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Finding Gold

Seminars: Why they're terrible and what to do about it! (Part Two)

By Michael Lovas
AboutPeople.com

Seminars in our industry stink. The speakers can't communicate, so they bore their audiences. The audiences never build any rapport with the speakers, so trust is never developed. Perhaps the most significant damage is this - when your seminar stinks, lose credibility in the entire community. And, your credibility is the only real value you possess.

Because seminars and credibility are such vital elements of our business, I'm going to continue the process I began in Part One. Here, I'm going to give you even more *Top Secret* information. I'm serious; very few people in our industry have ever been to this body of knowledge. It falls under the general heading of Communication Psychology, but it's actually much more specific than that. Because I have many years training and experience in this specialized area, I've developed certain knowledge and skills.

Initially, I pursued this knowledge to help people in a self-development context. Then, I realized that I could use the same processes and psychological language patterns to help advisors succeed. Seminars are nothing more than a dramatization based on message. If you don't employ communication psychology, you are almost guaranteed fail. Face-to-face presentations are simply intimate seminars. Again, if you don't communication psychology...

This material is a little deep, so please read three times.

How does this methodology work? Simply, picture four spots (like hula hoops) spaced across the entire width of the stage as shown in the graphic. You deliver the information from the first spot, way over to your right. Then, you move a few feet to left and deliver the *What* information, and so on. In theory, it's very simple. But, it gets little tricky when you want to double back to deliver some information. You have to go back to the same spot for that category of information. For example, every time you to deliver another *Why* message, you go back to the *Why* spot. This way, you help the audience's subconscious mind understand what category of information you're delivering.

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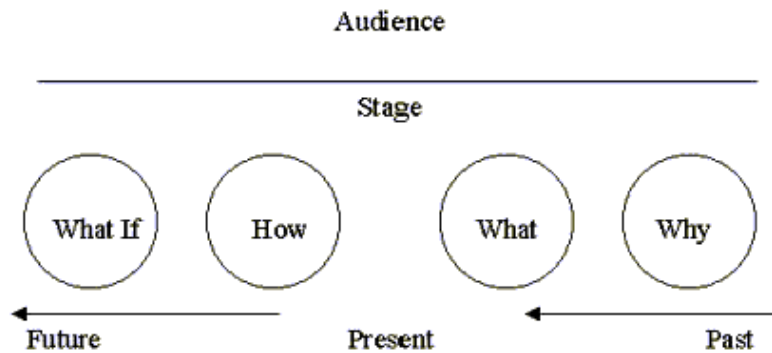
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The reason you start at the audience's far left and move to the far right is time. Most people in our culture time in a similar way. They sense the past off to their left, and their future off to their right.

Ask people about their youth, and you'll probably see them unconsciously motion to their left. As they begin to speak of the future, they'll start gesturing to their right. Since the predominant way we perceive time is running left to right, you can use that knowledge.

Layer on top of the time line the concepts of problems and solutions. Where do you want your problems? In the past, of course. Where do you want your clients' problems? In the past.

Layer on top of problem/solution, the concept of movement. Do you want to take action on your problems? No. will perpetuate the problems. You want to take action on your solutions — the things you want to achieve. Same your clients. You want to use soft, mushy, passive, past-tense verbs when you're in the problem spot. Then, as move across the stage, you want to start changing your verbs to bring action and movement to the solutions.

Present the "problem state" in the past (audience's left). Then, as you present your solution, or "desired state," move closer to where the audience perceives the future (audience's right). In this way, you can avoid confusing people. Considering how complicated insurance and financial concepts can seem to the average consumer, anchors can really help you communicate more clearly in your seminars.

Here's an analogy. Let's say that you and I are having a conversation. Without warning, I whisper "Dance," immediately step on your toes. Don't you think you'll quickly learn to back up when I whisper "Dance"? Let's say in my office, I have a joke spot. Every time I stand in the joke spot, my staff will know I'm going to tell a joke. you know that every time I stand on that spot, they'll start groaning?

Now, let's say that you're on stage to deliver a seminar. Immediately before telling the audience exactly why information is important to them, you first walk to your right and stand on the Why/Problem spot at your far right. While you're there, you explain how frustrating they must feel because of their shared problems. And, you list problems. After a few minutes, you move forward into your program, but a few minutes later, you walk back to Why/Problem spot and deliver the same type of frustration-focused information. What are you doing? What are teaching the audience to do?

Their unconscious minds begin to recognize that exact spot as being the Why/Problem spot. Every time you go back there, they feel the frustration. As you continue the seminar, every time you go to that spot, the audience unconsciously knows that you're going to express problems and explain *Why* something is important to them. information delivered from the *Why* box might sound like this:

Why:

"Through your lives, you encounter specific situations in which communication is very important to you. Unfortunately, you stumble. You stammer. You get confused. Your words get stuck in your throats and your communication fails. It could be the cause of a failed romance, a job termination, the loss of a client. It's happened to you, hasn't it? When communicating is important - to you, don't you want to have the skills to make sure your message is understood?"

You can see that the paragraph above is designed to put the audience into a problem state, have them relive failed communications and pique their interest. It answers the question of *why* people should pay attention to Logically, once you've done that, most of the audience members want to know *what* you're going to show them. They are not, yet, ready to know *how* it works. Thus, move two or three steps toward the middle of the stage. where the *What* box is. Then, every time you define something or paint a clear picture of something, you go that spot. The *What* information might sound like this:

What:

"There is a simple, highly effective, psychological procedure to discover how anyone's mind works. a simple set of questions you can add to any conversation. Would you like to learn how to do it? simple, logical, highly-effective procedure for reading anyone's mind to discover how to influence motivate him or her. Would you like to learn how to do it?"

By this time, at least half of the audience is hooked. They're on your side, they're intrigued and they're drooling more. Some of them are probably yelling, "Yes already! Show us how!" Specifically, they want to know a process. They want to know the step-by-step procedure.

Now, what do you do? You simply move two or three more steps to your left. That's where the *How* box is, and there, you deliver the *How* information. By this time, you have successfully placed your audience into a procedurally-oriented frame. So, it's important to deliver your information in a step-by-step manner. Like this:

How:

"First. Gain rapport with the other person. You can start this process by mirroring her facial expressions and approximating the pitch and tone of her voice... Second. Ask for permission to ask some questions and take some notes... Third. Ask 'Why did you decide to talk with me?'"

By giving the step-by-step process, you satisfy everyone's curiosity and you do it in a way that satisfies one of most important mental filters — the one requiring that information be delivered in a procedure.

What If:

The final stop on the trek across the stage is the *What If* box. That's where you apply the previous information to real-life situations and show the pay-off. What if your prospect has an unusual problem; how can you apply your ideas to solve that problem? Or, what if someone engages you in a question-and-answer interlude. Or, what if give several hypothetical examples? Here is where you can address everyone's need to know how they will This is your chance to give examples of your solutions.

"Think for a minute about the people you talk to. You can make them understand your meaning more effectively. Think about the possibility that you could impress people who are important to Consider the possibility that you could influence your boss, your clients, your children. Imagine for a minute what it would feel like to know how to motivate anyone. That's what I'm offering to you. does it feel like when you feel motivated?"

Conclusion. By giving the right information from the right box on the stage, you reach the most people in order their attention span and learning style. In effect, you have constructed a seminar presentation in the same way engineer constructs a building. And, just as the engineer anchors his buildings to the ground with a foundation, anchor your boxes to the stage. Those boxes are called "stage anchors," and when you use them, your material have the best chance of satisfying the audience's mental filters, while appealing to their need for specific types information in a specific order.

If you deliver your material in any other sequence, you risk confusing your audience. Since consumers find insurance and financial content confusing anyway, doesn't it make sense to make your presentation as easy as possible for them to follow?

Do you already do this? Do you map out your stage with the different overlays of the messages you want your audience or clients to receive from you? If not, you're in big trouble. Do you practice moving the audience from emotional state to another? If not, you're wasting your power and your knowledge.

I know a lot of advisors who took speech classes or joined a Toast Masters group in hopes of improving their business seminars. I personally have never heard of either one that teaches these concepts. To get really good motivating people in your seminars, typically, you have to take advanced training in Neuro-linguistic (NLP). Speech classes and Toast Masters are both pretty much based on the same concepts you learned in school. Now, I ask you, what else about your professional activities is based on a single class you took in high school?

If you were to create reports, plans or spreadsheets like you did as a teenager, you'd be sued for malpractice or laughed out of the building. So, why would you bet your career on a skill set designed for adolescents. OK, let's them a little credit; when those programs were developed, the psychological concepts I'm teaching you had not been created.

Treat. As you know, I like to reward people who read my articles. So, if you want to know where you can learn about Psychological Persuasion, and how to deliver seminars and presentations with significantly more impact, [send me an email](#). Since you like my work, and are reading it here, you get a special deal. Want to know what it

Recommended Reading:

- *Face Values*, Michael Lovas & Pamela Holloway
- *Seminars, The Emotional Dynamic*, Frank Maselli
- *Time Line Therapy*, Tad James and Wyatt Woodsmall

Michael Lovas is the president of About People, a credibility-consulting firm in Dallas, Texas. He is also the author of "Credibility-focused Psychological Marketing and Selling." Michael is a Clinical Hypnotherapist and Master Practitioner of Neuro-linguistic Programming (NLP). Those disciplines represent the skills absolutely necessary to improve seminars and face-to-face presentations.

*Michael is passionate about helping financial professionals improve their business and personal lives. He is the author of two books on using psychology to improve business: **Beyond Wave Marketing** and the new book/disk **Face Values**.*

A former comic, Michael also delivers many very entertaining seminars and keynote presentations in the US and Canada.

Upcoming events include:

- *National Brokerage Consortium — Chicago*
- *Edward Jones — Dallas*
- *Rio Grande Association of Insurance and Financial Advisors — McAllen*
- *Canadian Assn of Insurance & Financial Advisors — London*
- *Georgia Insurance Expo — Atlanta*
- *Michael Lovas "Psychological Persuasion" workshop — Dallas*

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