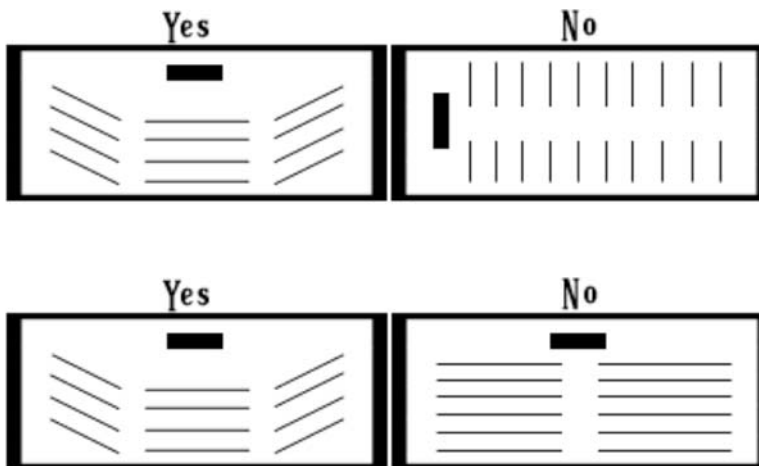


## ROOM SETUP TIPS

### Tips to Enhance the Audience's Experience

Nick has compiled a list of tools to help you achieve maximum audience response. Please use them to add to the experience your audience receives from your event.

#### THE BEST SEAT IN THE HOUSE



1. **Avoid a center aisle.** The best seats in the house-directly in front of the speaker- are often wasted in a large empty aisle. The speaker is forced to run stage left, stage right, to address a "divided" audience. Use two smaller side aisles on either side of center.

2. **Keep the audience responding as a group.**

Keep the front row as close to the stage as is comfortable.

Reduce the distance between the speaker and participants in the last row.

If the room is rectangular, set the stage in the center of the long wall.

Cut single-chair access lanes into long rows every sixth chair.

3. **Rope off the back 10 rows** until ten minutes into the presentation. Have a door host direct participants to take the seats up front.

#### 4. **Curve or angle your seating.**

Straight rows do not max a room. Curved seating exceeds straight row capacity by 26%.

Audience response to humor increases when individuals can see each other. Straight row seating requires additional concentration to absorb the message. (Turning the neck 15 degrees restricts blood flow to the brain, limiting learning. End-row participants must turn their necks 80 degrees or more!)

5. **Stagger the chairs.** Eliminate audiences twisting, bobbing and craning to see around the head in front of them.

6. **Do not overset the room.** If you are planning on 200 people, set the room for 180 not 250. Stack extra chairs at the back of the room. Otherwise, the front rows will be empty. Better to have every seat taken than large empty spots throughout the audience.

7. If you know some attendees will be in wheelchairs, you might remove a few chairs at the ends of the rows near the front, to provide space for them to wheel their chairs to the ends of these aisles. This allows for easy entry/exit, and it's nice change for those often relegated to the back row in an audience. (If they are placed in the front row, it may be difficult for others to see over them.)

8. If side or back doors close loudly, please have a door stop handy or tape the lock to avoid noisy distractions.

### **AUDIO VISUAL**

9. The most overlooked (and damaging) glitch – ceiling lights which shine directly on the screen and wash out the visuals. After 5 minutes of eye strain, the audience gives up even trying to follow along. **The solution is *not* to dim all the lights, which will throw your speaker in the shadows.** Have the hotel remove the offending lights that shine directly above the screen.

10. Use an additional light source on the presenter. Studies have proven that when an audience cannot see the presenter clearly, they also believe they cannot hear him or her clearly!

11. The eye follows movement, not sound. If photos are to be taken, avoid doing so during the first fifteen minutes of the presentation. It will be too much of a distraction for both your audience and speaker. Try and take a posed "action" shot during the break.

Have you ever suffered along with a speaker through microphone feedback or competing with a Dixieland band in the room next door? ***Where was your attention focused, and what do you remember of the speaker's message?***

12. Use your own speaker system, rather than the speakers in the room ceiling. You will get much higher quality sound. If you are in a divided ballroom, make sure that whoever is recording next door is not patched into your system.

13. If your group is large, use speakers in the front, middle and rear of the audience.

14. If recording, put microphones in the audience to pick up audience response.

15. When video taping, use BetaSP format rather than VHS.