

Promotional Events

Give a Speech

Even if you don't join an organization, you may still be able to connect with their members and get new business by being a speaker at a breakfast meeting, luncheon, or workshop.

The topic can be anything related to event planning that their members would be interested in. For example, if you're speaking to a business networking group, you might talk on "How to Promote Your Services to Event Organizers," while a women's group might be interested in hearing tips on how to plan a successful social event.

While you probably will not be paid for your presentations, it can be an excellent opportunity to promote your business. Your company name may be published in the organization's newsletter, it will be mentioned by the person who introduces you, you can distribute business cards and brochures, and you will be able to mingle with attendees before and after your presentation. (You may get a free breakfast or lunch too!)

If you give a good talk and offer useful advice, you will be seen as an **expert**. As long as there are people in the audience who need event planning services, this can be an excellent way to attract clients.

To let people know that you are available to speak, contact the local organizations mentioned above and ask friends and acquaintances if they belong to any groups that have presentations from speakers.

If you feel your speaking skills could be better, there are a couple of relatively painless ways to get comfortable talking to large groups. You can hire a speaking coach. Or you can join **Toastmasters**, a national organization that helps people develop their speaking skills. To find a Toastmasters chapter near you, you can check your local phone book, call their world headquarters in California at (949) 858-8255, or visit:

Toastmasters

<http://www.toastmasters.org>

Teach a Class

Teaching a class can be a great way to earn extra money, establish your reputation, and meet prospective clients. You don't have to have a degree to teach adults—just lots of enthusiasm and knowledge of your subject.

The first step is to review the current catalog of **continuing education** courses offered by local **colleges, universities** and other organizations that provide adult education classes in your community. Call and ask for a print catalog if they do not have course information at their website. Once you have reviewed their current list of courses, come up with some ideas for **new** courses. (They already have instructors for any courses that are in their catalog.)



Once you have an idea for a new course in mind, call the college or organization and ask to speak with whoever hires continuing education instructors. They will tell you what you need to do to apply to teach a course.

Your Own Workshops or Seminars

While teaching continuing education courses can be rewarding, it normally takes months for a new course to be offered (and there's always the chance the continuing education program may decide not to offer it). If you'd like to start presenting courses right away, consider designing and giving your own workshops or seminars.

You will need to choose a date and time (evenings are usually best for business people) and a location, such as a meeting room at a hotel or conference center.

You will then have to decide how much to charge (consider making the fee comparable to continuing education courses offered in your community), or it may be free if you are offering it in conjunction with a retailer.

If you are working with a retailer, they will likely market it to their customers. However, they will expect you to do some marketing yourself, and you will be responsible for getting registrations yourself if you hold it at another location. The following is from the

.com Guide to Becoming a Motivational Speaker which gives detailed advice on how to market a seminar:

When preparing your marketing materials, remember to focus on communicating all the **benefits** of attending. As well as the information, benefits of attending a seminar may include: a fun night out, a chance to network, or personal advice from an expert. Among the other items you might include in a brochure:

- **Who** should attend
- When and **where** the seminar takes place
- The speaker's **credentials**
- **Testimonials**
- That **enrollment is limited** (mention if past seminars sold out)
- A call to action such as "**Register now!**"
- **How** to register, including your phone number and web address

Brochures with this information can also be used to market seminars to the public. The ideal brochure for a public seminar is one that can double as a poster (e.g. printed on one side of a colorful 8½" x 11" sheet). If permitted, try posting them at bulletin boards, especially bookstores and college campuses – two places you're likely to find people interested in seminars.

Trade Shows

If you specialize in social events you may be able to find prospective clients at public shows and conferences. If you are selling to the corporate market, you might consider participating in a trade show for a particular industry.

The cost to become an **exhibitor** (i.e. to get a booth at the show) will vary depending on the particular show, the location, the number of people expected to attend, and the amount of space you require. It may range from as little as \$50 to \$1,000 or more for public shows, or up to thousands of dollars for trade shows. To cut costs, you could partner with another non-competing exhibitor and **share** a booth space.

However, before investing in a trade show booth, **attend** the event if possible, or speak to some **past exhibitors**. While you may find a \$100 booth at a women's conference is a good investment to market a party-planning business, \$1,000 spent on a trade show booth to promote meeting planning services could give **disappointing** results. (Trade shows are often used to raise awareness rather than generate immediate sales.)

You can find out about upcoming shows by contacting your local convention centers, exhibition halls, or chamber of commerce. The following site lets you search for events by industry, type of event and location. For most events, you can then click on a link to find out **contact information**.

Tradeshow Week Directory

<http://directory.tradeshowweek.com/directory/index.asp>

Many shows now have their own websites and provide registration information as well as site maps and logistical information. When setting up your booth you should bring **business cards**, your company **brochures**, and your **portfolio** for display at your booth.

When you speak with prospective clients, mention a few of the ideas you have for creating a spectacular event (but don't give away too much for free). To arrange consultations and discuss possible bookings, bring an **appointment book** or **calendar of events** you already have on the books. This information is very important to know if you are a one-person operation and have already booked events to plan in the coming months.

TIP: If you don't have an assistant, find a partner or even a spouse or close friend to help out at the show. The days can be long and tiring, and you won't want to close down your booth to take breaks.

