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Best and Worst Elements of an Event

Item	Best	Worst
Timing	Mornings, 9:00-12:00, while people are awake and alert.	Afternoons, after lunch or during cocktails. People are sleepy, tired and mentally drained.
Length	Three hour session with a break, or a 90 minute session without a break.	One hour; (too short to establish rapport and deliver enough content). Two hours; (too long for one session, yet too short to give a break).
Start time	Start precisely on time, regardless of where attendees are. This establishes the tone of this and future meetings. It shows respect for those who arrived on time and keeps the rest of your event on track. Someone must begin moving the crowd and making announcements 5-10 minutes ahead.	Late starts and creeping delays show disrespect for those who are present. It will "domino" for the rest of the day. No one will respect your next event times and you'll forever start late. (The people who are late are already frustrated. The ones present aren't...yet.)
Breaks	One for every 90 minutes. Shorter if they are staying in the same room, longer if they're changing rooms.	No breaks or short breaks. (If you worry about losing people at the break, then the break isn't the problem; it's the program.)
Setup	Center stage, center screen, chairs close to the stage to create energy and intimacy.	High stages too far from the audience kill the energy of the room.
Seating	Theater style, semi-circular; keeping the audience close and tight to the stage and speaker. This setup maintains eye contact and creates energy.	Round tables that spread the audience out and positions attendees facing each other instead of the front. U-shape.
Chairs	Fill the front rows first. Set for 10% under actual attendance, so more chairs have to be brought in. Creates response: "The seminar was so good they had to bring in more chairs!"	Empty front rows with people seated in the back. Over-seated by any amount allowing this to happen. (Hotels will usually try to over-seat, so they won't have to bring in more chairs.)
Lighting	Bright room. All lights on, all shades open.	Dimming for the projector. (Get a brighter projector...don't darken the room.)
Sound	Quality system, wireless lapel mike, multiple ceiling speakers, tested to be clear. (Professional option: Sound engineer with remote sound system and mixer.)	Old style, self-contained lectern. Hand held, hard wired microphones with short cords. Sound is critical to having a successful event.
Coffee	Before the session and during breaks. Cream & sugar at a separate station.	Attendees must find and purchase their own
Introduction	A skilled introducer who is enthusiastic, has heard the speaker, is familiar with the introduction, and comfortable with public speaking. MUST use a microphone, preferably separate from the speaker's.	A last minute selection, of someone unfamiliar with the introduction, uncomfortable with an audience and who fears microphones saying; "Oh, I won't need that", then gives a lackluster introduction or makes fun of the speaker.