

Get Smart at Investment Seminars and Trading Shows

by Michael Sincere

With the recent spike in market volatility, many traders are looking for ways to sharpen their trading skills. Investment seminars and trading shows offer excellent learning opportunities, but before you pack your bags, take time to think about your objectives. Are you hoping to find a “magic formula” that will improve your trading results? If so, experts say you might be disappointed.

Charles Githler, chairman of InterShow, which includes the Money Show, the Traders Expo, the Forex Trading Expo, and luxury cruise investment seminars, says that trade shows provide the “widest possible smorgasbord of advice, products, and services that you can sample.” He suggests that you think of these shows as continuing education. The goal is to improve your trading and investing skills while looking for new ideas.

Trade shows give you a chance to learn about the latest electronic trading products. In addition, you can receive one-on-one instruction on how to use specialized software. “These shows and exhibitions present material that individuals would not normally be exposed to,” says Howard Kornstein, an independent trader with more than 25 years of experience. If you are looking for additional advice, for a fee, you can sign up for a lunch with a panel of professional traders and television personalities who will discuss their experiences and provide market analysis.

Last February, more than 10,000 investors and traders attended the three-day World Money Show in Orlando, Fla. In addition to dozens of exhibitions and product demonstrations, the trade show also included both free and paid seminars.

Jim Jubak, senior markets editor for MSN Money and popular columnist of *Jubak's Journal*, gave a number of presentations. “You hear all sorts of opinions at these shows,” he says. “You can go to sessions that say ‘Sell everything!’ or sessions that suggest you put 10% in the market now. You quickly get to see everything that is out there.”

How to prepare for a seminar

According to Kornstein, you should attend a trade show with an open mind. “Before I go to a show, I usually have an idea of whom and what I’m looking for, whether it’s software or information,” he says. Kornstein determines which specific vendors he wants to visit, rather than aimlessly wandering from booth to booth.

The biggest mistake that people make, according to Kornstein, is buying new software without taking the time to think it through. “Don’t make an impulsive decision,” he suggests. “Read over the contract multiple times. Sometimes it’s easy to sign up but difficult to get out.” He also suggests talking to other attendees to determine the most effective way to use a particular program or service.

Meet the experts

Trade shows are attended by well-known experts who offer attendees insight and analysis on the market and particular trading methods. For example, Dr. Alexander Elder, psychiatrist and author of several books, spoke at one of the paid seminars at the World Money Show. Alexander said that he would not be surprised if the market rallied for a couple of months before taking a dramatic plunge. He is currently finishing a book on shorting

stocks titled *Sell & Sell Short* (Wiley, 2008).

“A good use of events like the World Money Show is to test your investing and trading ideas,” says Jubak. He believes you should purposely attend seminars that discuss views that are the opposite of what you believe. “You want to find someone to test your ideas against. You also want someone to bring you information that you don’t have.”

Although it can be exciting to meet your favorite expert, Jubak warns that some people take it too far. In fact, he feels the biggest mistake that people make is blindly following someone without thinking independently. “There is a subset of investors who believe that you need to find someone to follow,” says Jubak. “That doesn’t work for a lot of reasons.” For example, he says that because no one is right during all market conditions, you could end up getting bad advice. Rather than searching for a magic formula that may lead to trading profits, success more often comes from hard work and analysis.

How seminars can help you trade smarter

Jubak says that he learns as much from his million-plus readers as they do from him. Therefore, he attends seminars to get clues about what his readers are thinking. “I am able to see what’s on people’s minds and what’s worrying them,” he says. In fact, those worries and concerns are often what bring people to these events.

The most common question his readers have been asking is whether to sell certain stocks. To answer this question, Jubak has to play the role of psychiatrist, listening to readers to find out why they bought the stock in the first place. “If you don’t know why you own it, then holding it for the long term may be painful,” he says.

He believes that a key to investment success is “to know thyself. If you believe that a stock will come back because it has one of the world’s greatest products, you may want to buy more when it’s down. But if you can’t sleep at night because it’s down 20%, then perhaps you should do something different.”

Fidelity participates in the World Money Show

A steady stream of attendees stopped by Fidelity’s trading booth at the World Money Show. Fidelity representatives answered questions and demonstrated Fidelity’s Windows-based trading platform, Active Trader Pro®1, as well as Fidelity’s back-testing tool, Wealth-Lab Pro®2. At times, lines of people stood in front of the monitors, analyzing charts and studying stock quotes.

Bruce Johnstone, CFA®, managing director and senior marketing investment strategist at Fidelity, gave a seminar about investing in other countries. During his well-attended presentation, Johnstone suggested that people look at global opportunities, especially if there are cracks in the pillars of the U.S. economy. Johnstone’s talk was an “eyeopener,” says Githler.

Elder spent several hours demonstrating his trading methods during regular market hours on a live monitor. In response to a question about how to control greed, he told the attendees his key to success is not about trying to hit home runs. Just like Jubak, Elder also learns a lot from attendees. He enjoys answering questions and watching when that light goes on in a person’s head. “The reason I keep doing seminars is that every once in a while, it really catches, and people come up to tell me how much the seminar changed their life.”

While you shouldn’t expect to learn about a “magic bullet” that leads to investing success, interacting with presenters and attendees at these seminars can give you additional insights into market behavior and perhaps new trading methods, something that can be difficult to accomplish while sitting alone behind your computer screen. “You need to develop a system and a method,” says Elder. “Remember that trading is not a crapshoot.”

Michael Sincere is a freelance writer and author of five books on investing and trading, including Understand-

ing Stocks (McGraw-Hill, 2003) and Understanding Options (McGraw-Hill, 2006).

Past performance is no guarantee of future results.

1. Fidelity Active Trader Pro® software for securities brokerage and account management is available to those customers with annual household trading activity of 36 or more trades. Streaming watch lists and static Level II quotes are available to customers with 72 or more trades a year. Certain features, including streaming Level II quotes, streaming interactive charting, time and sales data, and directed trading, are available to those customers with annual household trading activity of 120 or more trades.

2. Investors in households that place 120 or more stock, bond, or options trades in a rolling 12-month period and maintain at least \$25,000 in assets across their eligible Fidelity brokerage accounts are eligible for Wealth-Lab Pro.

Foreign investments involve greater risks than U.S. investments, including political and economic risks and the risk of currency fluctuations.

The opinions of the experts presented are their own and are not the opinions or recommendations of Fidelity Investments. These materials are provided for informational purposes only and should not be considered or construed as a recommendation of any security. Fidelity Investments does not guarantee that the information supplied is accurate, complete, or timely, and does not make any warranties with regard to the results obtained from its use. Fidelity Investments does not guarantee the suitability or potential value of any particular investment or information source.

Fidelity Investments is not affiliated with any other company noted herein.

Copyright 1998–2008 FMR LLC

All rights reserved.

[Terms of Use](#) [Privacy](#) [Security](#) [Site Map](#)