

Business Extra

No-cost financial seminars a boon for all involved

Rachel S. Master

Staff writer for *The Business Press*

If you're looking for a way to help your employees maximize personal profits – at a minimal cost to you – consider investing in a financial seminar. After all, it may be free.

Hoping to make a good impression and perhaps win some clients, personal financial planners will deliver on-site presentations to your employees at no cost to you – no strings attached. You provide the employees the place (and perhaps some refreshments) and they supply the education.

And as Burk Rosenthal so eloquently put it: “Money is a topic that is always well received.”

His company, [Rosenthal Retirement Planning, LP], gears topics to a group's need, whether it's as specific as college investment or retirement planning or as simple as a financial overview.

“We're flexible and will speak on most financial planning topics,” he said.

And, he emphasized, it's a no pressure deal. “They're completely educational seminars,” he said.

So the employees get valuable information, the company takes credit for providing the educational event and the personal financial planner gets a chance to make a good impression on a captive audience, perhaps even walking away with some new clients.

According to Gene Wathey, of A.G., Edwards & Sons Inc., a no-charge seminar is a good way for those who haven't met with a broker before to meet him, get a feel for his personality and consider talking to him in the future about their own finances.

“It takes away the fear of walking into a broker's office unknown,” he explained.

Though his focus is education, Wathey said some of his largest accounts have come from doing seminars.

Wathey's traditional seminar is a two-part program; an hour of “How Do I Manage My Money,” followed a week later by an hour of “How Do I Survive CD

Rates,” with 20 minutes of homework sandwiched in between. The program has no product talk but, instead, helps employees tune in with other investment options, he said.

Rosenthal and Wathey have both worked with local companies such as Burlington Northern Railroad, which sets up one or two such seminars a month for its employees, ranging from finances, of course, to crime prevention and night school master’s programs, according to Henry McNair, a BN equipment manager.

Considering recent economic times, McNair said, employees find financial seminars to be very helpful.

“It’s a fairly cheap way to do something that’s both entertaining and educational,” he said.

Financial seminars, Rosenthal said, often provide employees with information they may not receive anywhere else. Retirement planning, he said, seems to be a topic on everyone’s mind. And misconceptions abound.

“There’s risk involved in every investment and it may not always be loss to principal,” he said.

Rosenthal Retirement Planning, LP•100 E. 15th Street, Suite 100, Fort Worth, TX 76102•(817) 336-2000•(214) 752-1000
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