PLAN A SEMINAR

Use the following step-by-step guide to ensure that you host a successful and effective seminar.

1. Identify your audience and set a goal for the seminar.

The material in this piece can help you target any segment of the market, such as working people, pre-retirees, or retirees. You may also address several different segments in one seminar. Whether the goal is opening new accounts or educating prospective and current clients, setting a goal will allow you to measure the success of your seminar upon completion.

Seminar topic ideas:

**Informed investors**
- Getting the most from your portfolio
- Building a successful retirement
- How to take advantage of a taxing situation
- Why diversify?

**Job changers and retirees**
- Financial strategies for rollover planning
- Income in retirement

**Women**
- Women and investing

**Parents**
- College planning
- How to talk to your children
- about inheritance

**Business owners**
- Build a better business
- Small business 401(k) plans
- How to sell a business

Start accumulating names of people to invite to the seminar based on your target audience by using the “Seminar lead tracking sheet.”

2. Set a date and reserve a location.

To allow yourself plenty of time to prepare, schedule the seminar four to six weeks in advance. When considering date and time, remember that holidays, sporting events, and even television shows can keep an audience away. Be sure to carefully consider any potential conflicts. And remember, your Compliance department must approve your presentation prior to the seminar date.

Many seminar professionals recommend Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday for hosting a seminar. When scheduling the time of the seminar, consider your target audience. For example, the best seminar time for retirees is during the day — and including a lunch with your presentation is even better. For working people, start the seminar right after work or on a Saturday morning.

When considering a location for your seminar, choose one that can accommodate the maximum number of potential attendees. Also consider the following:

- Reliable image (office, school, church, service club hall, library, hotel)
- Existing customer traffic (department store or mall meeting room)
- Existing residential population (apartment complex, planned unit development)
- Easy access and available safe parking
- Reasonable cost to rent facility
- Food (Can you serve food in the location? Food is optional depending on seminar time.)
3. **Invite your audience.**
Select the style of invitation. If possible, hand address and stamp your invitations. By doing so, the recipient will be more likely to open the envelope. Distribute invitations to clients and prospects and ask them to call for reservations.

Personal telephone invitations are also effective. Use the phone as a direct invitation or as a follow-up to the mailed invitation. Please note that all invitations must be approved by HD Vest Advertising Compliance before being communicated to clients.

4. **Prepare seminar equipment.**
Actual requirements will depend on the size of your audience, but in general you’ll need the following equipment/materials to effectively present your seminar. Many facilities — such as hotels — have audiovisual equipment available. To ensure that you’re well prepared, reserve the following equipment four weeks in advance:

- Laptop with projecting capabilities
- Heavy-duty three-prong extension cord
- Three-prong/two-prong adapters
- Projection screen
- P.A. system (if necessary for room)
- Podium (if you need one)
- Chairs
- Registration table
- Registration book or seminar sign-in sheet (your record of who attended) — refer to “Seminar sign-in sheet”
- Marker board/marker or signage

5. **Know your material.**
Review the script and accompanying overheads you plan to use, and, if necessary, make sure you have filed them with the Compliance department. Practice the presentation several times until you’re completely comfortable with it. If possible, arrange to conduct a dry run in the room where the seminar will be held.

6. **Telemarket your prospects.**
Review the list of people who have made reservations and place a reminder phone call to them one week in advance. Place another phone call the day before your seminar.

When calling, you should make an effort to familiarize yourself with the people who have confirmed their attendance. Try to remember any information you have on attendees, including the correct pronunciation of their names, so that you can maintain conversations on any points of common interest.

7. **Set the agenda and confirm your arrangements.**
Establish an agenda for the presentation following these suggestions:

- Introduce yourself and members of your staff
- Thank your guests for attending
- Start the program with a brief review of your firm’s capabilities and experience and your professional background
- Begin the formal presentation, which should take about 45 minutes including a question and answer period
- Invite your guests to stay for refreshments. This is a perfect time to suggest follow-up appointments

Call the function room and confirm the time of your event, and verify reserved equipment and materials, as well as any refreshments to be provided.
8. Make final preparations.

Day of seminar
Take the time to scan newspapers and magazines for economic, legislative, or regulatory updates. This will keep your presentation timely and prepare you to answer related questions. It is always wise to arrive at least 45 minutes ahead of time to

• Familiarize yourself with the room and facilities
• Check your equipment
• Arrange seating in the most appropriate fashion for your audience
• Have supplies of pens and paper available
• Have prospectuses and other handouts on display and/or ready for distribution
• See that you and your staff have name tags

When the guests arrive, greet them and make sure they stop at the registration table to sign the registration book or sign-in sheet. (See the “Seminar sign-in sheet.”) This information will be critical to you later for scheduling follow-up appointments.

9. Follow up with attendees.

One to seven days after seminar
Review your “Seminar sign-in sheet” and call attendees to thank them for participating. Offer to set up an appointment to answer any questions they may have.
SEMINAR PLANNING CHECKLIST

Initial preparation
- Identify your audience
- Set a goal

Six weeks prior to seminar
- Set seminar date
- Reserve a location

Four weeks prior to seminar
- Ensure all letters, invitations, handouts etc. are compliance approved
- Mail letters and invitations
- Prepare seminar equipment/materials

Two weeks prior to seminar
- Review script and rehearse seminar
- File your presentation script with the Compliance department

One week prior to seminar
- Place reminder call to attendees
- Familiarize yourself with attendance list

One day prior to seminar
- Place another reminder call
- Establish an agenda
- Confirm your arrangements

Day of seminar
- Check current events and updates
- Arrive early for final preparations

One to seven days after seminar
- Follow up with attendees