

# Site Selection

Choose a site that is conveniently located to the majority of your audience (or equally inconvenient to all)! Preferably one that is easy to get to and that offers free and convenient parking facilities. Following is a good criteria for selection:

## A. Convenience

Choose a place that is well known and has easy access.

## B. Parking

This is important. The loudest gripes come from inconvenient or expensive parking.

## C. Image

The site you choose represents your image and the value you place on attendees.

## D. On site staff

Select a site where the staff will help you make the meeting a success.

## E. Sound

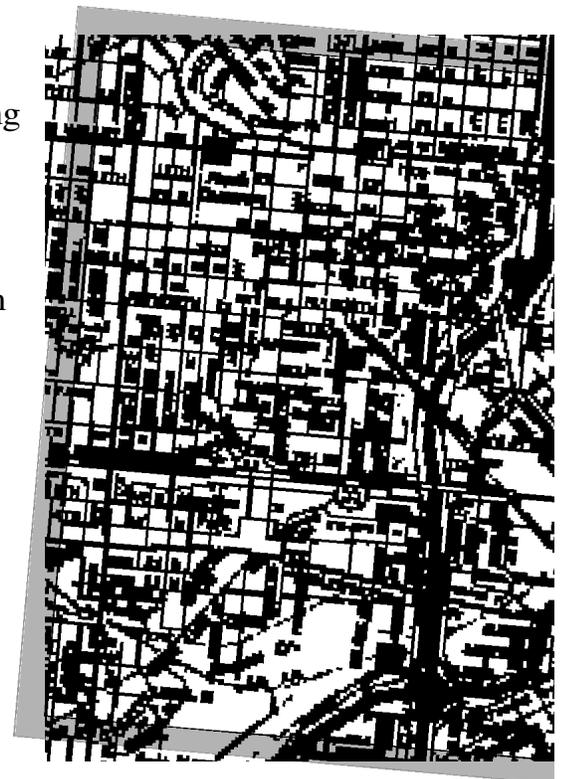
Bad sound has killed many a meeting. If the sound system isn't excellent, you'll have to rent your own. Listen in on a meeting in progress or test the system yourself.

## F. Cost

What is included vs. ala carte when you rent a room? If it is an overnight event, guaranteeing sleeping rooms may get you a comp meeting room. This is also true if you are providing a meal. Other costs to consider are audio/visual, sound system, soft drinks, coffee and materials handling.

## G. Hotel vs. meeting hall

It is always more convenient to use a hotel when people must spend the night. It eliminates the morning drive and hassles for both the speaker and the others who need to be there. The hotel may also be more accommodating with last minute needs.



# Scheduling and Timing

## A. Competing programs

Use your best efforts to see what other programs may be competing against yours. Here is a checklist of sources:

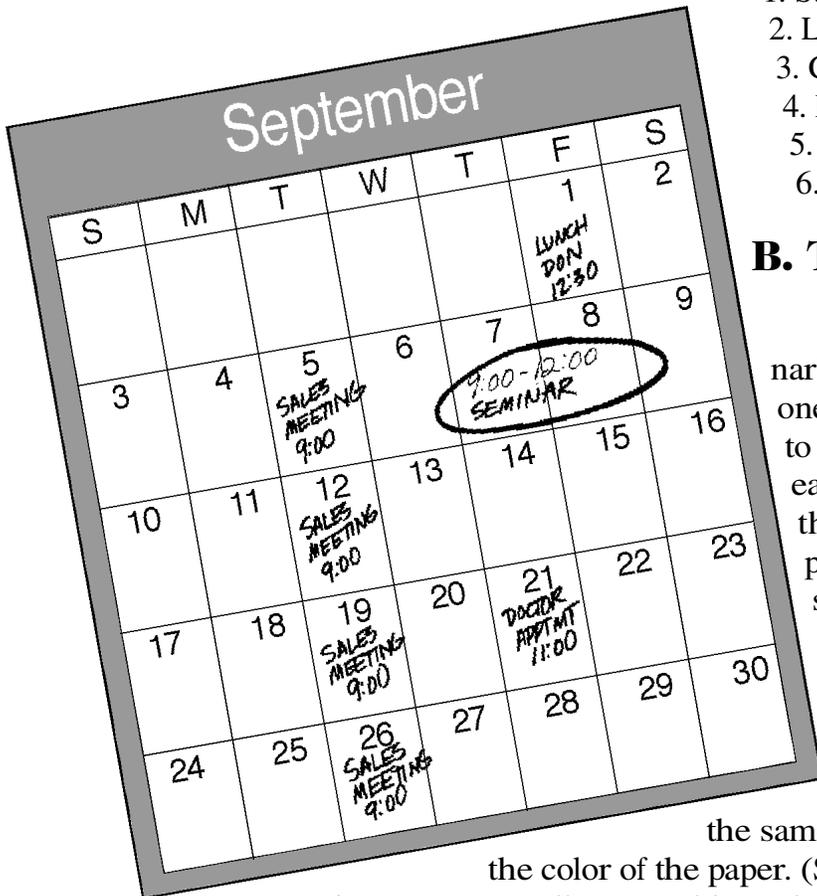
1. State Association
2. Local Board
3. Competing companies
4. National speaker public seminars
5. Holidays
6. Local civic events

## B. Timing

When should I start promoting the seminar? Seminars are scheduled anywhere from one month to 12 months out. The best time to start promoting the seminar is not too early so agents forget, and not too late that they've made other plans. Two months prior to the date can be a good time to start company or association promotions. (If it is an annual state convention you can start promoting 6 months out). The promotions should be distributed at least every other week to keep the interest level going. It doesn't hurt to distribute

the same flyer each time, just consider changing the color of the paper. (Studies show that people are most responsive to canary yellow or goldenrod papers).

Allow 2-3 weeks for the creation of the flyers and/or tickets. Two months out would be a good time to start sending out flyers. Have some kind of contact with agents on a weekly or bi-weekly basis regarding the seminar. If you are asking for RSVP's, try to get final numbers two weeks out.



## Scheduling and Timing

### C. Meeting times and length

We have found over and over again that you will get the best attendance from a real estate group if it's a half-day session in the morning. If it is a three hour seminar, the prime time is 9:00-12:00. Once you get past the 12:00 mark, attendees will start to look at their watches. If you absolutely have to run an afternoon program, the prime time is 1:00-4:00. Too many people have other commitments around the 5:00 hour.

### D. Breaks

The longest recommended stretch before a break is 90 minutes. A three hour program should be broken half way through. A two hour program is right over the edge for needing a break, but to be safe, break at the one hour mark. Keep the break from 10 to 20 minutes.

Fear of breaks: 1) Some event planners fear losing the audience at the break and, 2) some are concerned about the logistics. If you fear losing them at the break, the break isn't the problem, it's the program. Be sure the speaker and the program are strong enough where this isn't a concern. Your audience should want to return to the program after the break. You will 'lose' more of them mentally if they are sitting in pain.

Logistics are of more concern with audiences over 300 people. To speed things up, have ushers in the hall announce the re-convening. Consider using bells, lights or speakers to get attention.

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**“ If it is a three hour seminar, the prime time is 9:00-12:00. ”**

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**“ Be sure the speaker and the program are strong enough. Your audience should want to return to the program after the break. ”**

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# Promotion Tips

## B. Identify markets

1. **Key people in large companies**  
Go for the big sale. Have them bring the whole office.
2. **Encourage out-of-state cooperation**
3. **Past students**  
This group is the most likely to take another course. They have had a positive experience and are ready for another.
4. **CRS Chapters**  
They have already committed themselves to advanced education.
5. **Large independent companies**  
It's easier to go after the 'big sale' and get a whole group to go together.
6. **Franchises**  
Same as above.
7. **GRI classes and graduates**  
These people are ready for the next level of training.

## C. Manager support

Whether you're a Company, a Board or Association, the Branch Manager is the absolute key to attendance. This is the person who must be sold on the event, sold on the speaker and willing to induce the agents to attend. If the manager will stand up in a sales meeting and say, "This is a great event, I'm going and I want all of you to go. Please take out your checkbook right now and sign up. I'll come around and pick up your registration forms in a minute", then consider this event a success. If not, then plan on 50%. This is the kind of commitment and closing pressure it takes to get people to attend seminars today. You must be willing to sell the event harder than an agent closes for a listing. *This point cannot be over emphasized.*

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**“ You must be willing to sell the event harder than an agent closes for a listing. ”**

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## D. Sell tickets at your last event

As mentioned before, this is the best time to promote upcoming events. Actually collect money or signed commitment forms AT the event. If it's too late for this now, remember at THIS event to promote your next one.

## E. Charge for it

Attendance is inversely proportional to what attendees pay for it. If the event doesn't have perceived value, then they have nothing to lose by

## Promotion Tips

canceling or not showing up. Even a nominal charge of \$5 or \$10 will increase response. Some companies feel that this should be a perk to their agents and therefore free. There is a lot of merit to this philosophy and for major company events, most valid. For “extra” educational events however, get agreement from your agents that they should share in the costs. Even if you don’t charge, put a price on the seminar. Let them know it’s worth attending. When creating the tickets, put a price on them and then “paid for” (or sponsored) by your company.

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**“ Charge per head and rebate amount for each potential recruit they bring. ”**

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### F. Add incentives

1. Charge per head and rebate attendees the same amount or more towards their advertising budget. (This way the money stays in the company.)
2. Charge per head and rebate amount for each potential recruit they bring.
3. Offer a breakfast or lunch included in the price of the seminar.
4. Have a listing contest and the winning office or agent gets recognized at the seminar (with money or a prize).
5. For Mortgage or Title Companies: Print a price on the tickets then give them to your current or potential customers.
6. Have door prizes given away at the end of the seminar (must be present to win).
7. Have a drawing for free advertising \$ (must be present to win).

### G. In-office presentations

If the managers will not, or cannot, make the presentations, then you or your representatives must make the pitch. You must ask a closing question and wait for signed registrations and/or checks.

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**“ A photo of the speaker is essential for a successful promotional piece. ”**

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### H. Flyers

A photo of the speaker is essential for a successful promotional piece. Audiences consider speakers celebrities and they want to see what they look like. You’ll notice on all promotions for movies, videos, etc. there are pictures of the stars, not just words. People tend to be visual.

Most speakers will provide clients with a 5”x 7” black and white photo for promotions. For about \$15.00 you can take this original to a Quik Print and have a half-tone done to ensure a good reproduction on the flyers.

## Promotion Tips

Elements of a successful flyer are listed below (see sample/checklist page 24).

- Time
- Date
- Place/name of meeting room
- Directions if necessary
- Topic title and description
- Photo of speaker
- Biography of speaker
- Ticket price
- Registration information
- Sponsor(s) name
- Continuing education credits (if applicable)

### I. Posters

Posters can be put up on office bulletin boards so the agents are constantly reminded of the seminar. They should contain the same information as the flyers. (see sample on page 32).

### J. MLS messages

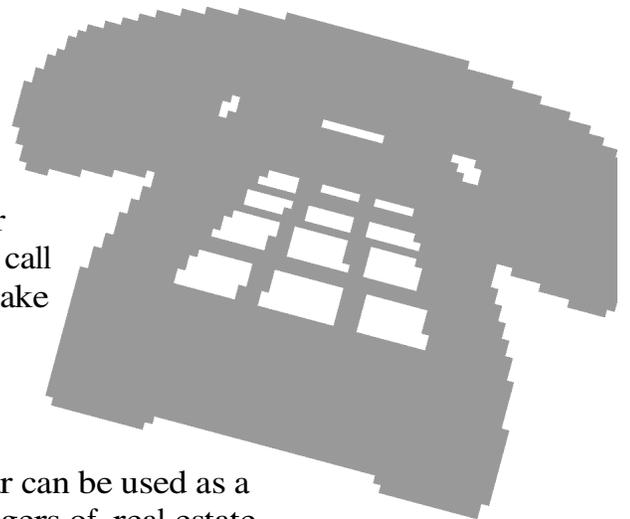
If the seminar is being put on by a Board or Association, put a daily message on the MLS computer reminding agents of the upcoming event. If there are other sponsors involved, make sure and put their name on the messages. This is the kind of exposure they are looking for when they sign on as a sponsor.

### K. Phone calling

Prior to the seminar, launch a phone calling night where office managers or brokers are called and reminded to get their people to attend. Get them to commit to a specific number of people. Preferably call the afternoon or evening before the weekly sales meeting. Tell them you'll call back after the next sales meeting to get their numbers. Make it a fun night with pizza and soda for the callers.

### L. Office visits

For mortgage or title companies, promoting a seminar can be used as a way to get in front of sales people. Arrange with the managers of real estate offices to make presentations at their weekly sales meetings. Take along a video demo tape of the speaker and show it at the meeting. Send around a sign up sheet and get people to feel like they're making a commitment when



## Setting the Stage

### A. Room setups that work

If you are certain of your attendance, then set enough chairs for all. If you are uncertain of attendance, then under seat. Nothing is worse than setting a room with 500 chairs and only 267 show up. The room looks empty, people fill from the rear of the room and spread out too far. It's harder for a speaker to achieve "critical mass" and create high energy. Even if 267 is great attendance, the meeting looks like a failure. So remember, when having the chairs set, it will look better to have too few chairs than too many. You can always add at the last minute which creates comments like, "...it was a great meeting,

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**“ If you are uncertain of attendance, then under seat. ”**

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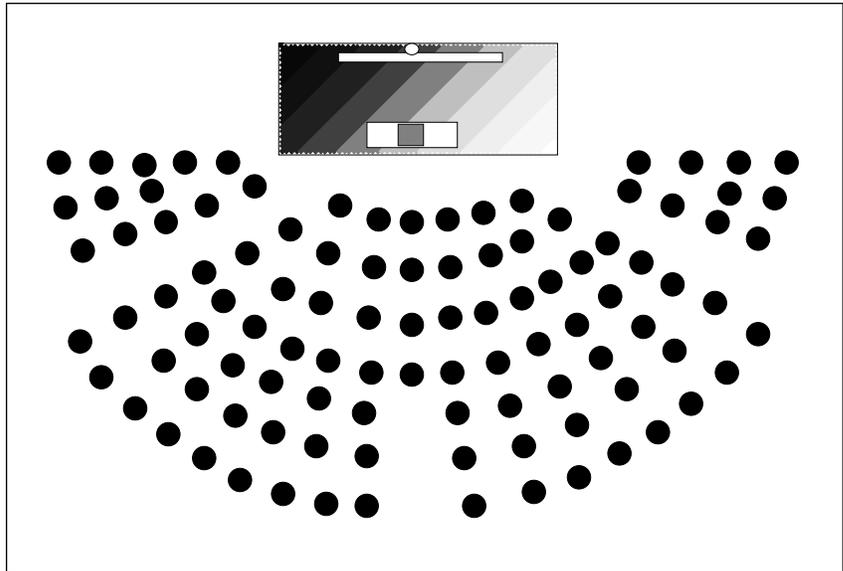
they had to bring in extra chairs!" To select the most appropriate arrangement, consider your meeting purpose, check with your speaker for their preference and examine the charts that follow. Most speakers will provide you with a room setup diagram for your use. (See sample on page 34).

The following charts illustrate various seating arrangements. In addition to the standard arrangements, some new ideas are included. The first seating style, Semi Circle, is suggested by Paul Radde, PhD, Fort Washington, MD. He wrote in Professional Speaker magazine, "In any straight-row setup, you can see only three people clearly: the presenter, who is in the front of the room, and the individuals on either side of you...Much valuable nonverbal communication, bonding and interpersonal contact are missed in straight-row setups for lack of visual contact with others."

# Setting the Stage - Seating Diagrams

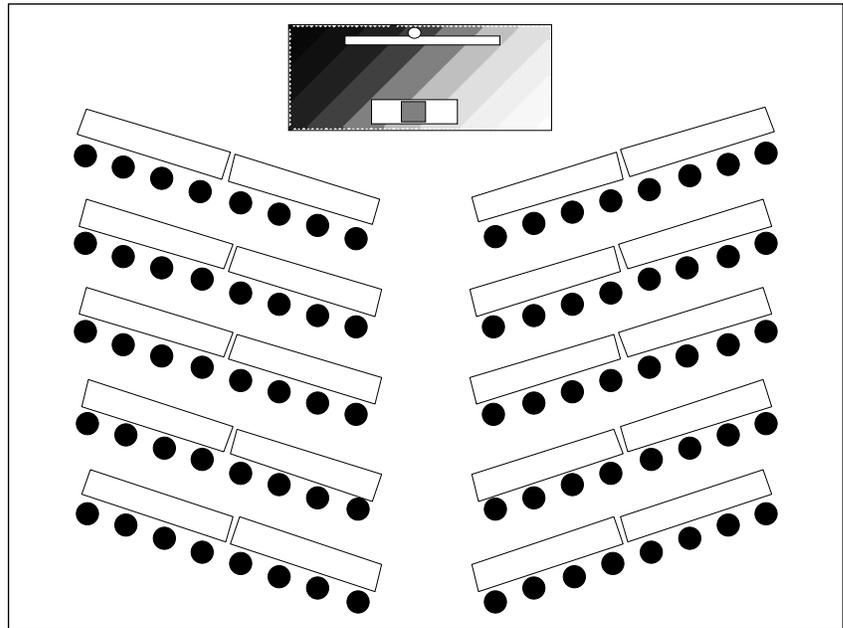
## Semi Circle

The problem with standard seating arrangements is that only the center seats have a straight view. The others must turn their head. It also prevents interpersonal contact in the audience. Semi circle provides all attendees good viewing and audience contact and the presenter has high audience density with great eye contact. Since center aisles are prime seating areas, the aisles are moved to the sides. All chairs face the presenter. The only difficulty is getting the hotel to lay it out this way.



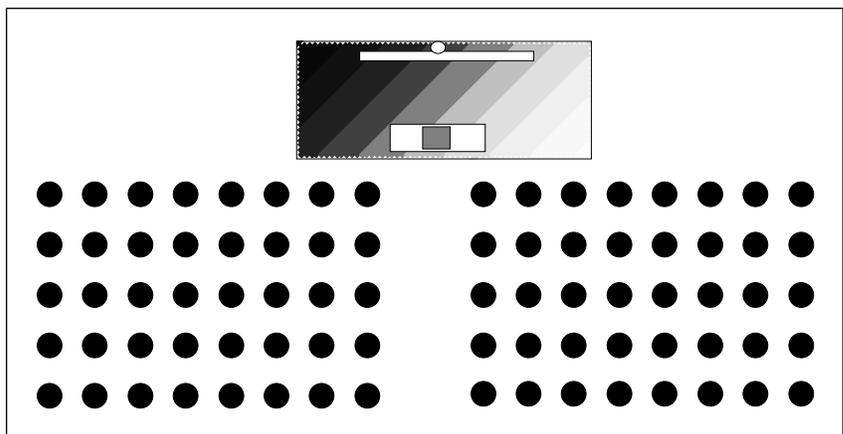
## Herringbone

Theater or classroom seating positioned in angles or curves to face the stage. This setup is both unique and functional. Each member of the audience can look straight forward and have a good view of the stage. It's the next best thing to Semi Circle.



## Theater

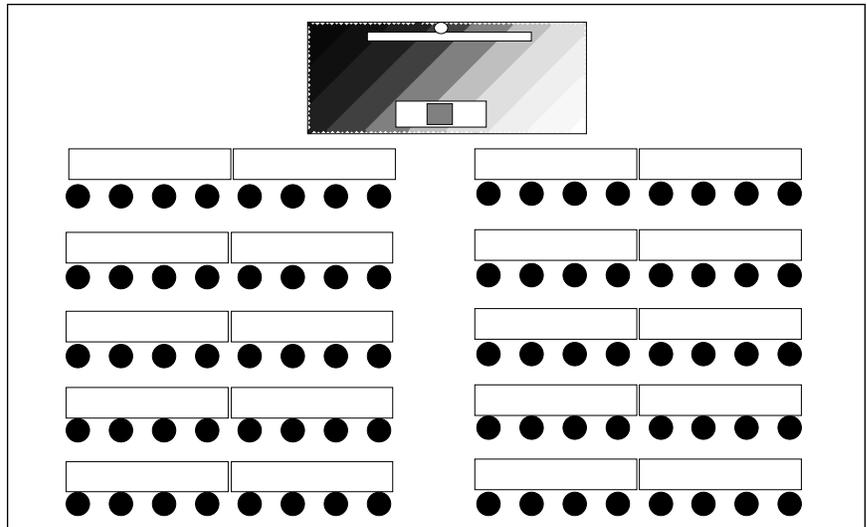
Straight rows of chairs facing the stage, without tables. Many speakers prefer this style seating. It allows for the highest audience density and keeps them closest to the front to create increased audience responsiveness.



# Setting the Stage - Seating Diagrams

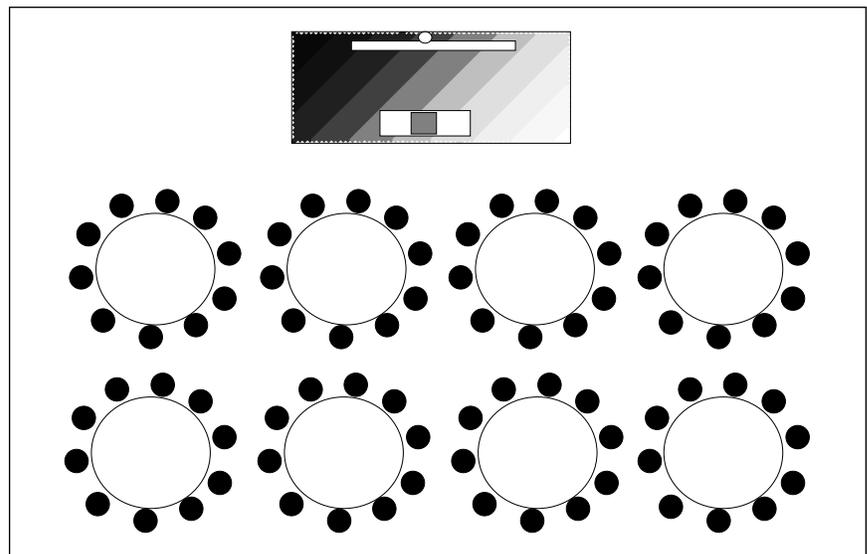
## Classroom

Rows of chairs, as in theater, placed at long, narrow tables. The best tables measure 18" x 6 or 8 feet. You lose some audience density and seating capacity, but gain comfort and writing ability for the attendees. For long seminars this layout works best.



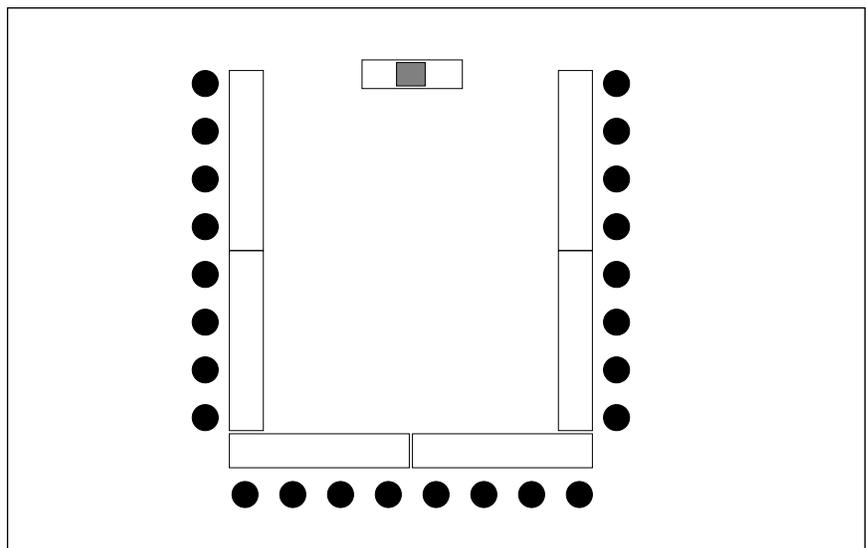
## Banquet, Rounds

A series of round tables set with 8-10 chairs. This is a good setup for meals and/or networking among the people at the table. It has the drawback of severely limiting seating capacity, spreading the audience too far from the stage, and forcing half the audience to crane their neck or rotate their chairs.



## U-shape

Rows of long, narrow tables shaped to form a "U". Best for interaction between attendees as in a meeting, but least effective if you want attention placed on the presenter. The presenter is always looking away from the majority of the attendees and has a space gap between all of them.



## Setting the Stage

### **C. The sound system**

You must have an excellent sound system. High quality hotels usually have good sound systems, low quality ones don't. Be sure to test it out. For important meetings, consider hiring someone to provide the speakers, amplifier, mixer and microphones. They will set up the equipment and monitor the sound.

### **D. Audience control**

If you are taking tickets or registering the attendees you need to set up a registration table near the entrance door and make sure they cannot get in through other doors. On a typical seminar morning we've seen 200-500 people all go to the front desk and ask where the event is. Save them this hassle by having signs starting at the entry hall and directing them right to the room.

### **E. What room conditions should I be aware of?**

Speakers generally prefer a well-lit room. This is not the time for "mood lighting". Make sure all lights are turned up. Watch the temperature. The room should be colder before it is filled, as the body heat will naturally warm it up later. You can really lose people when a room is too warm.

### **F. Should I have an on site coordinator?**

Yes! One person should be the speaker liaison. This person should be in the seminar room at all times for that inevitable situation that might arise such as microphone problems or light and temperature adjustments.

### **G. Who should handle the introduction?**

Have a special person selected to introduce the speaker. This person should be a familiar face within the organization, someone that is well respected. Make sure they have received the introduction prior to the seminar and have had time to read it over. Most speakers prefer to have their introductions read to the word with no ad libbing. Many speakers have lost credibility with an audience due to a bad introduction.

# Checklists

## Speaker Selection Checklist

	Speaker:	Speaker:	Speaker:	Speaker:
Topics	•	•	•	•
	•	•	•	•
	•	•	•	•
	•	•	•	•
Availability				
Referred by				
Past experiences with speaker				
In-house, agent or committee comments				
Outside references				
When was speaker last here?				
Fees				
Travel expense				
Other comments				
Choice ranking				

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# Checklists

## Elements of a Successful Flyer Checklist

	Date
	Time
	Place/name of meeting room
	Directions if necessary
	Topic title and description
	Photo of speaker(s)
	Ticket price
	Registration information
	Sponsor(s) name
	Continuing education credits (if applicable)
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# Checklists

## Event Promotion Checklist

	<b>Identify markets</b>
	Past attendees
	Large independent companies: (List them below)
	•
	•
	•
	•
	Franchises: (List them below)
	•
	•
	•
	CRS Chapters
	GRI classes and graduates
	<b>Sponsors</b>
	Mortgage companies
	Title companies
	Cellular phone companies
	Home inspection companies
	Home warranty companies
	Vendors you use frequently
	Advertising specialty companies
	Board of Realtors
	Gift companies
	Home magazine companies
	<b>Tickets</b>
	<b>Flyers</b>
	<b>Posters</b>
	<b>Office visits</b>
	<b>Phone calling</b>
	<b>Announcements at meetings, events. Collect checks</b>
	<b>MLS messages</b>
	<b>Fax messages</b>
	<b>Voice mail reminders</b>

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# Checklists

## Event Budget Planning Worksheet

Expense	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3
<b>Speaker</b>			
Fee			
Airfare			
Hotel/Meal			
Ground			
<b>Meeting space</b>			
<b>Refreshments</b>			
Coffee/Tea			
Pastries			
Soft drinks			
Meal			
<b>Audio/Visual</b>			
Overhead projector			
Flip Chart			
Screen			
Sound system			
Slide projector			
Video equipment			
<b>Printing</b>			
Outlines/handouts			
Flyers			
Tickets			
<b>Promotion</b>			

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# Checklists

## On Site Event Checklist

### Registration

	Registration tables
	Signs and arrows directing people to event room
	Attendee list
	Name tags/pens
	Handouts on chairs

### Times

	Start
	Break
	Finish

### Room Setup

	Tables set up for product display
	Chairs set for
	Display tables
	Coffee stations
	Water stations
	Banners, signs, etc.

### Stage Setup

	Front speaker table
	Overhead projector
	Screen
	Flip chart/markers
	Sound system check
	Written speaker introduction

### Schedule (Opening comments, introducer, speaker, etc.)

Time	Speaker, event, etc.

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