

Trade Show Exhibitor Tips

Get the most out of your trade show experience

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Deciding to exhibit at a show will cost your company money, resources and time. Strategically planning for this event can help you get the most out of your show experience, and hopefully get you the leads to grow your business.

Set clear goals for your show participation

What do you want to get out of it? How many attendees do you want to stop at your booth? How many leads do you hope to generate? How many products do you want to sell? Are you focusing on promotion or hoping to launch a new product?

You can have more than one goal, of course, but the point is that you need to be clear about what your participation in the show is going to achieve. Determine what your ROI would be – if one new customer helps you justify you being at the event, then focus on getting that customer.

Do your research

You need to choose the shows that will give your business the best ROI in terms of your goals. If your goal is on-site sales, exhibiting at that big splashy show where your booth is among dozens that sell similar products may not be the best choice.

You want to choose a show that best targets the audience that you want to reach, and best suits your participation goals. Find out what the particular show's objectives are, and investigate and evaluate the show's audience.

Budget and book your space



Find out everything you can about your space, including:

- Location on the trade show floor
- Other exhibits nearby
- Physical conditions of the booth space, such as lighting

Plan your exhibit in terms of your audience

Who are you targeting with your show display? If you are targeting multiple audiences, make sure you have appropriate information to meet the needs of each.

Advertise in advance

Put the word out that you're participating in a particular show by inviting your clients, customers, suppliers, and other contacts to attend the show. Be sure you give them all the details, such as your booth number. Be sure to advertise your coming show attendance on your website as well.

You can also advertise in the event program if one is available.

10 Tips to maximize your exhibiting experience

So now you're ready to attend that show -- almost. Below are tips for putting together a show display that wows your audience and draws a crowd.



Engage in social media.

Learn what the Twitter hashtag is for the event and post what you are promoting or what you are giving away. Like the organization's Facebook page. If they allow it, post teasers or questions to engage the audience.

Other social media outlets can include:

- Instagram
- LinkedIn
- Pinterest
- YouTube
- Flickr



Pull a crowd to your trade show booth

Use an interactive display, such as a quiz or game on a computer, a contest draw, or a scheduled demonstration. It doesn't need to be fancy to draw people's interest.



Use a prize draw or contest

Having some kind of prize drawing or contest is a great way to collect contact information from booth visitors. You can give away promotional items to encourage people to participate.

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Have a stock of promotion items that you can use as giveaways at your booth

Small items that people can take away and use (while being reminded about your business) are best. Be sure you place these items in a location where people will have to walk into or through your show display to get them.

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Actively engage trade booth visitors

Give people who approach your show display a friendly greeting and welcome their questions. Be sure that your body language is friendly. Don't stand there with your arms crossed over your chest, for instance. Chat with booth visitors, and find out what aspect of your business they're most interested in. Be prepared to offer specific solutions to their questions. The trick is to draw them in without intimidating or overwhelming them.

6

Make sure you have plenty of promotional literature on hand

You'll want to have a good supply of color fliers and brochures as well as order forms, price sheets and business cards that you can hand out to booth visitors. Make it easy for them to find the information on your business later.

7

Have your show booth manned at all times

Someone has to be there to greet browsers, engage them in conversation, and take their questions. If you can't be there every minute the show is open, you'll need to have at least one other person to help man your booth.

8

Send knowledgeable staff

Many companies will send their "rookies" to shows. Sending new staff people is not always the wisest decision, however, as they may not have all the answers about your products or services. If you do send a new staff member, be sure to include an experienced employee as well. That way, newer staff will be able to watch and learn.

9

Get out from behind your booth and get off your phone/computer

Often, exhibitors sit behind their tables while attendees stand looking down at them -- get up and engage! Also, get off your phone or computer. Nothing is worse than watching one of our exhibitors miss valuable exhibitor time because he or she is on the phone. There are typically periods of down time during any show to follow up on voicemail or e-mails.

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Follow up promptly

Follow up with contacts and leads you made during the show as soon as possible. The faster you send them out, the more your business will stand out from the rest.