

Marketing Your Seminars

by Vicki Fletcher

Abstract. There is no magic involved in booking and conducting successful seminars. What it takes is careful planning, a viable list of prospective attendees, perseverance, doing the necessary work, and a professional attitude and manner. To give seminars on a routine basis requires a systematic approach, broken down into single steps and done daily. Once you develop your routine, you'll learn to make promotion a way of life.

It doesn't take magic to book and conduct successful seminars. It does take careful planning, organization, perseverance and doing the actual work. It's a matter of breaking the job down into small segments and then doing them in order, 1-2-3.

In-depth planning is the first step to a successful seminar. This starts with designing your actual program and the need to get down to specifics:

What are you going to teach?

What materials will you need to facilitate your presentation?

How long will the seminar be?

Set a definite time, date and place where your seminar will be held.

What expenses will be involved and how much money must you earn to make the seminar worthwhile?

Lastly, decide how much you will charge and what your minimum attendance must be to make the seminar worthwhile.

Prospect List

Every successful seminar starts out with a list of prospective clients. Most people have their own lists, but for individuals who are starting out, or for those who want to add new names to their lists, the Touch for Health Foundation is a good place to start.

Upon request, the Touch for Health Foundation will provide a computer list of names of people who have taken seminars in the past year or two in your area or who have

expressed an interest in Touch for Health programs. The fee is a modest 10% donation for every person who signs up for your classes. This creates a win/win situation for both you and the Foundation. You get a viable list of prospects. The Foundation gets money it needs to operate.

Lists can also be obtained through working and networking with other holistic health instructors and chiropractors in your area. It is also important to keep a notebook with you at all times to write down the names of individuals who express an interest in your programs.

Update your lists constantly. As you add new names and make phone calls, strike the name of any person from your list who doesn't appear interested. It's demoralizing to you and a nuisance to them. Go for top clientele. The constant supply of new people you meet will keep your first seminar freshness and enthusiasm alive.

Once you have planned your seminars and have your lists ready, it's time to start marketing. A good rule of thumb is to put in the same number of hours marketing as you plan for the seminar. For example, you would market a three and one-half hour seminar for three and one-half hours, a fifteen hour seminar for fifteen hours, etc.

Don't get discouraged if a longer seminar doesn't fill up in the first couple of days. It doesn't take long to get ten or more people interested in a 3-1/2 hour seminar for \$35, but a 40 hour seminar for \$500 will take considerably more effort.

Steps to Marketing Your Seminar

1. Flyers & Demos

Once you have your list, draw up and mail out a flyer to the names on your list a week before you start telemarketing.

Free demonstrations are a very effective tool to initiate interest especially for the large seminars. These demos can be conducted in your home or where the seminar is to be held. The demo should offer something beneficial to everyone in attendance to hook their interest and prove the classes are valuable. Provide attendees with a preview of things to come and demonstrate how the program will help each individual specifically.

2. Make Promotion a Way of Life

Carry a notebook with you at all times with a list of all upcoming seminars and classes. Every time someone expresses an interest, immediately tell of upcoming classes and ask if he/she wants to be notified. Then write that person's name under that class.

Never miss an opportunity to sell people on your seminars. Your enthusiasm and knowledge can frequently help you book individuals on the spot. Tell those you don't sign up that you'll call them before the class starts.

Then call these people first when it's time to start marketing. It makes the getting started process easier when you don't have to start "cold turkey." Also, by routinely generating interest in your classes as you progress to your seminars, you may find you have some of your classes filled by the time you normally start the telemarketing.

3. Follow Up

A week after the flyers have been mailed, make up a calling schedule setting aside two to three hours of uninterrupted telemarketing time a day. It is important to have several scripts that you alternate between and set aside different times of the day in which to make your calls. Also, have a chart to keep track of each call.

Daily record:

- a. Time of day the calls were made.
- b. Number of people who you called (even those who were not home).
- c. How many people you actually contacted .
- d. Finally, list the names of the people who were interested and how many you booked for the seminars.

The above list is important for two reasons:

1. When the 2-3 hours are completed you can see on paper what you have actually accomplished for your efforts (i.e. talked to 50 people in two hours) . Without this reminder, you may lose perspective and feel you have wasted your time.
2. After several days, you can use these lists for comparison to see which hours of the day are the most productive and which sales presentation was the most effective. This enables you to make the most productive use of your telemarketing time.

It helps also to set up a daily contest and compete with yourself. Try to outdo your best effort each day. It makes telemarketing more fun.

Keep control of the conversation when talking to potential clients. Talk about positive things such as:

What's new in the field.

What the Foundation has done.

New techniques you have learned.

Ask what they already know about holistic programs.

The key is to get people to speak positively. Don't let them concentrate about things that are going wrong in their lives. This builds up sales resistance. People who feel everything is going wrong don't feel they have the power to help themselves.

4. Best Leads for Potential Clients

Although telemarketing is the most effective method of marketing small seminars of ten or more people, there are other ways to generate new clients:

a. Advertise in newspapers.

Small, local newspapers provide prospective clients.

In large metropolitan areas, it is usually more productive to advertise in the small newspapers that cater to a particular section of town or interest group than the large daily newspapers unless you are planning a seminar with thousands of people in attendance.

The ad, itself, should concentrate on the free demonstration instead of trying to sell people on the workshop. Box display ads that would say, "Free demonstration about energy work," or "Free demonstration on how to reduce stress," (listing the location) are particularly effective.

b. New clients can also be obtained by going door-to-door inviting people to a free demonstration. Never go door-to-door trying to sell anyone on a workshop. Leave the sales presentation until after you've shown them what you can do for them at the demo.

c. Students who have taken the seminar previously are very important prospects that many people overlook. Chances are that many of them have gotten busy and have forgotten much of what they learned. Allow them the opportunity to refresh their knowledge by auditing the class at a special price (i.e. a \$40.00 for a \$125.00 class). Once their interest is rekindled, it's easy to sell them on additional seminars to advance their knowledge, particularly when they see their friends sign-up.

5. Where to Conduct a Seminar

Chiropractic offices are usually the best place to conduct a Touch for Health seminar. A seminar in chiropractic office gives the chiropractor exposure as well. Frequently you can work out a mutually beneficial business arrangement with one or more

chiropractors whereby you get paid to help them promote themselves at seminars of their own as well.

6. Don't lower the price if the seminar isn't filling up.

Frequently individuals will panic if their seminar isn't filling up as rapidly as they expected, and they reduce their price. This is a mistake. If you aren't going to make any money on your seminar, don't have it. Lowering your price will hurt your chances of having successful, money-making seminars in the future. Also, if you give seminars and don't earn money, you'll burn-out quickly. If you are ever tempted to lower your prices, stop and do the following:

Add up:

- The time you've spent marketing
- The cost of the materials and supplies
- Location fee
- Refreshments
- Phone
- Advertising
- Printing costs
- Postage
- P.I.N. \$ (10% sent back to the TFH Foundation)
- Cost of TFH annual meeting to get updated information
- Annual dues to the foundation

Once you have determined what the seminar is going to cost you, you are in a better position to resist the urge to reduce your fees. If that's not sufficient, then make up a list to acknowledge to yourself that you are valuable and that what you are giving people has value also. Realize that a person could easily spend \$125.00 on a new article of clothing and that is all he/she has to show for it. The information individuals would gain from one of your seminars, however, would benefit them for the rest of their lives.

Don't get discouraged too easily in your early marketing efforts, and don't be afraid to give it a try.

Touch For Health International Journal, 1990

"The greatest mistake is to do nothing because you think you can only do a little."

Many people are afraid to get on the phone because they fear rejection. Remember people aren't rejecting you. They are only rejecting an idea, or an approach you may be using.

Don't set up a judgment until you have completed your designated time commitment (i.e. 15 hours of marketing for a 15 hour seminar). At that time, if you haven't made your quota don't say, "No one's interested." Realize the subject is of interest to people, but maybe your sales presentation is lacking. That's why it's important to vary your approach as you go.

"It's just as difficult to reach a destination you don't have as it is to come back from some place you've never been."

Too many seminars never get off the ground or fail because of inadequate preparation. People are too vague or don't put in adequate effort. They just send out some flyers to see what happens but don't bother to do the follow-up. They don't plan it. Set up a definite time and place for the seminar or carry through. If they don't get a good initial response in the first couple days, they give up too easily and call it off.

Remember it takes practice to make perfect. You don't sit down at a piano and play Beethoven after the first lesson. You improve only with practice. Keep track of what was said when someone signed up versus what

you said when "no one was interested." Then use the successful approach, vary it, modify it (when necessary) to fit individual needs

Finally, be professional. Remember seminars must be interesting and entertaining as well as informative. Have a professional manner, voice and appearance. Use charts. Provide refreshments and background music. Have the latest newsletters from the organization and a picture album of the annual meeting laying about. Have flyers out on advance classes along with teaching manuals so prospective clients can see what those classes will be like.

Don't just sell one class. Prime people for the next and the next. No one will learn it all in ten or fifteen hours. That's only a start!

It's important to let people know in the beginning that this is something they must incorporate in their lives. They will become more sensitive to their bodies. It's a new way of thinking and eating. Also, it's important to stay around people who are in the program or they will lose it like anything else. One must stay involved to stay motivated.

Constantly think in terms of marketing. It takes work to make a seminar successful. Polish your speaking ability and approach, do the work that is required and you will find that you, too, can routinely schedule and conduct successful seminars and bring about the career of your dreams.