

How to successfully create a program from your live seminar

20 powerful tips that will significantly change your result:

Part 1: The Recording

- 1) Your recording is the foundation of your product – ideally undertaken by a professional. The room for error is significant and in most cases there is no second chance.
- 2) However, if you decide to record a seminar by yourself for use in an audio product, have an audio-savvy assistant on duty whose only job is to attend to the recording. You'd be amazed how many times an assistant forgets to turn over tapes or lets levels go too low or too high. This can result in missed, valuable chunks of the seminar, or a too soft or distorted recording.
- 3) If a conference you are presenting at is being recorded, don't assume that the recording will be of a quality to make a product. Often there are so many recordings being done at once in different breakout sessions that the finer points of recording are overlooked. Tell the sound engineer in charge that you need a good recording and then hopefully it will turn out as the basis for a professional quality audio product.
- 4) Always test and re-test your equipment before recording an interview or a seminar. In a one-on-one interview your subject would prefer if you ask if you can just check that all is working OK, than have to do the whole interview again.
- 5) Be aware of background noise (and potential background noise). Make sure the environment has no background noise that could be distracting. (We once got caught out on this when the people in the next-door suite were moving office whilst we were trying to record a live seminar.)
- 6) Do not succumb to the myth of 'digital'. Just because something can be recorded on your computer or over the phone doesn't mean it will be of a sound quality that is useable in a final program.
- 7) If you are recording for cassette (yes it is still sometimes a viable option) make sure Side 1 is longer than Side 2 and has a 'Turn Over' message at the end. There is nothing less professional than having Side 1 be shorter than Side 2 and then not have an instruction at the end. The same principle applies to the end of CDs because many car CDs just start playing track 1 again and it can be very confusing!
- 8) As soon as you change tape, mini-disc or CD, label with a number and an overview of the content, i.e. "How to network session". A pile of unlabelled recordings is frustrating and time consuming to sort after the event.

Part 2: Editing

- 9) The amount of editing required will depend on the fluency of the presenter and type of recording, studio or seminar. It's worth noting that sometimes the best speakers on stage need the most guidance and editing to create a professional product.
- 10) You have the choice of sitting with a sound engineer and editing the material yourself, or using a creative producer. The latter is naturally more expensive but will result in a classy, professional audio product that will reflect your professionalism. Ideally you should recoup the cost of your product in the first run and then it will only cost for duplication.
- 11) Plan your program to have maximum impact. This may involve narration, editing and generally 'slicking up' the delivery of your content. You need to keep a program moving even for the most committed listener.
- 12) Be willing to 'slaughter' some of your material. That is, don't be too attached to your content. The program can lose momentum if the presenter has focused too much on a point instead of moving on.
- 13) Consider using music and link-scripts between the topics in your program. It serves to break up the flow and prevents your voice becoming a monologue.
- 14) Divide your program into CD tracks so that it is easy for a listener to go back to the beginning of a section at any time.

Part 3: Packaging and price

- 15) The style, size and quality of the packaging may considerably influence the price you can put on your product.
- 16) The packaging and labelling should reflect your professionalism as much as the content of the product.
- 17) An audio product with a workbook or vice versa, looks good as a pack and attracts a higher price.
- 18) Consider weight and durability. Some CD packs are more economically and safely mailed than others.
- 19) If you are planning a CD insert in a book, make sure the pack is slim enough not to distort the book. Alternatively attach it to the cover.
- 20) Consider offering bulk purchase rates for more than five items.