



Tradeshow Facts & Tips

Facts:

Exhibitions are the #1 source for attendees who make the final decisions!

Exhibitions	90%
Direct Sales and Field Sales	75%
Public Relations	75%
Internet	63%
Direct Mail	58%
Trade Publication and Journal Advertising	55%
Telemarketing	50%

Exhibitions are most effective for each of the following objectives:

Promote Brand Image and Visibility	22%
Take Orders for Products and Services	20%
Promote Awareness of Company and Capabilities	19%
General Sales Leads	15%
Introduce New Products and Services	13%
Enter New Markets and Regions	11%

Exhibitions are used more in the selling process than any other marketing tool.

Exhibitions	87%
Direct Sales and Field Sales	78%
Trade Publication and Journal Advertising	70%
Public Relations	55%
Internet	46%
Direct Mail	41%
Telemarketing	28%
Other	6%

Power Buyers walk the aisle of exhibitions at closing to time

68% of salespeople surveyed indicate that they meet a quality prospect during the last half-hour of the exhibit day.

21% of the exhibiting companies obtained a sale from the lead taken in the last half-hour of the exhibit day.

6% of the booth staff did not meet a good prospect in the last half-hour

5% of booth staff met with an attendee who was revisiting the exhibit for a second or third time during the last half-hour

AT ANY GIVEN SHOW, EXHIBITION ATTENDEES,

60% attended for two or more years

40% are attending for the first time

86% have "buying power"

50% want to see "What's New" in products and service

ATTENDEES USUALLY FEEL THAT,

42% of exhibit salespeople don't understand their needs

28% could not find the salesperson to assist them

16% don't trust the salesperson

TRADE SHOW EXHIBITORS:

54% fail to see objectives for exhibition participation

46% set objectives, but half follow through on them

Trade Show Tips

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1. Exhibitor Information Manuals

All professional trade show organizers supply exhibitors with an Information Manual, which contains all necessary information for successful exhibiting. This is the document that very few exhibitors read! Information Manuals should be read from cover to cover as they contain:

Service order forms- which either have discounts for early submission or penalties for late orders. Note that some trade shows have compulsory contractors for supplying services.

Advertising opportunities – in trade show catalogues or show dailies and supplements which would receive much wider circulation and attention, than individual advertisement.

Free editorial in the trade show catalogue- is offered by many show organizers. Trade show catalogues are kept for a long time, after a show, as they serve as a valuable source of reference. This can generate sales and leads for exhibitors long after the trade show has closed.

Free signage-if included as part of your booth rental, the organizers need to know what company/brand or product name you require on the provided signage.

Tickets, passes and badges- are normally linked to security procedures so you must be aware of the rules and how many you are entitled to. Check how many invitation tickets you will receive to accompany your pre-show promotions. If more are required, then contact the organizers.

Rules and regulations- absolutely vital to know and may include height restrictions, signage requirements, and other vital information.

Shipping information- the shipping details vary by show and are critically important for a smooth event. Depending on how early you send your booth and materials, you may need to ship to a special designated (early equipment) address instead of the standard exhibition hall address.

Participation- trade show participation is a unique marketing opportunity that involves a great deal more than the physical trade show booth.

2. Choosing the Right Show

With so many shows and conferences to choose from, exhibitors need to determine which trade show will best meet their objectives. To choose the trade shows that best meets your marketing objectives you'll need to do some research.

- ✓ If it is a new trade show, check with your suppliers, competitors and customers to see if they are supporting it
- ✓ Ask the organizers how many visitors they are expecting, how many are from your target market and what mix of job titles and responsibilities are represented.
- ✓ Check out the current list of exhibitors.
- ✓ Understand your total costs. What are the costs of the booth space and what is included; booth hardware and lighting, flooring upgrades, lead retrieval equipment, trash cans, carpet cleaning, etc...?
- ✓ Examine the show organizers. How long have the organizers been in business, what other shows do they run, and how long have they been running those shows?

3. Setting Objectives

The first step in planning your trade show success is to set effective and realistic trade show objectives. Effectively planning your show's objectives allows the rest of your show to fall into place. Written objectives are the foundation for a successful show. For example, if your objective is to obtain 200 top-quality leads, how many visitors would you have to meet to find the right potential buyers of your products? If one in every four visitors was a potential buyer, then your booth should be big enough to accommodate 800 visitors during the trade show. Written objectives will help you decide on:

- 📌 **Space Selection**
- 📌 **Exhibit Designs**
- 📌 **Integrated Marketing**
- 📌 **Pre-Show and At-Show Promotions**
- 📌 **Booth Manager**
- 📌 **Booth Staff**
- 📌 **Leads Management**
- 📌 **Measuring Results**

Of course, you can have more than one goal but the point is that you need to be clear about what your participation in the trade show is going to achieve. Use **SMART** objectives that are: specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time-related. For instance, if you don't have the budget for a big booth, with lots of staff, then reduce your objectives accordingly and consider a more affordable alternative like a pop-up display that still gives you a presence at the show. Written objectives allow you to determine the cost-effectiveness of exhibiting compared with other marketing media.

4. Space Selection

If you have formulated trade show objectives, then you will have already established what products you will be promoting at the show, how many visitors you expect at your booth and the staffing required. Next, consider seating, hospitality, demonstration, office, storage areas and in-booth promotions. Allow floor area for everything, which will drive your booth size requirement.

The average trade show has over 400 exhibitors. So, how do you choose the best booth space for you? Most shows give space-picking priority to the exhibitors who have been with them the longest. Some studies have found that booth placement has no effect on the amount of audience you receive to your booth. Yet, other studies have found that visitors enter an exhibition and turn right, because we drive on the right. Therefore, if you want visitors to see your display first, then the right-hand side of the exhibition is best. Corner booths and those fronting major features like the entrance and restaurant, are the most visible. Some veteran exhibitors take advantage of this and require a space in the center, front entrance to the hall, or near their biggest competitor. But there are veteran exhibitors who flee from the same locations. All the same, the size of your booth space is a very important decision. You must weigh the need to stand out from your competitors with a large booth, and yet have enough budgeted to exhibit at all the worthwhile shows for your company.

Your total exhibit budget forms the basis of the decision to exhibit. The show organizers will allow you to place a hold on the selected booth that places neither party under any legal obligation. Once the hold is placed on a booth, then the other associated costs can be calculated, allowing you to judge the expected expenditure against the expected.

4a. Space Selection - Worksheet

Factors to consider when selecting space

- What is the typical traffic pattern?
- Is there more than one entrance to the exhibit hall?
- How much time do visitors normally spend on the floor?
- Do we want to be near the front of the hall? In the middle? Or at the back?
- Do we want to be near competition?
- Do we want to be near necessities –restaurant, telephone, rest rooms?
- Are there adjacent meeting rooms that attract visitors?
- What kind of lighting is available in the hall – Where are the windows, if any?
- What kind of space do I need? Inline, peninsula, island, cross aisle?
- How much space do I need for the exhibit, product, visitors and staff? (1 staffer per 50 square feet if unoccupied space)
- Are hanging signs allowed? If so where is the best location?
- Are there height restrictions in various areas in the hall? – Such as lower ceilings along the periphery of the hall.
- What kind of storage is available – on-the-floor, off-the-floor?
- What Obstructions are there on the floor plan, such as columns, post, stairs, and low ceilings?

Floor plan Checklist – when looking at a floor plan look for the following:

- Entrances/Exits
- Restrooms, Restaurants, Telephones, Water fountains
- Registration area
- Freight doors, elevators, escalators
- Conference locations
- Windows, columns, posts
- Power sources/electrical junction boxes
- Fire protection Plumbing
- Exhibitor lounges, Association lounge, Show Manager's office

5. Exhibit Design

Why does exhibit design matter? A well-designed exhibit is so effective at cutting through the trade show clutter and getting your message to your target audience. The average trade show attendee will spend 7 to 8 hours on the floor over a period of 2 to 3 days visiting an average of 25-31 exhibits. This gives attendees 5 to 15 minutes per booth. This gives you only 5 to 15 minutes to make a lasting impression that will give you an edge over the competition. Fortunately, design is not a completely hidden mystery but is actually a process that you can learn about from the tips we've provided here.

5a. Effective Booths

The booth design is a tool to draw trade show attendees to your booth, project and reinforce your corporate branding, and help your sales staffs sell.

Various display options are available which include [renting a booth](#), buying a booth or display system, or customizing the shell scheme provided by the trade show organizers. If you exhibit even once a year, it might be worthwhile to purchase a display system which is portable, re-configurable, and which can be put-up and taken-down by your own staff.

Every display should have good graphics which clearly state who you are, what you do and key product selling points, and clear concise benefit statements. Keep wording to a minimum as visitors will walk past your booth in seven seconds and in that time should know who you are, what you are selling and what the product can do for them.

5b. 7 Key Exhibit Design Questions

In designing an exhibit that fits your needs, you have to ask a lot of questions. Here are 7 essential questions – and why they matter.

1. What kind of image do you want to convey?

Your exhibit conveys your company's personality – it creates an emotional reaction with your customers and people buy for emotional reasons. The shapes, materials, surface treatment, colors, images and even typography you choose help convey your company image. A company that wants a high-tech innovative look will end up with a completely different exhibit than one that seeks a professional established image.

2. What are you trying to accomplish?

Believe it or not, your objectives can dictate the actual shape of your exhibit. If you want to generate a lot of leads have an open inviting space that allows easy entry for attendees and open sightlines for booth staffers. On the other hand, if you're looking to build relationships with a select number of key individuals; then you need an exhibit with conference rooms where you can spend quality time closing sales. Two different objectives which have two radically different exhibit designs. Exhibitors that want to build their image tend to go for bigger graphic images and larger architectural elements to create a bigger impression.

3. What booth sizes are right for you?

Many companies use several booth sizes – island exhibits for their national shows, and then inline exhibits for their regional or vertical market shows. With foresight and planning, exhibitors can design one large exhibit that can be reconfigured for their smaller booth spaces. Not only do they save money by not having to purchase multiple exhibit properties, but they also present a more consistent look at all their shows.

4. How can you stretch your exhibiting budget?

Everyone wants the Taj Mahal. Yet, everyone must come up with a justifiable budget. Balancing those needs is the goal of every exhibit designer. Compared to traditional custom exhibits, Skyline uses its compact lightweight exhibit materials to deliver an effective exhibit that still saves clients thousands of dollars in operating costs. Reconfigurable components let exhibitors create many exhibits from one. Rental exhibits are also a major help in maximizing the budget.

5. What matters to your target audience?

Answer this question, and then make sure that's what you're showing on your exhibit. You'll get to what matters by determining the benefits your clients are seeking and then what the key advantages are. It can take many of decisions to arrive at this conclusion. Start with what your products are, move to their features and then decide what the benefits of these features are. Continue until you distill the message down to the key benefits that drive your buyers' purchasing decisions.

6. What message do you want your visitors to get in the first three seconds? And what do you want them to remember after visiting your booth?

Do you want them to remember your new products, your competitive advantage or your company's brand image? Keep it simple. Designers who are use to creating brochures or ads have a tendency to overload exhibit graphics which with way too much information to be effective in a trade show exhibit. Think billboard, not bulletin board. It's better to go for impact – less is definitely more in trade show exhibit copy.

7. What functional needs do you have?

In creating an exhibit, you're also creating a temporary workspace for your booth staffers. What are their needs? You may need to create areas for demos, presentations, conferences, and storage. And still balance that with your need to create an accessible exhibit with graphic messages.

5c. Design Your Exhibit with Your Target Audience in Mind

Below is a list of questions you can ask yourself and others in your organization as you evaluate the design of your next exhibit. These questions focus attention on the visitors at your booth – which is why you exhibit at shows!

- Is your organization name professionally presented and located at the highest possible point in your exhibit?
- Are your graphics easily read from 10-20 feet away?
- Is the exhibit easily read and presented with memorable factors in mind?
- Is the key point in your graphics prominently positioned?
- Are your tables the right height for the planned activities?
- Are the video screens/monitors large enough and at the right height for easy viewing?
- Is the demonstration area large enough for planned activities?
- Is the lighting adequate for easy viewing of the exhibit?
- Is there adequate storage space to eliminate a cluttered exhibit?
- Are the photographs and backlit transparencies easily read from 10-20 feet away?
- Is there adequate table space for lead-generating activities?
- Do the colors attract the eye? Are they pleasing to the senses? Are they memorable?

5d. Trade Show Exhibit Design for Different Booth Sizes

Trade show exhibits are not all created equal. Exhibit sizes can range from tabletops to islands. Exhibits require different design approaches to maximize their impact.

Tabletop Exhibits

Tabletop exhibits are usually used at shows that limit the booth size to that minimum standard. However, you can still use a tabletop with great effect. A tabletop exhibit is basically a two-dimensional object, like a miniature billboard. This exhibit is close to eye level and is thus easily seen at glance. So, you'll have greater results with a single large image than with many small photos.

Ten-Foot Backwall Exhibits

More than half of all trade show exhibit booths are ten-foot backwall exhibits. Ten feet provides enough space for a company to display its message and host attendees. Backwall displays are still primarily a two-dimensional medium, so take full advantage of your limited space by covering it with attention-getting graphics. Curved wall pop-up displays will work for these spaces, as their surfaces always face the attendee, surrounding them with your graphic message. Curved displays even focus sound to the center of the booth, so it makes it easier to be heard within a busy show hall. Again, remember to make your display more like a billboard and less like a bulletin board.

Also, avoid the temptation of putting a big table in front of your backwall exhibit. Although that gives you a place to put your literature, it also creates a barrier between you and your prospects. It's better to have your booth staffers standing on that valuable real estate right next to the aisle, ready to greet and meet with your future customers. A smaller table is a great place to put an extra graphic that's close to the aisle, and still display your product samples, literature and more. If it's a Skyline exhibit, you can often store your cases inside the table.

Twenty-Foot and Larger Backwall Exhibits

Once you graduate to twenty feet of booth space you enter into a different trade show arena. With twenty feet you have new design possibilities. You can create small work areas within your exhibit for demonstrating product, making presentations or meeting with clients' around a small table. Twenty foot means you have twice the time to catch an attendee's eye as they walk past your booth. You can use part of your exhibit for a high impact graphic, and still show smaller detail graphics or display products on the other half.

Twenty-foot booth spaces offer greater three-dimensional design possibilities. Now it's legal to have a bridge coming off your backwall to the middle of the front of your booth. A bridge puts your name or message at a perpendicular angle to the aisle. Why is that important? This is important because your prospects can see the company name from a greater distance as they walk towards your booth. That gives you even more time to get noticed. Plus, you can also put a tower, perhaps 10' or 12' tall, in the middle of your backwall exhibit for greater attention-getting impact. Backwall booths beyond 20', allows several designing possibilities. However, growing beyond a 20' backwall an exhibitor may choose a 20' by 20' island exhibit instead.

Twenty-Foot by Twenty-Foot Island Exhibits and Larger

If backwall displays tend to be a two-dimensional medium, then island displays are true three-dimensional marketing powerhouse. Within an island booth, you have the opportunity to create an environment for your booth staffers and attendees that accelerates communication and opportunity. You can have separate areas for demonstrating product, writing leads, meeting in private conference rooms, presenting to groups, storing staffers effects and

promotional giveaways. You can create graphic messages that are seen from every side on towers, bridges, and even hanging signs. And all this can be combined into a single, impressive exhibit that communicates that you're someone worth doing business with. There is one other major advantage of an island exhibit: More aisle space. A 20-foot by 20-foot island exhibit has 80 feet of aisle space, twice as much a 10-foot by 40-foot space with the same square footage. Double the aisle space means double the chance to stop and engage passing attendees. Even a 20-foot by 20-foot peninsula space, which has aisles on three sides, offers 60 feet of aisle space.

With even larger island exhibits, you can create larger environments for conference rooms, theater-seating presentations, product demonstrations and multiple workstations for booth staffers, with computer monitors and lead processing machines. According to research the bigger your exhibit is, the more memorable it is. So at trade shows bigger is often better.

5e. Graphics

Designing great graphics for your booth is critical to setting yourselves apart from the competition. Some important tips to keep in mind are as follows:

- The 15 foot rule. Make sure all logos and text can be clearly read from a distance of 15 feet (i.e. no squinting required even for us 40 and 50 year olds:)
- Limit bullet points to 10 words or less
- Limit text oriented charts to a headline and 4 bullet points
- Include plenty of visual images to extract emotion and make your exhibit memorable
- Don't scrimp on your company logo. Make sure it's very very easy to spot even from a long distance away. You want to make sure that your target audience can find you in a glance. Hanging displays are key to improving your visibility.
- Look at using mural graphic panels and fabric backwalls to greatly increase the perceived value and emotional impact of your display.

6. Integrated Marketing

Very few companies understand how events fit into their overall corporate sales and marketing objectives, which is why ad hoc decisions are taken to participate in a trade show. Most exhibitors have never even considered exhibiting as a way to effectively achieve annual marketing objectives. Exhibitions and events can involve all of the 4 P's of the marketing mix; product, price, place and promotion. The direct communications that take place at a trade show are the most valuable tool in relationship marketing.

Successful exhibiting incorporates other marketing communication elements like print, advertising, direct mail, PR, corporate communications and the Internet. When used together, the combined efforts of all marketing tools produce better results than when they're used individually.

When trade shows are integrated into the annual marketing mix, far better results are achieved.

7. Pre-Show and At-Show Promotions

Promotions are the secret weapon of the veteran trade show manager, when done right they work so well. Consider these two items: 1. the average trade show has over 400 exhibitors, where the average attendee will visit about 21 exhibits and that average attendee walks into the show with a list of 75% of the exhibits they want to see. That means you have to get on their dance card before the show. 2. You can boost your trade show lead counts by 33% with promotions - even though they require a much smaller percentage of your budget. So, promotions are money well spent. Pre-show promotions are the things you do before the show to make attendees want to visit your booth. At-show promotions are the activities at the show and what you do in your exhibit to bring in more attendees.

7a. Pre-Show Promotions – Your Call for Actions!

Research reveals that exhibitors who undertake pre-show promotions, to build quality visitors to their booth, improve results by 300%. Study your written trade show objectives and determine who you would like to visit your booth, and then aim all pre-show promotions at them. The value of pre-show promotions is to build qualified traffic to your booth rather than just hoping that good prospects will happen to walk by. Giveaways in the booth are also useful since they create a lasting impression.

Less than 20% of exhibitors actually conduct some form of Pre-Show Promotion. CEIR reports that 75% of today's attendees come to an exhibition with an agenda. If you want them to schedule time to visit us you need to get on their "must see agenda." An effective pre-show promotion program has three elements: The List, The Content and The offer.

The List is almost always the most important and time-consuming activity of the three. You first need to define your targeted audience and then locate them for some type of communication. You have several options: (1) show management: last year's registration list (be careful with high turnover industries – they may have come last year, but are they still in place this year?) They may offer a pre-registration list that is categorized into industry segments and demographic description. (2) You can buy or rent a list from a professional list management company. Or (3) you can create our own from your database or field sales input.

The Content is what you will have in your exhibit that is of interest to your targeted audience: Your new product, a demonstration of the product. What have you brought to the show that will interest your audience?

And last The Offer – what benefit are you offering that will change your prospect's or customer's life. What solutions are you providing? What will attract them to come to your exhibit, greater profitability, improved efficiency, or the opportunity to win a Palm Pilot?

With the popularization of the internet and broadcast faxes, you are not left to the traditional means of communicating your presence at a show – print. You can begin the dialog before the show using web-based pre-show promotions. With the speed of communication, you can have more than one interchange before visitors arrive at our exhibit. It doesn't really matter what type of pre-show promotion you employ, just so you do something that is a call for action to increase the awareness that you are present to offer solutions.

Don't be left wondering why no one is in your exhibit and our neighbor's exhibit is full. Conduct a pre-show promotion program that communicates who you are, what you do and what is your offer before they arrive at the show.

7b. Promotions Guide

There are a wide variety of promotional tools you can use before, during and after the show. This guide gives you the advantages and disadvantages of each and lets you match the promotion to your company's objectives.

Promotions	Advantage	Disadvantage	Objectives
Before the Show			
Trade Press Ad	Wide reach, Reaches vertical audiences	Not selective or targeted	Image awareness, Product introduction, Sales
Direct Mail	Targeted Reach	List availability	Image awareness, Generate leads, Product introduction, Pre-schedule appointments
Telemarketing	Direct contact/direct feedback	Expensive and time-consuming	Generate leads, Pre-schedule appointments, Sales
Broadcast Fax	Targeted message to a targeted audience	List availability	Build awareness, Generate leads, Product introduction, Pre-schedule appointments
E-mail (broadcast)	Targeted message to a targeted audience, Generate dialogue before the show	List availability	Build awareness, Generate leads, Product introduction, Pre-schedule appointments
Press Releases/editor contact	Inexpensive, Credible voice	Less control over type of exposure	Press exposure, Image awareness, Product introduction

At the Show			
Billboards	Wide reach	Limited locations	Image awareness, Product introduction
Airport ads	Early exposure	Limited time for exposure	Image awareness, Product introduction
Hotel TV ads	Less competition for visibility	Limited time for exposure	Image awareness, Product introduction
Mobile Ads	Repeat exposure	Restrictions in some cities and or some shows	Image awareness, Product introduction
In-Room Promos	Less competition for visibility	Additional time and coast for distribution	Image awareness, Product introduction
Hospitality events	Less competition for visibility	Cost, limited control over who shows up	Image awareness, Product introduction,
Show issue trade publication ads	Wide reach	Not targeted or selective	Image awareness, Generate leads, Product introduction, Sales
Show Daily ads	Wide reach, show related editorial	Readership varies from show to show	Images awareness, Generate leads, Product introduction, Sales, Promote your at-show event
Hall Ads/ Boards	Repeat on-site visibility	Limited choices	Image awareness, Generate leads, Product introduction
TV/ Photo ops	Local or national exposure	Limited time exposure, Little control, Limited audience	Image awareness to a public audience, Generate leads, Product introduction
Press Briefings/Interviews	Inexpensive press coverage, Exposure through a credible source	Little control, Requires additional staff to handle the press	Image awareness, Product introduction, Press coverage
Show Directory Ads	Outer covers provide good exposure, Selective reach	Limited availability, Costly	Image awareness, Generate leads, Product introduction, Sales

In the Exhibit			
Contests, games, drawings	Ability to draw a large audience	Time-consuming, Audience too general	Generate qualified leads, Product introduction
In-booth premiums	Generate qualified leads, Relatively inexpensive	Frequently misused by staff	Generate leads
Celebrities	Ability to draw a large audience	Audience too general	Build traffic
Live Presentations	Ability to draw large audiences, Ability to deliver a targeted message	Can draw too general an audience, Can lose targeted prospects if staff fails to interact	Build traffic, Product introduction

7c. Promotions

Before the show

- Personal Invitations
- Trade Press Advertising
- Telemarketing
- Press Releases
- E-mail
- Broadcast Fax

At the Show

- Billboards
- Airport Advertising
- Hotel TV Advertising
- Mobile Ads
- Hotel Room Promotions
- Show Directory Advertising
- Sponsorships
- Local TV opportunities
- Press Kits
- Show Daily Advertising

In the Exhibit

- Promotional Products
- Contests and Drawings linked to pre-show promotion
- Attractions – mime, magicians

After the Show

- Deferred rewards – personalized promotional products
- Lead-fulfillment information packets
- Post-show personal communication

7d. Promotion Execution

- What is your most desirable scenario? Define specifically what you want attendees to see and do in the booth so you can plan how you can make this happen.
- What happens when attendees bring the pre-show mailers and/or invitations to your booth?
- How and where will the giveaways be fulfilled?
- Will attendees that return the invitations still be required to visit the exhibit to claim a gift or do they get another prize for visiting?
- What are the staff required to do to make this work? Define this according to each area in the exhibit including the reception desk, product demonstrations, meet and greet areas, etc...
- If your booth is an island space, how will you facilitate desirable traffic flow? In other words, what do you want attendees to do during their visit?
- If your booth program includes a presenter, theater magician, etc., how will these activities support the other goals you would like to accomplish? Such as, having attendees visit a demonstration area, read the graphics, talk to the staff, etc...
- How will the promotion facilitate the collection of lead information so the sales force has comprehensive data to insure accurate post-show follow-up?
- How will you reinforce the messages and creative ideas post-show to help aid retention for your company's participation after the show?

7e. Time Line for Pre-Show Promotion

- **Six months from the Show**

- Decide on show objectives
- Establish the budget
- Decide on pre-show promotion vehicles

- **Five months from the Show**

- Decide on the show theme
- Select targeted publications for pre-show publicity
- Content planning for promotions
- Select list for telemarketing, e-mail and fax broadcasting

- **Four months from the Show**

- Define and plan direct mail options
- Select and order incentives – promotional products
- Plan and write your press releases
- Create telemarketing scripts

- **Three months from the Show**

- Schedule advertising
- Send as proofs to publications
- Target list of editors for press releases and send

- **Two months from the Show**

- Order direct mailing lists
- Produce direct mail piece

- **One month from the Show**

- Package and send direct mail piece
- Call editor to arrange interviews
- Begin e-mail and fax broadcast campaign

7f. Last Thought on Promotions

The most successful [trade show booths](#) include demonstrations. Every product or service can be demonstrated. Buyers visit trade shows to see products in action, which they can't get from advertisements and other one-dimensional media.

8. Booth Management

Successful exhibitors appoint a booth manager who has prior trade show experience, management support, and the necessary authority to work with all departments in your company regarding the show strategy, staffing, promotions, and procedures. Booth Managers should be involved in your trade show participation from the formulation of written objectives, right through to the processing of leads, after the show.

9. Booth Staff

90% of the positive feelings visitors have are due to the staff. Think about it, these are the people that are responsible for drawing in your customers, effectively engaging them and creating leads. Because of this, it is important that you select the most effective staffers that your company has to offer. If they are sales people, you have to train them to adapt their selling style to the trade show floor. If they are not salespeople, guess what – they can still do extremely well, given the proper preparation. The following worksheets can help you to pick the most qualified staffers and give you great ideas on how to effectively manage the visitors to your exhibit.

9a. Booth Staffers Attitude and Etiquette

We often avoid the Attitude and Etiquette portion of our pre-show meetings. (Or sometimes that is the only thing we talk about – “don’t drink, don’t smoke and don’t eat your lunch”). This segment is vital to your exhibiting success since the outcome is very visible but it must be presented in the positive if it is to be received and internalized.

- Wear your badge on the right hand side so it can be seen by your visitor when shaking hands
- If you don’t know the answer to a question, say so and use it as an excuse to follow up after the show with the answer when you locate it.
- Make only those commitments that you and others can keep – visitors remember staffer commitments, especially those that are not kept.
- Exhibiting is a TEAM event – other staffers are counting on you and you on them.
- Visit with prospects, only. A crowd of staffers does not attract a crowd of visitors.
- Smile – 90% of the time, if you smile someone will smile back at you
- The exhibit is your office away from the office-as visitors see your environment, they see your company and make a judgment as to whether they want to do business with you.

9b. Booth Staffing: The Short Form

Create a “Comfort Zone” for booth staffers with the 4-step booth staffing process:

1. **Engage: 30 seconds**
Prepare and practice questions that won't get a yes or no answer.
2. **Qualify: 2 minutes**
Determine if the prospect is worth presenting to... and what to present
3. **Present: 10 minutes**
Demo on just the prospect's needs, not everything you know. Prepare for common objections and questions.
4. **Close: 1 minute**
Lead card complete? Agree on the next step and go on the next lead!

9c. Motivate Your Booth Staffers – The Best Investment you'll ever Make

You're spending a lot of money on so many things for your trade show – from booth space to transportation to airfare to hotels to exhibit construction to promotions – and more. Yet all those things don't bring in leads, it's your booth staffers that do. You can double your lead counts just by offering prizes to the 5 booth staffers that take the highest number of qualified leads. A gift certificate to a nice restaurant will turn some mild mannered employees into enthusiastic go-getters. Then give them company-wide recognition for their achievement. One warning: make sure before the show that your staff understands that you are rewarding them for qualified leads, so they still take the time to question visitors and record their valuable remarks for your field sales people. Otherwise you'll get quantity, without regard to quality.

10. Lead Management

Almost 80% of leads generated are never followed, according to the Center for Exhibition Industry Research (CEIR). Rather than sending your hard-fought trade show leads into the abyss, strive to be part of the elite 20% that actually follow up on their leads! We've heard horror stories of exhibits pulled out of storage to prepare for a show -only to find the leads from the previous show still packed with exhibit. What a tragedy! Remember, trade shows are very effective tools to create qualified leads. They could also be an effective media to create sales – but only if the leads are followed up appropriately. Your pre-show and on-show promotions and display are all aimed at generating the greatest number of quality leads but without a plan for managing, processing and converting those leads to orders, the benefits of the trade show would be wasted.

Ideally, the booth manager's responsibility should be extended to monitoring lead processing since casual handling of show leads is the most common reason for poor results from trade shows.

10a. 6 tactics to increase the effectiveness of your led follow-up

1. Regardless of whether you are using an electric lead management system or have your own lead form for capturing specific information, when you create the form have your sales organization (who will be using it) to review it prior to giving it to them to use at the show. Get early buy-in.
2. Train your staff how to capture information in the interview process. What information should they be seeking that will be beneficial to follow-up?
3. Discipline your staff to categorize your leads as they are generated and review them each night for completeness.
4. Create a system to manage the leads. When the show ends how do they get fulfilled, who is responsible for the transmittal letter, the lead management reporting? When and to whom does the sales force report their results? When and to whom are the results reported?
5. Prepare your lead follow/fulfillment before leaving for the show. If you are sending a letter along with literature, prepare and store it so all you have to do is text merge your leads into your word processor. Most exhibitors go to shows to accelerate the sales cycle. In order to accomplish this goal a well thought out lead management systems needs to be in place.
6. Make your follow-up timely. Time your follow-up so it arrives the week after the show's attendees get back to their offices so that they have time to clear their desks of work that was generated while they were at the show. They will then have time to give your proposal consideration.

10b. Start Following Up on Leads BEFORE the Show Starts

To efficiently follow up your leads it is important to make preparations to follow them up before you leave for the show.

Before leaving for the show:

- Write (and, if not personalized, even print) the follow-up letter
- Prepare the follow-up packets – be sure to have a stockpile of any brochures you may need
- If you're going to promise to send anything after the show, be sure to have it already back in the office.
- Create the lead management forms.
- Identify the person responsible for lead management.

By preparing before the show starts, you can fulfill your leads without delay once you return from the show.

11. Measuring Results

Once you return from a trade show it is important to measure the success of the trade show. Thus, information can be used to report to management the effectiveness of the show and to improve exhibit performance for future shows. Success can be measured by the return on objectives set and also by the return on investment.

12. The Show

The decision to participate in a trade show should always be based on the numbers; what it's going to cost against the benefits you expect to receive. Once you have formulated your trade show budget, stick to it ruthlessly and do not be panicked into last-minute additions. Successful trade show participation takes time, so start early and return all forms to the organizers, by due date. Before the trade show opens, prepare your first direct-mail piece for new prospects, to be posted immediately after the show. The real work starts once the trade show has closed, as you start processing the leads gained.

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