



Tradeshow How-to

A trade show is one way of showcasing your products and services to a large number of prospects all at the one location and at the same time. Success at these shows is based upon how well you market your company, leave a lasting impression and follow up.

1. Plan Prior to the Event

In the weeks and months before the event, start planning all the phases of the event. Get as much information from the company organizing the event and write down everything you will need, and the time it will take to get these things done. Failure to have a well-organized plan might leave you looking a little harried at the event doing last minute things.

2. Market Prior to the Event

At least a month before the event, invite your prospects and current customers to visit you at the trade show and let them know where you will be located. Make sure the invitation is compelling enough so that they will attend. Offer a demonstration, a drawing or a free gift.

3. Create a Space Worthy of them Coming

Your exhibition area is perceived to be a reflection of what you are like as a company. Make sure it is inviting and that it stands out from others at the event. Signage must be clear and kept simple. Clearly write your business name on your sign and state your unique selling proposition. If your message is not translating clearly to people passing by in seconds, you have lost their attention.

4. Provide Marketing Collateral

Brochures and leaflets are typical marketing collateral and promotional materials that need to be freely available. Make sure your contact details and web address are printed on everything. Use interactive ways to show your materials, such as DVDs or plasmas running loops of your message.

5. Have a Well-Trained Marketing Staff

Your staff represents your company and they must be professional at all times. Gossiping and ignoring delegates is a poor reflection of your company. Make sure you staff your booth with employees who are people-orientated. Brief them fully on what is required of them. Let them know the reasons why you are at the trade show, what you are exhibiting and what you hope to achieve by being at the event. Training on how to correctly approach and interact with people and collect quality leads is also essential.

6. Gifts and Giveaways

Everyone thinks giveaway items as a waste of money. However, the reality is that they do increase awareness of your company and entice attendees to your booth. The trick is making sure that you are giving away an item that your target audience wants. What items will appeal to your market?

7. Follow-up All Leads

A successful trade show is dependent upon your skills in following up leads. Research has found that 70% of trade show leads do not receive proper follow up. To make the job easier, plan before the trade show how you are going to follow up prospects. Design a system to mail out information to leads within a week or two of the event and how you will follow these up. The longer leads are left unattended the colder they will become. Make sure to pre-qualify these leads before handing them to your sales team.