

Dos and Don'ts for Developing Continuing Education Programs for Design Professionals

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DO

- ... ask the design professionals what they want to know about your industry and product type.
- ... open the presentation with an industry overview or some key observations on current industry issues.
- ... provide an industry rather than product point-of-view.
- ... demonstrate your industry expertise and knowledge.
- ... provide solutions.
- ... develop topics that directly relate to the target firm's project types.
- ... develop program elements that will directly help the design professionals understand current industry trends and issues.
- ... provide USEABLE information that directly relates to professional practice
- ... present industry standard product application and use issues.
- ... develop excellent presentation skills.
- ... ignore Freudian slips, faux pas, poor slides, or presentation problems, the show must go on.
- ... use technology to support your presentation and education efforts.
- ... use PowerPoint™ as a secondary support to your presentation.
- ... include hands-on demonstrations.
- ... provide a detailed handout that will be saved for reference.
- ... do make eye contact, relax, and smile.
- ... evaluations after the presentation.
- ... include specification issues where appropriate.
- ... provide guide specifications.
- ... provide AIA/CES learning unit credits and certificates.

DON'T

- ... assume you or sales management know what the design professionals want or need to know.
- ... open by introducing yourself or your company as a way of establishing credibility.
- ... ever apologize for faux pas, bad graphics, poor photos, unreadable slides, or the fact you think you are not a good presenter, nobody cares, just present.
- ... let competitive issues and problems bias your program ideas.
- ... let your product's features and benefits bias the program.
- ... provide USEFUL information that is not applicable to practice.
- ... provide product information.
- ... sanitize your old product sales presentation and call it "generic and non-proprietary".
- ... let your personal and product bias influence the program.
- ... let technology control the presentation.
- ... use PowerPoint™ as a presentation crutch.
- ... use PowerPoint™ sounds, transitions, and animations.
- ... use PowerPoint™ handouts.
- ... read the PowerPoint™ to the audience.
- ... distract audience from the presentation by passing around samples.
- ... provide giveaways that distract your audience.
- ... hide behind a podium, use a remote control.
- ... display logos or product literature during presentation.

Michael D. Chambers FAIA FCSI SCIP is principal of MCA Specifications, Construction Product Marketing Group of Daly City, CA. (San Francisco) MCA designs, develops, and produces guide specifications, technical data sheets, AIA/CES Continuing Education programs, and design guidelines for construction product manufacturers. MCA provides preliminary document, education program, and web site reviews to help manufacturers be more effective and strategic with their critical marketing tools. 415-239-6566 www.mcaspecs.com