

San Diego NetWare Users Association: Planning an NUI Seminar

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When I became president of the San Diego NetWare Users Association (SDNUA) several years ago, the SDNUA board members and I decided that we should organize a networking seminar. This seminar would allow NetWare Users International (NUI) members to improve their networking skills and to interact with other NUI members in Southern California.

Because many of the high tech organizations located in Southern California hesitated to sponsor such an event, the SDNUA board members and I decided to roll up our sleeves and organize our own seminar. This decision resulted in a tremendous amount of work for SDNUA leaders, but it also generated valuable benefits for SDNUA members.

IT'S HARDER THAN IT LOOKS . . .

We faced many challenges in organizing a networking seminar. The first challenge was locating a building that could meet our needs: We needed a centrally located building that could hold more than 200 people, provide audio and visual equipment, and offer free security services and parking facilities—all on a Saturday. Qualcomm, a local wireless communications company and employer of Rich Flees (then an SDNUA board member and currently the president of SDNUA), generously offered to provide all of these services.

The next challenge was establishing a theme for the seminar. After a bit of brainstorming, we decided to focus the seminar on analyzing IPX protocol. Finding a keynote speaker for this topic was relatively easy: Laura Chappell, an expert in protocol analysis and the author of many books on the subject, was the perfect candidate. Laura graciously accepted the invitation to speak at the seminar, and we agreed on a date to hold the seminar.

With a keynote speaker scheduled, we moved on to organizing other details of

the seminar. For example, we needed to advertise the seminar. About six months before the seminar was scheduled to be held, we began advertising the seminar during local user group events. In addition, we asked SDNUA members to advertise the seminar to their coworkers and to others who might be interested in attending.

We also decided on a registration fee of \$75 for SDNUA members and \$120 for nonmembers. As an incentive for nonmember attendees to join SDNUA, we offered a registration/SDNUA membership package for \$115.

As the date of the seminar approached, we meticulously assigned responsibilities to SDNUA leaders. We wanted to make sure that the speakers, the attendees, the name badges, and the muffins would all arrive on time and without confusion.

BUT IT'S WORTH THE EFFORT

Fortunately, everything went smoothly on the day of the seminar. The speakers delivered a wealth of information with a great deal of flair. For example, Laura Chappell explained packet technology in terms of a 2 a.m. bar scene, and she threw pencils at the audience to explain how NETBIOS broadcast works.

We were initially concerned about attendees disappearing during the afternoon sessions of our seminar. (After all, a walk on the beach after lunch seems much more appealing than sitting in a room full of engineers.) However, by providing some great afternoon workshops as well as an incentive or two to stick around (last minute raffles are great!), we kept attendees interested through the end of the seminar.

Thanks to the efforts of many individuals, the seminar was a success. Attendees left the seminar with a better understanding of networking and some great prizes. But attendees were not the only ones to benefit from the seminar: SDNUA's mem-

bership increased, and the seminar generated revenue for SDNUA.

IN CASE YOU MISSED IT

SDNUA continues to offer networking seminars, and attendance at these seminars continues to increase. To view photos and highlights from previous seminars or to find out about upcoming seminars, visit SDNUA's web site (<http://www.sdnua.org>).

Sean Azhadi is currently the NUI regional representative for Southern California. Prior to his election to this position, he served as president of SDNUA for two years. You can contact Sean at sean@sdccu.com. ●

