

**Case Study**  
*How to Thrive in Retirement™*  
July 2008

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**Background**

Tom Kopatz has been with Thrivent 18 years and served as a Managing Partner for 15 years. Last year, Tom was assigned to a Regional Field Office (RFO) that wasn't living up to its potential and had an unmet need of interfacing with the target market, and teaming with veteran associates. Tom's challenge was to identify the problems inherent in the business and develop a strategy and tactics to turn around the region and a growth in profits.

As a long-time proponent of seminar marketing, Tom was eager to learn about the new seminar program created by Ken Dychtwald and his organization, Age Wave, the *How to Thrive in Retirement™* seminar. As part of Tom's overall RFO turnaround strategy, he envisioned using this motivational and non-product seminar as a way to partner with financial representatives (FRs) in the region with the hope of building business with their members. Tom's vision was to establish a simple way for members to engage or, perhaps, re-engage with FRs without burdening them with the responsibilities of coordinating and facilitating the seminars.

**Preparation**

Tom readily signed up for the first field introduction of the seminar system and participated in the comprehensive training program in March of 2007. As an accomplished seminar presenter, Tom understood that practice, practice, practice was essential to delivering a first-class program. Therefore, he spent much time studying the storyboard, script and PPT and practiced it among family and friends before trying it before an invited audience. He then practiced it with a volunteer network training group as well as civic groups within other companies. In addition, he took advantage of all the training materials included with the seminar system to enhance his understanding of the content and the most effective way to deliver it to his audiences. Tom's primary preparation tip is that there is no substitute for memorizing the script. He believes that "this ensures proper timing of the delivery to produce better results, like a comedian, so that you pause to let the audience laugh, and for facts and concepts to really sink in." Tom has added his own personal style to the seminar and as of now has presented *How to Thrive in Retirement™* more than 30 times so that it has become part of his repertoire. He no longer needs to resort to any tools.

**Seminar Program Delivery**

During the first 12-month period, Tom presented the seminar for the FR's in his region 31 times. Seminars were held at upscale venues including local restaurants, country clubs and other group meeting places. Dinner was often served, but not in every instance. Kopatz identified an opportune moment during the presentation to introduce the attending FR to set the stage for a follow-up marketing call. Tom found an excellent time to talk about a long-term care insurance product during the presentation immediately following the *City Slickers* video clip of Billy Crystal lecturing to third graders about aging. At the conclusion of his presentation, Tom asked

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the participants to complete the Roadmap in their participant workbook in order to ensure a more engaging and productive follow up conversation with the FR. Upon closing, all seminar attendees were asked to complete an evaluation form and provide any referrals before leaving. Tom is an ardent supporter of *How to Thrive in Retirement™*. He finds this seminar uniquely successful in building business because it brings members and prospects together in a relaxed, non-sales environment. He goes on further to say by talking about one's lifestyle, hopes, dreams and fears rather than selling a specific product sets the stage for building trust in an inspirational and educational way. Perhaps just as important, Tom has developed camaraderie amongst the FRs in the region as they rally together for growth and success in the region.

**Marketing Steps**

- ❖ Tom asked each participating FR to provide him with a computerized list of 200 members/prospects
- ❖ Targeted age group was 45 to 64
- ❖ FRs selected the seminar dates
- ❖ Thrivent customized, printed and mailed the large postcard mailer provided with the seminar materials. Each mailer referenced the FR
- ❖ A minimum of 20 participants or 10 households was necessary to conduct each event; seminars that did not attain that goal were postponed to gain a broader audience
- ❖ No seminars were conducted in December, and a small number were conducted in July
- ❖ Thrivent provided a telemarketing service to conduct post-mailing follow up calls one week before the seminar to confirm attendance
- ❖ FRs were required to follow up by phone with each seminar attendee no later than 10 days following the seminar presentation
- ❖ Members/prospects unable to attend received a follow up call from the FR and were offered an office appointment or home visit at which the FR could deliver an abbreviated one-on-one presentation or provide materials from the program – this was a *very* successful and effective tactic

**Marketing Results**

- ❖ Exceptionally high average response rate from direct mailing – 6%
- ❖ Exceptionally high number of follow up meeting request – 85%
- ❖ Attendance averaged 30 participants
- ❖ Several events generated 100 attendees
- ❖ Majority of participants were members (clients) rather than prospects.
- ❖ Attendees were split between the ages 45-59 and 59-64; less than 10% were 65+
- ❖ Average sales after each seminar was \$10,000 in first year commissions; total annual sales were up by more than \$300,000 in first year commissions produced by 32 seminars
- ❖ Surprisingly high number of 401K rollovers generated
- ❖ Regional sales rose from 20% below projection to 6% above