

Super Seminar Tips & Tricks[®] by Frank Maselli

Episode 20: A New Dinner Seminar Model

A very simple restructuring of your dinner seminar timetable can significantly boost your business results! Give this a try.

The typical model

For decades, dinner seminars have followed the same model. The advisor talks for about an hour, then everyone gets to eat. Usually the advisor sticks around to table hop and answer questions, and then people depart.

But consider this...

The audience came for two reasons. One was probably to hear your story about retirement, or taxes, or estate planning. But the other reason, and perhaps the bigger one, was to enjoy a delicious steak dinner like the one they saw on the mailier invitation.

From an emotional standpoint, the thing standing between them and the sizzling filet is YOU! Your presentation is the pain they must endure to get to the pleasure. And as you approach the end of your talk, they might be getting a bit annoyed, restless and anxious for you to finish.

So at the exact moment in the seminar when you are issuing your “call-to-action” and asking them to set an appointment or take some other step toward becoming a client, THEY ARE VERY UNHAPPY! You’ve put them in a bad mood and they are just hoping you will shut the hell up so they can eat!

Try the “Split Model” instead

My dinner seminars start the same way as a typical dinner, except I add this into the intro segment:

“Folks, tonight we’re going to try something a little different than you might be used to from other dinner seminars you’ve attended. I think you will enjoy it a heck of a lot more.”

“I’m going to break tonight’s discussion down into 2 parts. In Part 1, which should be about 25 minutes, I want to discuss the situation we are facing with taxes (or your topic) today. What exactly is going on and why is it absolutely critical for you to understand this?”

“Then, I’m going to stop talking and we are all going to enjoy a delicious meal. This is a wonderful restaurant and it absolutely kills me to make you wait an hour to relax and have some fun.”

“After dinner, I will come back up for another 25 minutes or so and explain what you can do about the all the challenges I discussed in Part 1. That’s the solution part, so you do not want

to miss that. Once we’re done, we will have a wonderful dessert and I will answer any questions you might have. The total time is exactly the same, but I would rather face a well-fed, happy audience versus an angry, starving one.”

I’ve done well over a thousand dinner seminars and have found this to be a much more enjoyable and relaxing format. I realize it’s different, but the results have been remarkable. The Split Model is a lot more enjoyable and informative.

What if they leave before Part 2?

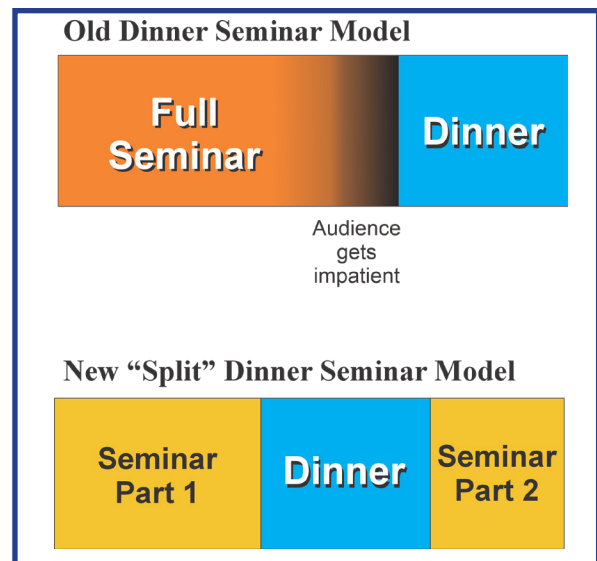
This is very rare, but if someone eats dinner and leaves before you get to Part 2, you dodged a bullet! They actually did you a favor by identifying themselves as people you don’t want to work with.

Dinner or education only?

You don’t need to serve a meal to attract people to your seminar. The choice to feed or not, usually comes down to your market demographic, personal style, and budget. Both formats work extremely well if you know what you’re doing.

There is a subtle, sub-conscious difference between them that you should understand. Dinner events are often associated with more “sales-pitchy” presentations. People expect that some product is going to be served with the steak. It’s the unspoken quid pro quo. **“I feed you...you get my sales pitch.”**

Non-meal seminars in classrooms or libraries have more of a “pure education” feel. These folks know they’re not getting fed.



In a seminar, YOU are the only “product” that should be “sold!” If you do that well, your audience will do whatever you ask. If you fail, no product on Earth can save you!

In the old dinner seminar model the audience gets impatient and restless right at the critical time when you are wrapping up your program and issuing the important “Call-to-Action. They are eager for you to stop talking so they can eat dinner.

Also, there might be distractions in the room because the wait staff is starting to bring out the food.

With the new model, you take a clean break for dinner. The audience gets a chance to eat, which makes them very happy and puts them in the ideal frame of mind to listen to Part 2 of your workshop.

Also, talking while people are eating is always a bad idea! Avoid this at all costs.

In the split model, the total event time remains the same. During dinner, you can table hop or simply step off stage and let them enjoy their meal without any content.

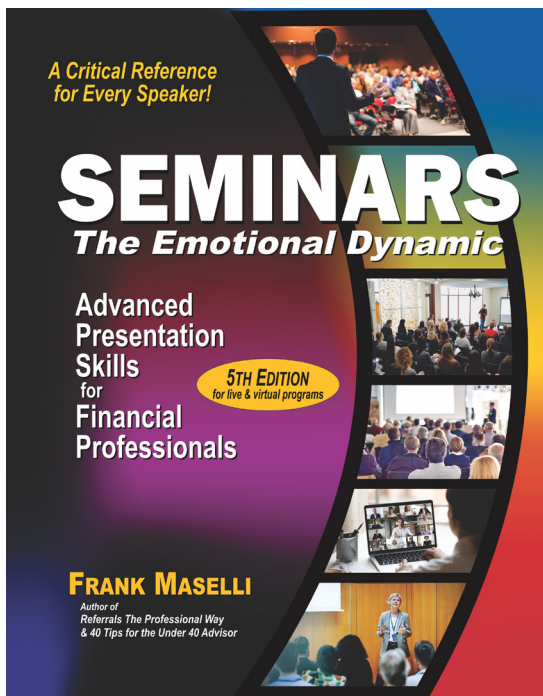
Serve dessert after Part 2. This can also be when you do a quick Q&A session and end with your Emotional Close. Remember, **NEVER END WITH THE Q&A!**

Talk to the restaurant

Discuss your plans with the restaurant in advance and make sure they know your timetable. You want tight, efficient service for serving and clearing. Most will have no trouble handling this.

Give the Split Model a try and see the results for yourself. You may find your audiences love this.

The Romans had a phrase known as “Bread and Circuses.” Keep the people happy and they will follow you. Seminars are a slightly different context, but the general idea is the same. And note that “Bread” comes first! Smart, those Romans!



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This book is the industry “bible” for all types of seminars and workshops. It will cut ten years off your learning curve and save you tens, or even hundreds of thousands of dollars in wasted or fruitless effort.

The ideas in here come from my own experience of over 4,000 public seminars. They are also the product of decades of coaching and training advisors and wholesalers in these same skills.

The book is over 300 pages long, but I wrote and designed it to be an “easy read.” I think you will find it to be an invaluable resource that could easily double the business results from your workshops.

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