

## ***Top Ten Success Tips for Successful Exhibiting***

### ***Plan Your Exhibit Program for Maximum Results***

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#### **1. Know your audience and focus your message on their needs.**

- Who is the "perfect prospect" at this show for your product or service, and what are their current problems? Your participation as an exhibitor at a trade show should focus on defining which of the show attendees' are in your target market and determining their current needs to offer solutions. Make sure your graphics and message answer your target audiences' needs and wants.
- Show Management can provide statistics regarding number of anticipated attendees, and historical data on job titles, purchasing influence, company size or sales volume, and budgets.

#### **2. Identify and prioritize the top three reasons why you are going to each trade show.**

- To sell your products or services to attendees and other exhibitors (or gather sales leads)
- Promote new products/product launch
- Enhance your corporate image or corporate message as an industry leader (branding/awareness)
- Cement existing client relationships
- Conduct business meetings
- Identify and recruit new distributors/dealers/representatives/employees
- Educate your audience regarding your products and/or services
- Obtain press/media coverage
- Perform competitive and market research
- Attend educational sessions

#### **3. Set strategic, measurable show goals and objectives.**

- Your goals and objectives should be in keeping with your corporate mission and integrated with your overall marketing plan, keeping your prioritized objectives in mind.
- Set realistic goals based on show attendance, number of exhibiting hours, exhibit size and staffing, and budget.
- Plan your logistical exhibit timeline based on the tactics needed to support your predetermined goals.
- Allocate your budget to meet your prioritized show goals.

#### **4. Identify the products or services you will showcase and determine how you will display or demonstrate them.**

- If the show is supporting a new product launch, time is of the essence in having marketing collaterals, training for your exhibit staff and the actual product ready for display or demonstration.
- If you have a large product line, display only a sample, pertinent to your audience's identified needs.
- Trade show attendees want to experience your product or service in your exhibit, not just walk through it. Make it as interactive as possible.

#### **5. Produce an attractive, uncluttered exhibit consistent with your corporate marketing campaign**

Exhibit tips:

- Use color, light and movement to attract attendees to your exhibit.
- Retain attendees in your booth using presentations, demos, or "info-tainment", and a well-trained exhibit staff to convey your corporate message and answer attendee questions.
- Keep your exhibit open and inviting; don't block more than 20% of your aisle space with counters, walls, or excess exhibit staff.

#### **6. Use high-impact graphics focusing on your prospects' needs and wants.**

- The "look" of your graphics should impart your overall marketing strategy (integrated marketing) and specific show message.
- Leverage your best ideas from other media (advertising, print media, promotions, giveaways, etc.) into a consistent presentation to gain brand recognition.
- Plan your exhibit graphics as large, colorful "visual speed bumps" to attract attendees' attention and communicate your message.
- Effective graphics create an interest in your product or service by telling potential prospects what you can do for them in approximately 3.5 seconds.
  - Use graphics to state your unique selling position (what differentiates you from competitors).
  - Use graphics to qualify who you want to meet ("Dealers Wanted") and discourage those time wasters you don't!

#### **7. Promotion – Pre-Show, At-Show, Post Show**

Be proactive in inviting the attendees you'd like to visit your exhibit. Industry studies have shown that exhibitors can double the number of qualified leads at a show with effective pre-show and at-show promotional campaigns.

- Plan an integrated promotion strategy for all three timeframes of a trade show: pre-show, at-show, and post-show.
- Work with Show Management to obtain a targeted list of pre-registered attendees' names for pre-show promotion: postcards, email, or letter with exhibit floor passes. Contact them multiple times with compelling messages.

## **Promotion – Pre-Show, At-Show, Post Show (continued)**

- Determine on-site promotional opportunities, such as hotel door hangers or room keys, taxi receipts, event sponsorships, show directory advertising, banners, show bags or badge lanyards, etc.
- Pick promotional items that have a high perceived value, will be kept by the attendee and have a tie-in to your message to make it more memorable.
- Give promotional items as a positive reinforcement to only those who complete a lead form or attend a demonstration or presentation for higher perceived value.

### **8. Prepare your exhibit staff for “show business”.**

Trade shows are a different type of sales venue with specific rules and expectations. Just as you would not send an actor on stage without a script, props, and a rehearsal, don't send your exhibit staff to a trade show unprepared.

- Recruit friendly, courteous, enthusiastic, knowledgeable booth staff.
- Hold an exhibit staff meeting in the booth to introduce the Booth Captain, PR contacts, VIPs and review exhibit layout, lead gathering systems, promotions, presentations, partners, and work schedules.
- Corporate management should sponsor a mandatory off-site exhibit staff dinner or breakfast to:
  - Share corporate show strategy and goals with your staff.
  - Conduct product training.
  - Review good booth etiquette and body language.
  - Train how to effectively greet and engage suspects, quickly qualify using probing questions, demonstrate to prospects, and disengage unqualified attendees.

The most memorable part of the attendee's exhibit experience is the staff interaction!

### **9. Record all pertinent information on a lead form to facilitate follow-up.**

- Plan ahead with your sales department to determine what pertinent information they will need to follow-up after the show, including demographic data (from the attendee's scanned show badge or business card), product interest, role in purchasing process, timeframe to buy, and requested follow-up.
- Determine if you will rent an official lead retrieval system on site (standard or customized), purchase a customizable system, or customize your own pre-printed forms to be completed manually.
- Determine your lead rating system for after-show follow up, such as A=Hot, B=Warm, C=Cold.

### **10. Provide promised follow-up within 72 hours if emailed; 10 business days by US mail.**

Fact: About 80% of all printed materials gathered by attendees at trade shows are thrown away before they make it back to the office. Use expensive collaterals in post-show follow-up of qualified leads.

- Write your follow-up letter before the show; reference the show name, your booth theme, etc.
- Thank them for visiting your booth; reiterate the features/benefits of your product/service in the letter, and mention your proposed follow-up.
- Mail this letter with literature, coupon, article reprints, case studies, etc. to reinforce the sale or, if responding by email, hyperlink to your web site for easy access.
- Follow-up in the requested manner, whether by phone, fax, email, or with promised materials.