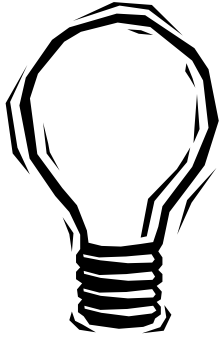


Top Twelve Tips Toward Better Senior College Course Descriptions

1. Use action words, active voice
2. Highlight special benefits or features of the course
3. Showcase any unique teaching methods to be used
4. Outline the “meat”—course content
5. Set expectations for the course
6. Obtain information in an organized way from the instructor
7. Establish credibility of the faculty
8. Create a grabby title
9. Convey a user-friendly tone
10. Use tasteful humor; a clever turn of phrase; and employ sights, sounds, and smells
11. Include sentence variety, questions, complex sentences
12. Proof read!!!



Course Description Cheat Sheet

Describe your *faculty* with lively adjectives:

- Seasoned
- Top level perspective
- Knowledgeable
- Experienced
- Know-how
- Hear expert advice
- Expertise

Describe the course *benefits and features* with words such as:

- Walk away with
- Establish
- Increase
- Communicate effectively
- Learn what works for others
- Reduce
- Respond
- Gain understanding
- Deal with
- Optimize
- Develop steps
- Gain insight
- Walk in their shoes

Replace *learn* with:

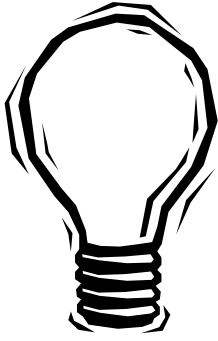
- Focus
- Align

- Maximize
- Discover
- Get advice
- Find out why
- See how
- Develop
- Benchmark
- Explore
- Address
- Improve
- Design
- Outline
- Review
- Expand
- Determine
- Measure
- Assess
- Zero in on
- Integrate
- Position
- Tailor
- Analyze
- Forecast
- Create
- Examine

Set course expectations with phrases such as:

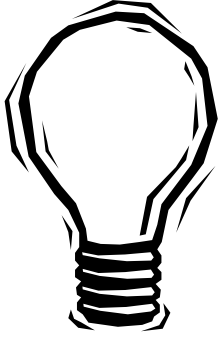
- This lively interactive session is for those who

- Learning materials
- Demonstrate
- Anticipate
- Review “Professor Smith’s 7 principles of an outstanding XXX”
- Tactics
- Hear
- Practical advice
- Implement
- Bring order to the chaos
- Methodology
- Select
- Exercises
- Take away techniques
- Build excitement
- You’ll be motivated
- Involve
- Create excitement
- Join with us
- Redefine
- Cost effective
- Prepare
- Tips on
- Get a checklist
- Map out
- Apply conventional wisdom
- Specific tips
- Hot topics



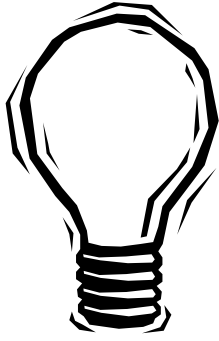
PR Tips and Techniques

- √ Make a yearly plan for your Senior College PR initiative. Write it down to “plan your work and work your plan.”
- √ Develop goals for your plan. Examples of goals include:
 - Increase public awareness
 - Increase membership
 - Increase participation in Senior College
 - Increase financial support
- √ Make certain your promotion plan is comprehensive and includes all types of promotional media: newspapers, weeklies, magazines, radio, tv, cable, word of mouth, events, presentations, etc.
- √ Develop a short statement about what your Senior College is all about, how it is different from other educational programs (such as adult education) and why it is special. Emphasize positive aspects of Senior College and clearly articulate this in all of your communication with media and potential members.
- √ Put together a press list of local media to send information about Senior College.
- √ Develop a series of ongoing press releases and advisories for programs/services/events based on the established calendar. For example:
August-send press release about the course offerings in the fall semester to all media.
- √ Take a member of the media to lunch or for a cup of coffee to meet and build relationships with local media so that they will both be more receptive to placing your stories on Senior College. Also let them know that they can see you as a source of information and/or story ideas.
- √ Don't expect everything you do to get coverage. Make certain it is “newsworthy” and point out its newsworthiness to the media.
- √ Develop a “media kit” for news media with consistent and accurate background information on your Senior College.
- √ Don't forget word of mouth promotion—it's the best and its free. Start a speaker's bureau or encourage members to bring/tell a friend about Senior College.



More.... PR Tips and Techniques

- √ Find out more about your audience: your members. What do they do in their free time? What clubs or organizations do they belong to? That is where you'll find more members.
- √ Think of grass roots ways to promote Senior College:
 - Speaking engagements with local organizations (such as local Kiwanis, Lions and Rotary Clubs; church groups, retired teachers).
 - Information booths set up at local events
 - Posters distributed to the local retirement community.
- √ **THINK PROMOTION.** Enhance existing programs to make them “newsworthy” events such as pairing the opening of classes with a special event. Consider other promotional ideas such as a talent show, visual or performing arts exhibits.
- √ Use other people’s newsletters and communication vehicles: such as senior center, agency, historical society, garden club newsletters to promote Senior College and specific programs.
- √ Work with other organizations to co-sponsor programs or events such as museums (42% of museum visitors are 55+), arts groups, book groups, libraries. Use their mailing list.
- √ Offer to write a monthly column in the local weekly.
- √ Seek sponsors for paid advertising (be sure that it fits with the policies of your Senior College).
- √ Send Post Cards.
- √ Distribute materials, schedules, to libraries, museums, senior centers.
- √ Seek editorial mention in University publications (eg. Alumni magazines, graduate newsletters, etc.).
- √ Include the phone number and web address in every ad, press release, and external communication.
- √ Put up Bulletin Boards about Senior College in schools, churches, town hall, historical societies.



More.... PR Tips and Techniques

- √ Develop a “movers and shakers” list of people in your town (business, civic leaders) and send them your newsletter on a regular basis.
- √ Develop an Internet/email address book of members to instantly spread the word about events or other Senior College issues.
- √ Write a Letter to the Editor or an opinion column for the local paper.
- √ Work with your host institution to set up an Internet home page on their website and list your courses on it (keep it current!) OR send your information to the Maine Senior College Network for posting on their site.
- √ When printing, avoid fonts that are hard to read, too small, or intricate.
- √ Appoint an official Senior College Photographer to develop and maintain a photo library of good photos of members.
- √ Use photos of groups and individuals in all age ranges over 55 to communicate clearly what our programs are about.
- √ Don't overlook your course catalog as a promotional vehicle: use testimonial quotes, write lively course descriptions and tout all the advantages of Senior College (classes, new friends, social group, etc.).
- √ Use testimonial quotes in promotion. There is a good likelihood that many people would know the person quoted—adding a great deal of credibility.
- √ Develop standard membership kit materials for prospective members who want more information—and respond quickly to their requests. Follow up if possible.
- √ Maintain an accurate mailing list. Designate members vs. inquiries and set up some “rules” about how long to keep inquiries on the list.
- √ Show the link between your organization and the state network of Senior Colleges. Include the Maine Senior College Network boilerplate language in press releases.