

The Secrets to Hosting Successful Teleseminars



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Introduction

At first thought, the idea of holding your own teleseminar might seem as out-of-reach as starting your own professional basketball team. As you'll discover in the next few pages, however, that's simply not the case. Teleseminars aren't just for the likes of Tony Robbins, John Grey, and Suze Orman. In fact, thousands of internet marketers, small business owners, and solo professionals regularly use teleseminars to reach new audiences, establish themselves as experts, and create new products. And so can you.

Some people charge thousands to teach you how to master the fine art of teleseminars, but you really won't need to spend that kind of money to learn the ropes. Teleseminars don't have to be flashy events with slick graphics, big-name speakers, and four-figure price tags. Instead, most of the best teleseminars are much more down to earth. They're a lot like traditional seminars, except that they are usually less formal and presented over a teleconference or bridge line rather than in person and at a physical location.

It's easy to see the advantage of teleseminars. You won't have to limit yourself to the number of people you can round up and lure into a hotel room or lecture hall. Instead, you can draw your audience from all over the globe and connect with them by phone.

And it doesn't have to be fancy either. In fact, any time you're on the phone, talking about your products, services, or on anything else related to marketing your business, you're conducting a teleseminar. Of course, you can also host teleseminars that are more formal and require more planning and care in execution. And that's what you're going to learn in this report.

First, I'm going to cover the basics of teleseminars: Why you should incorporate teleseminars into your marketing mix, how you should set them up and promote them for best results, and how you can leverage the power of what you have created. In a matter of days, you could be producing top-notch teleseminars that grow your business as well as your bottom line. Let's get started.

What Can Teleseminars Do for You?

From the day the first caveman tried to convince his cohorts how great saber-tooth tiger tasted once it had been cooked over a fire, humans have been “selling” their ideas to each other. The practice of sharing with and educating others hasn't changed. We just have a whole lot more options when it comes to choosing the medium.

With the ready availability of low-cost (or no-cost) long-distance service and conference call lines, teleseminars have become increasingly popular. Instead of spending thousands of dollars traveling to give an in-person presentation, you can meet your customers and prospects right where they are, without even having to change out of your pajamas. Here's what you can do with teleseminars:

- Introduce new products
- Get known in a new market -- and get to know that market in turn
- Explain how a product or service works
- Interview experts and share their knowledge with your audience
- Answer questions about your area of expertise

In addition, teleseminars can help you do the following:

- Sell more. By presenting a sales presentation over the phone, you offer much more interactivity and a stronger personal connection than you can through a website or direct mail piece.
- Create products. The calls themselves can be turned into products or classes. You can sell access to your live events, or you can record them and sell them later as CDs or audio downloads. And that's just for starters.
- Get to know your audience. Being able to interact with your audience in real time allows an unprecedented level of market research, right in the moment.
- Establish yourself. If you interview experts in your area, you will quickly be seen as an expert by association.
- Build your list. Teleseminars are popular ways to introduce yourself to a new market. It's easy to invite people to your free events -- and as they sign up, they become part of your list.
- Create trust. Trust is crucial when you want to do business online. And one of the best ways to build trust with your audience is to interact with them directly. As they hear your voice live on the call -- and as they ask questions and get answers right then and there -- you become "real" to them and they'll be able to bond with you. This is something that's much harder to accomplish through sales letters and emails.

But what about skills? Don't you have to have some kind of “chops” to host a teleseminar? Stop wondering! If you have enough experience to start a business, you

have enough experience to produce and host a teleseminar. Read on and I'll show you how.

Planning for Success

In order to pull off a great teleseminar, you'll need to plan for success. Sure, there are things that can go wrong, but if you plan your teleseminar well, most of them can be avoided. Let's review what you need to do to ensure your teleseminar will go as smoothly as possible:

1. **Choose a good topic.** Choosing a topic for your teleseminar is much like choosing a topic for a blog post. You don't want something too broad, or you'll have no focus. And you don't want something too narrow, or you will run out of things to say. Instead, you want to balance your need to cover new ground with your need to keep the length and breadth of your teleseminar manageable. For your first go-round, I suggest keeping things tight and focused. You should also plan keeping your call to an hour or so. Any longer and you may burn yourself out or run into more problems than you're prepared to deal with!

Start by brainstorming a list of possible topics for your teleseminar. When it comes to scope, ideal topics are suitable for magazine articles rather than books! In short, go through your list of topics and decide for each one whether it is so broad you'd need a book to cover it, or if you could do it justice in a magazine article. Then make a list of your top picks.

Can't pick just one? Remember, you can always hold another teleseminar -- and you should! Right now, you're just getting ready for the first one, so select a topic you feel comfortable with.

2. **Decide on an expert.** One of the greatest advantages of teleseminars is that you don't have to be the expert; you can interview someone else with more experience. You can also hold a dialog between the two of you, or you can do the whole thing yourself. It's entirely up to you.
3. **Pick a day and time.** Next, you need to pick a day and time. It's easy to drive yourself nuts trying to find a day and time that works for everyone in your target audience. Just realize that no matter what you do, you simply won't be able to pick a time that is convenient for everyone! Instead, pick a time that works for you, and go with it. You can always make the audio available later if you like.
4. **Decide on whether to charge or not.** Are you planning to charge for your teleseminar? You'll want to decide upfront whether to charge or not, and what you should offer as upsells. In a later section, we're going to cover fee vs. no fee teleseminars in more detail.

That's it! These are the key decisions you need to make before you get started because they will affect a lot of your other activities. Just keep in mind that they're not

necessarily either/or decisions. There are a range of options you can select, so let's discuss those in greater detail, starting with inviting an expert.

Inviting an Expert

One of the easiest ways you could host a successful teleseminar is by inviting an expert. Having an expert take part in your teleseminar has a number of advantages:

- You don't have to rely on your own expertise – your expert will be there to educate your audience.
- You'll achieve expert status by association. Think of Oprah: She isn't a weight loss expert, but because she has interviewed dozens of them, she is seen as a health and fitness guru in her own right (even in light of her ongoing battles with her own weight!).
- You can bring new expertise to your audience. Offering an added perspective to your audience raises your value in their eyes. You become a “connector,” someone who knows all the right people.
- You can get in front of new prospects. Many experts have audiences or lists of their own, and their “tribe” will follow them to your sphere of influence. If they like what they see, they will stay a while – and maybe even buy something!
- You can do soft-sells on affiliate products. If you are an affiliate for a book on, say, cheerleading, you can bring the author in front of your audience for a Q&A session. Then, when the author mentions her book, you provide your affiliate link and get a commission for every book your audience buys.

So what do you need to watch out for when you're selecting an expert to interview? Here are several factors to consider before issuing an invitation:

- Are they a good fit for your audience? Don't invite the cheerleading expert when your list consists of survivalists and expect to get a warm response.
- Are they personable and good at public speaking? Few things are more painful than listening to a poorly prepared, poorly skilled public speaker – even in an interview setting. Have a screening phone call or listen to other interviews with your prospective guest before you issue an invitation.
- Do they have something valuable to say? Make sure you're spending your time – and your audience's time – wisely by offering something unique, interesting, educational, or entertaining.
- Do they have a large list? This isn't a must-have, but it definitely helps if your speaker has a large audience of his or her own and is willing to promote your teleseminar.
- Do they have products or services to promote? If you are hoping to earn commissions by promoting their products or services, find out how their affiliate program works, and if their products or services are right for your audience.

When you are first starting out, the top tier experts, such as those with New York Times best-selling books, those with their own talk shows, and those in the million-dollar-plus income bracket, can be hard to reach for a relative unknown. Don't let that

stop you from asking, though! You never know when someone will say “Yes,” so don't say “No” for them.

Get in touch with them directly or through their publicist (contact information is typically available on their website). Write a polite, SHORT email saying who you are, why you think your market would be a good match for their area of expertise, when you'd like to speak with them, and how long it will take. Then tell them what's in it for them, for example exposure to an enthusiastic new market or a share of the proceeds. Finally, send it off, and start thinking about who else you could invite if your first choice isn't able to participate.

It's really not a complicated process. Choose someone you would like to hear from, write them a polite note to invite them, and then move on if you don't hear back or if they can't help at this time. A “No” isn't a “No” forever; it's just a “No” for today. So keep asking others until you get a “Yes.”

Pricing Options

Should you charge for your teleseminars? And if so, how much? That depends on your goals. If your main purpose is to promote a product or service, or to build your audience, you may decide to offer your expertise for free, thereby maximizing the number of people who participate.

The benefits of hosting a free teleseminar:

- You'll get more registrations.
- It's easier to implement. You won't have to worry about processing payments or integrating a shopping cart with your sales page or email service.

The drawbacks of a free teleseminar:

- You won't make any money upfront.
- It can be difficult to get your speakers to mention your call to their list if they won't be making any upfront money from it.
- Sometimes, something offered for free is perceived as having a lower value than something that comes with a price tag.

If your main goal is revenue generation, you could charge a fee for participating in your call. Then again, you could opt for having it both ways: You could offer free participation in the initial call, and then charge for access to the recording and/or a transcript of the call. This way, you maximize the number of people you get to add to your list, but you'll also raise some revenue as you allow them to self-sort into buyers and non-buyers.

The benefits of hosting a paid teleseminar:

- You'll make money with each additional person who signs up to attend.
- Your speakers will be more likely to promote the call if they can earn a commission (i.e., if they receive a percentage, typically 50%, of any sales generated through their affiliate link).
- Your teleseminar might be perceived as more valuable if people must pay to gain access.

The drawbacks of a paid teleseminar:

- The more you charge, the fewer attendees you are likely to have.
- Implementation is more complicated, as you'll have to set up a way to take and process payments as well as process affiliate commissions in the event that you're offering an affiliate program.

If you're just starting out, you may want to go with a free teleseminar. That way, you can work out the kinks, figure out the technology, and focus on learning the ropes without the added stress of dozens of people expecting a top-notch, glitch-free experience. And, of course, you can focus on the teleseminar and won't have to worry

about how to set up your shoppingcart. Then, once you've figured out how everything works, you can start charging for your premium teleseminars.

Only you can know what will work best for your situation and your business. Take a look at the pluses and minuses of each model, and choose the one that feels right for you.

Scheduling Your Teleseminar

If you're serving as your own expert, you can choose the day and time that works best for your schedule. If you're interviewing someone else and want to host the call live, you'll need to take your interviewee's schedule into consideration. You could also pre-record the interview at a mutually convenient time and then make it available as a replay. Whichever way you go, here are some things to keep in mind when selecting the day and time for your teleseminar:

- Allow yourself enough time to build an audience and set up your system, but not so much time that everyone gets sick of hearing about the event. Two weeks is ideal, but one week is workable. Any more and you run the risk of losing momentum; any less and you may not be able to get everything together in time.
- Realize that you will never make everyone happy. There simply is no one time that is ideal for everyone. Your best bet is to pick a time that should work for the majority of your target market.
- There are times that are “better” than others. For instance, if your market includes working professionals, they may have trouble attending a teleseminar in the middle of the work day. Instead, choose evening or weekend hours. Stay-at-home moms, on the other hand, may have more time during the day, but are probably busy in the evening and on weekends.
- Remember that if people cannot attend, they might still want to download your teleseminar later, so make sure to offer an option for getting the information later, either free or paid.
- Offering a download also gives your teleseminar announcements a longer shelf life. You can continue to invite leads by promising that even if they missed the call, they can still get the download.
- If you're not sure what time is best, you can always schedule two calls! Of course, if you're interviewing someone, you'll want to replay the original teleseminar rather than ask them to participate twice on the same topic.
- More is not always better. A two-hour teleseminar isn't inherently more valuable than a one-hour call. In fact, more people would rather attend a one-hour teleconference that moves along quickly than a two-hour call that drags on and on. Value people's time. If you really have enough content to go for two hours or more, schedule two separate calls.
- Choose a time when you're at your best. If you're not a morning person, don't schedule your teleseminar for the early AM hours. You won't get brownie points for heroics. Instead, pick a time when you're “on.” After all, you're the star of the show.

Now that you've scheduled a time, let's talk about one of the most important skills of a teleseminar host: Interviewing.

Interviewing Tips

If there's one skill that can make or break your teleseminar, it's interviewing. I'm sure you've listened to poor interviewers – or interviewees! – and wondered how soon you could turn off the radio (or the TV) or hang up the phone. And then there are the fabulous interviewers who are so skilled at pulling great information from their guests that you could listen for hours. Larry King, Oprah Winfrey, Barbara Walters are great examples. Even though they have very different styles, they do have some commonalities in the way they interview. Here's how to make sure your own interviewing is top-notch:

1. **Prepare.** Good lawyers have a motto, “Don't ask a question you don't already know the answer to.” While you don't need to predict every word out of your interviewee's mouth, you should have a strong idea of their areas of expertise, their background, and their value to your audience. If you're not familiar with them, investigate: Read up on them online, get a copy of their book, listen to other interviews they did, and check out their website. Basically, be sure you know who they are and what they can offer your listeners.
2. **Share.** Share your plan for the teleseminar with your interviewee. Do you plan to guide the session with questions, or would you like your expert to take the floor? Do you want them to mention the product or service they have to offer, or do you want the teleseminar to be pitch-free? What are the main questions you'll ask? Who is your audience? Pass this information on to your expert so he or she can prepare.
3. **Care.** I have heard interviews where I got the impression that the interviewer wasn't even listening to the expert's answers. No matter what their guest said, they never really responded and simply read the next question off a sheet. Don't make that mistake. Listen and respond thoughtfully to your guest's answers, and ask the kinds of follow-up questions your audience might wish they could ask.
4. **Dare.** In keeping with the last point, dare to ask a few deeper questions. The best interviews are the ones where the questions go a little deeper than in most other interviews on the same topic. There's value in going beyond the same old information that's been covered time and time again. Be different by being more thoughtful and insightful. That doesn't mean you should ask rude, personal, or deeply confrontational questions. Just be curious, open, and really involved in the conversation. After all, this is a teleseminar, not a Senate confirmation hearing!
5. **Disappear.** One of the biggest mistakes you can make is putting yourself in the spotlight. As the interviewer, your job is to step into the background and let your expert take center stage. You've chosen this person because they have valuable information, so let them share it! Don't hog the microphone, keep turning the conversation back to yourself, or start every sentence with “I.”

Good interviewing takes practice, but the good news is you can start growing your skills right now! Practice on people you come in contact with – standing in line at the bank, over dinner with your family, and while watching the kids play at the Little League game. Ask them about themselves, and practice listening and responding. You might even learn something in the process!

Getting Publicity

If you don't have a built-in list of thousands, you'll need to generate some publicity for your teleseminar if you want others outside of your immediate "world" to attend. Here are some ways you can start spreading the word:

- Email your list. Even if you only have a few dozen subscribers, let them know what you have planned. Encourage them to invite their own friends and contacts.
- Blog about it. Write a short interview with your guest expert or provide an introduction to the topic you'll be covering. You could even invite readers to submit questions, which will increase their involvement in your teleseminar.
- Mention it on the various social media platforms where you're active. Tweet about it and post updates on Facebook, MySpace, and any other social media sites. Don't be afraid to mention it several times, and be sure to include a link to your sign-up page.
- Create a short pre-interview audio or video and distribute it through YouTube, Viddler, Metacafe, or iTunes. Provide an overview of the topic, or share a sneak peek of what you'll be covering. And of course, be sure to link it to your sign-up page.
- Post it on teleseminar announcement services, such as seminarannouncer.com, cculearning.com, or seeyouonthecall.com.
- Post an announcement in the events sections of Facebook, LinkedIn, and any other social media communities you're a part of.
- Include a short blurb with a link to your sign-up page in your signature on your favorite forums, and then step up your participation in relevant discussions. That way, you'll get the information right in front of your target audience. This strategy is especially effective with free teleseminars.
- Ask your contacts to spread the news. Leverage your relationships with others in your space, and ask them to publicize your teleseminar.
- Write a few articles and announce your teleseminar in your resource box. To avoid disappointment, make sure that the link leads to a page that will also offer access to the replay after the live event.
- Ask your guest to mention the call in his or her newsletter, and to tweet or blog about it.
- Mention it in your own newsletter. Don't assume your list will put your teleseminar on their calendar the first time they hear about it. Remind them a few times, especially on the day of the actual event!
- Don't forget in-person promotions. If your teleseminar is related to parenting, tell your friends and fellow parents at your kids' schools. And why not ask your PTA if you can mention it in their newsletter. If your topic is personal finance, local accountants may be willing to mention it to their clients. They're often

looking for valuable information to offer their mailing list. Think outside the box
– and off the computer!

There are literally hundreds of ways you can promote your teleseminar. The more time you spend, the more buzz you can create. If you have limited time, just focus on a few key strategies, and get promoting.

Making Money

Why do people offer teleseminars? Sure, some of them want to get the word out about their causes, but most hosts know that teleseminars are a great way to make money, and some of them make a very nice living with their teleseminars. Here are just some of the ways you can make money with your teleseminar:

1. **Charge for registration.** Charge people for access to your teleseminar. How much you can charge ranges from a few dollars to thousands of dollars; obviously, the higher the rate, the higher the perceived value needs to be. I would suggest that you keep the registration fees on the lower end of the scale when you first get started. It will give you a chance to prove your value to your market before you ask them to invest huge amounts of cash upfront.
2. **Charge for the transcripts and/or recordings.** You can generate income by making the initial call free, and then creating an “upsell” and charging for the audio recording or the transcript of the call, preferably both. How much you can charge will depend on your market, the content, and the length of the teleseminar.

Here's a special strategy: When people register, you can invite them to buy the recording/transcript at a pre-event special discount, and then raise the price after the call has taken place. This sort of pricing strategy provides an incentive to act "now."

3. **Sell your own products.** You can also sell your own products either towards the end of the teleseminar or even after the call, in a follow-up email. Make sure those products are related to the call, useful, and targeted to your market.
4. **Sell an affiliate product.** Don't have your own product, or want to expand your options? Offer your attendees a “special offer” on a related affiliate product, perhaps one created by your guest expert. Again, you can sell during the call or in a follow-up email. And for an even better conversion rate, offer a special bonus if they act quickly.
5. **Turn the contents of the call into an ebook or a special report.** When you conduct a teleseminar, don't think that's the end of it! Transcribe it (or have someone else transcribe it) and turn it into a special report or an ebook. You may not even need to do much formatting if you hire a professional transcriptionist and tell him or her how to format it.
6. **Bundle your calls together.** Think creatively about new ways to package and present your content. Take a series of related teleseminar calls and bundle the

audios together into a larger product for sale to your market.

7. **Turn your calls into physical products.** Of course you can also turn your calls into physical products. The audios will make fine CD sets and the transcriptions can be turned into physical books thanks to Amazon's new publishing options. Then again, you could also put the transcripts into binders, maybe along with action sheets, and command a much higher price as you sell your combined set as a home study course.

As you can see, there's plenty of money to be made, even if you don't charge an upfront fee for your teleseminar registration. And the best thing... you can use several of the above methods and turn your calls into multiple streams of income.

Technology

Just a few short years ago, teleseminars would have been impossible or prohibitively expensive. But now, they are inexpensive and even free, depending on which service you use. In addition, you'll need a few additional tools to reach and connect with your market, especially if you plan to turn your teleseminars into streams of income. Here's a rundown of the key tools you should add to your arsenal:

1. **A way to capture your leads.** The first thing you need is something called a "squeeze page," which is a one-page website that invites visitors to provide their name and email address in exchange for access to your teleseminar. You need this squeeze page as it will allow you to build your list, which you can then use to send information to your subscribers, including information about any upcoming teleseminars.

You can either set up a separate page or even website, or make the opt-in form part of an existing page. Either way, you will also need a place for the leads to go, which brings us to the next thing you'll need: an email management system.

2. **An email list management system.** An email management system, usually referred to as an autoresponder system is an indispensable part of your online business. While there are various options available, you'd be wise to pick a reputable third-party autoresponder service such as Aweber, 1shoppingcart, or Constant Contact, or one of their branded versions. These services ensure great deliverability of your emails and will also insulate you from spam complaints, which could otherwise kill your budding business faster than you can say, "What the heck!"

Any of these autoresponder services will allow you to create lists and send them emails. That way, you can send them your teleseminar information, as well as follow up with additional information after the call and of course invite them to your next calls.

An autoresponder gives you several options: you can set up a sequence of emails that will be sent out in pre-determined intervals after someone first opted into your system, or you can broadcast messages to all your subscribers (or all members of certain lists) at once. You can even schedule those broadcasts in ahead of time.

3. **A payment processor.** If you plan to make money with your teleseminars, you'll need a way to take payments. There are a number of options, from PayPal to Clickbank to a shopping cart system like 1ShoppingCart. Which one is your best option depends on whether or not you're planning to offer affiliate

commissions and what other products you want to sell.

If you plan on building a business around your teleseminars, you should seriously consider 1shoppingcart as your autoresponder and shoppingcart option since it allows you to integrate your autoresponder function with a shoppingcart, and even an affiliate program. You can use it with PayPal or upgrade to their integrated merchant account service.

4. **A teleseminar service.** Obviously, you will also need a teleseminar service. There are many free teleseminar services, such as freeconferencecall.com, freeconference.com, nocostconference.com, and freeconferencecalling.com. There are also paid services available, including the one that is the most popular among internet marketers: instantteleseminar.com

Figure out which options you want – the number of callers, recording services, playback capability, reliability, and sound quality, ease of use, and availability and friendliness of customer service, and choose accordingly. You should also test any services you're considering to make sure they meet your needs. And don't forget to give them a trial run so you can discover their quirks as well as how user-friendly they are BEFORE your teleseminar.

With just these options, you can create and run a fully automated teleseminar with a minimal outlay of upfront cash. Just remember that while there are indeed a number of free options, occasionally it's a good idea to invest a little bit to get a more robust, scalable, and dependable service. It also makes you look much more professional when your attendees are not greeted with something like "Welcome to freeconferencecalling.com" or whatever the name of your free service may be.

And if you play your cards right, you can actually get some of the best services for next to nothing -- at least for a few weeks. Instantteleseminar.com offers a 3-week trial period for a dollar. And Kickstartcart.com, one of the branded versions of 1shoppingcart, offers you a 30-day trial for free, at least until you reach 50 subscribers. Of course, if you do your job well, you'll have to upgrade very quickly because you'll gather those 50 subscribers within days.

Troubleshooting

Sometimes, despite your best efforts, things will go wrong. Fortunately, most challenges you'll face in creating and producing your teleseminars are relatively easy to fix. Here are some of the top problems you could run into, and how to recover:

Problem: Your registration numbers are low.

Solution: If your numbers are low, start a last-minute blitz through social media, related forums, and your blog. If your teleseminar is free, list three or four concrete skills or pieces of information your listeners will gain from participating. If you're charging for it, consider offering a "bring a friend" discount, or giving current registrants a rebate for anyone they refer.

Problem: You are a lousy interviewer.

Solution: If your interviewing skills are less than professional, you have a couple of options. One, you could be your own expert and skip the interviewing altogether. Two, you could practice to gain a higher comfort level. Three, you could ask your expert to take charge – you can simply introduce them, and then let them take over the call and serve as instructor. Four, you could ask someone else to do the interviewing for you. And five, you could open up the teleseminar line and let your listeners ask questions directly. Don't let your skills hold you back; get started and refine along the way.

Problem: Your teleseminar is over. Now what?

Solution: That's not actually a problem of course. Every teleseminar will end after about an hour or two. The question is what to do next. First of all, you should give yourself a pat on the back! You did it!

Take a bit of time to relax before you get back to work! Then follow up with your interviewee and thank him or her for their participation and provide a link to the recording. Email your list of participants and let them know if transcripts and recordings are available. Offer them more information related to the call, like a few highlights and key takeaways. Get them excited about putting the information they've learned to use. And then start planning your next teleseminar. You're an expert now!

Conclusion

By now, I hope the ideas are flowing fast and furious. Teleseminars are really no more complicated than group phone calls, but with tons of extra benefits. You can use teleseminars to increase your market reach, establish yourself as an expert, bond with your audience, and earn serious money. This short report has introduced you to the basics of what you need to consider, from the technology you'll need to whether or not you should charge.

There are a lot of moving parts to keep track of, but don't get so caught up in the details that you lose sight of the big picture. The most important thing to keep in mind is your primary goal: to provide valuable information to your audience. When you stay focused on that goal and follow the steps above, your teleseminar should be a big success. And then, you'll simply schedule and host the next one, and the next...

Here's to a long and happy series of teleseminars – for you and your audience!