**Planning Your Info Session**

Hosting an info session can be a great way to cultivate interest in your course offerings. We’ve compiled a few tips to help you get started on planning. We encourage you to keep these considerations in mind as you plan, market and host your event!

**Define Your Info Session Goal**

To make your session a success, document your session purpose and success metrics. This will help you understand what to cover and how you will measure success, or modify for future efforts.

***Sample session purpose:*** Introduce an HR topic to generate awareness for my program offerings, Introduce the value of certification to meet HR Career Goals, etc.

***Sample success metrics:*** Generate X leads for our certification preparation course, Connect with X prospective enrollees for follow up, network with X local professionals to make them aware of your offerings.

**Consider Who Should Attend Your Session**

Consider all audiences who might benefit from your session and how you can reach them.

* Prospects in your database (lead forms, any inquiries about your programs, visitors to your website)
* Social media prospects or followers
* Referrals from past students
* Chapter members interested in HR training or certification
* Local business professionals who want to advance their career or organization

**Select How You Will Offer your Info Session (In-person or Virtual)**

There are benefits to offering your session online or in-person. Decide what format will work best with your audience or the technology you have access to.

In-person: Create an expense budget. Consider trying to save money through a partnership or “in-kind” sponsor donations.  Make a comprehensive list of all the expenses and then highlight areas where you think you can partner with another company to offer something “in kind.” The more you work with other brands and partners to host your events, the more you can save.

Virtual: Determine the platform where you can host your session. Make sure you understand the maximum number of potential attendees and what options are available for presenting (i.e., video, hosting time limits, or polling options). Consider engagement ideas to keep audience interested (such as polling, Q & A time, including past students, and more.)

**Determine What Content You Will Cover in Your Info Session** The purpose of an info session is to provide educational content and a valuable reason to begin a dialogue.You can accomplish these goals in many different ways, so don’t be afraid to get creative.

* Provide an overview of how to advance your career in HR with certification and demonstrate the value of preparation (Don’t forget to check out the PowerPoint template!)
* Interview an instructor on the benefits of training or tips to success on your certification exam.
* Offer a Panel on how to prepare for certification or another HR Topic. Pull together experts to speak on the topic.
* Include a tip session! Provide methods to study for certification and open up for questions at the end to engage potential students and get them excited to take the next step.
* Ask previous students who have passed to speak about their experience and share their tips and best practices for studying.
* Create engagement opportunities by trying a unique format, such as a fireside chat with an interviewer and interviewee, or set up a coffee talk, or happy hour to encourage participation either virtually or in-person.

**Set Your Team Up To Help**

* Delegate responsibilities, if you can.  No matter the size of your business, always try to delegate responsibilities. Having one person in charge of every detail can be overwhelming, and may not work out as well as a team effort. Whenever possible, let people take control of the areas they most enjoy.
* Follow up with your team regularly to ensure that you are sticking to your event timeline, ensuring registrants are signed up and any other stakeholders (panelists, speakers, etc.) are prepared.

**Info Session Day**

* Attitude is contagious. Your attendees will play off your attitude and dynamics during the event. Lead by example: be energetic, positive and have a good time.
* Always ask yourself: How is this relevant to attendees?  Make sure you offer content that is relevant to at least 80% of the attendees. They must walk away with tangible tactics to improve their business/career, and feel engaged by the speaker’s energy. Speaking about your business and what you do — without offering the audience what THEY need — is a waste of time and money for all.
* Make sure to practice.  You know your business, but don’t assume that you know how to put on a presentation. Practice giving your presentation, answering questions and handling difficult and confrontational members of the audience. Most attendees will respond to real people so be sure to relate to the audience.

**Contingency Planning**

* Imagine the event, step by step, and make a 2-column list: what could go wrong in one column, and your contingency plan in the second.  Be prepared for the unexpected. Maybe the sound system fails. Maybe your keynote presenter bails. Can you cope and move on with your session without cancelling it.
* Be ready to lend a hand to fill any gaps. Although planning ahead is a great formula for success, sometimes it’s not enough. Something unexpected usually comes up so put in a little extra prep for the unexpected. This applies to technologies, catering, printing, guest accommodations, weather and more.