Keep to your schedule! It is imperative to start on time. Put your best foot forward in the introductory remarks, relax your audience, make them glad to be there. Create an exciting atmosphere that promises to deliver what they came for. Be prepared to move forward even if one of the other business associates is late arriving. Give each of the seminar partners an opportunity to speak about what they do and how it relates to the seminar topic; however, limit their time to about 5 minutes and do not let it become a commercial. Invite the audience to join you at the back of the room when the program is completed. Extend an invitation to visit your place of business and also your seminar partners' businesses.

HAVE FUN!!!

The primary purpose of seminars is to educate or sell, whether it be products or services. The meetings that will be best remembered and are the most successful are those that also combine humor with education and marketing efforts. If you follow these proven steps, you will be in a good position to promote and conduct a successful seminar.

June Davidson, as President of **American Seminar Leaders Association (ASLA)** with worldwide membership, offers introductory, advanced and personalized training for seminar leaders, along with variety of educational material. June is our Women's Support TEAM Coach & Seminar Training Mentor at www.w-t-team.com. Contact June at American Seminar Leaders Association - <http://www.asla.com> - info@asla.com or 800-801-1886.