

# Super Seminar Tips & Tricks<sup>®</sup> by Frank Maselli

Episode 3:

## Use a Confidence Monitor

Reading from the slides on the screen is one of the most common mistakes speakers make. It can severely hurt your connection to the audience, make you look unprepared, and undermine your credibility as an expert.

But sometimes you just can't help it. Maybe the material is brand new to you or maybe it's particularly dense and wordy. Without even realizing it, you may be facing the screen for the majority of the program.

One easy solution would be to use...

### A "confidence monitor"

Confidence monitors are screens that face the front of the room that only the speaker can see. They're used regularly by top professionals at large events, but they can be valuable in any size room.

The monitor itself could be a second computer screen, a big-screen TV, or even a second LCD projector facing another screen set up in the back of the room. Your choice will depend on the size and setup of the room. I prefer the second projector and screen setup because the image is much bigger. When I glance at it, the audience simply thinks I'm making eye contact with people in the back row.

### Much better than your laptop

This is definitely NOT the same as having your laptop open on the lecturn. That tethers you to one location in the room and forces you to read from a tiny screen. Not good. The key is eye contact with the audience. Reading from a computer is no better than turning and reading from the front screen.

### Monitor Set-up

To set up a confidence monitor you will need a HDMI splitter and an extra HDMI cable. Set all of this up in advance. You don't want the audience to see you fumbling with cables as they arrive.

A good quality HDMI cable can carry a signal safely up to 50 feet. I've used them a bit further. But if you have a longer cable run, you might need an "Active" or even a fiber-optic HDMI cable, or use a HDMI amplifier.

Place the monitor on a small table where you can see it comfortably. You could even prop it up on a chair in a pinch. Keep it close to audience eye-level so you can glance at the screen without looking down at the floor or off in some strange direction.

Also, you will most likely need to bring your own equipment to do this. Most facilities won't have what you need. But this is a very good investment if you intend to make seminars part of your life.

### Your Comfort Equals Expertise

Your ultimate goal is to get so familiar with the content of that program that you don't need to look at the screen at all. That can take time, especially if you're using a store-bought presentation you didn't create.

This is where a confidence monitor can make you look like an expert who knows the subject intimately. You can focus your attention on the audience instead of the screen, and they will enjoy seeing your face instead of the back of your head.