



Making Shows Work For You

Show Tips For Exhibiting

- The Value Of Trade Show Exhibiting
- Planning Your Booth
- Pre-Promoting Your Exhibit To Maximize Your Success
- Promotion In Your Booth
- Promotion At The Show
- Working The Booth (Do's And Don'ts)

THE VALUE OF TRADE SHOW EXHIBITING

When business is slow, you may look at ways to cut your budget. Trade Shows are likely one of the first things you may consider dropping. Think again. There are many reasons you should reevaluate the need for exhibiting in shows:

1. We live in a world of email, websites, and voice mails. Face to face contact is an opportunity to build customer relationships. That's something every business can use a little more of.
2. The average booth in a Chamber show is \$250. Less than the cost of one small newspaper advertisement. It's a very effective way of reaching a lot of people in a few short days.
3. Your competition will likely be there. This gives you a chance to be compared to the competition and gather competitive intelligence.
4. Gather qualified leads for post show follow up. Your market is there and you should be too!
5. Demonstrate new products and services or new usages for existing products. It's a great way to distribute samples and information.
6. Establish new company image or reinforce existing company image within your community.
7. Obtain feedback from current and potential customers. Take this opportunity to really understand your customer.
8. Have your company experts, dealers, reps, etc. showcased at seminars – stand out from the others!
9. Determine the effectiveness of marketing and promotional campaigns.
10. As well as sales leads, it provides an opportunity to network with colleagues, find dealers, reps and agents.

Consider your budget options and weigh the value of trade shows.

PLANNING YOUR BOOTH

Now that you have clearly defined your objectives for participating in the show, it is time to start planning your booth. There are a few rules to follow to help you achieve your goals:

1. Less is better – you don't need to fill every bit of space – focus on your main selling features.
2. Create a focal point – ensure you merchandise it properly and create good, large graphics.
3. Establish a theme – create a “feeling”, tie into current events, time of year etc.
4. Reinforce your identity – hit your customer 7 times to get your message across.
5. Attract attention – use motion, demonstrations, lights – keep it fun and tasteful
6. Plan traffic management – make it creative and inviting, don't put a table across the front, display products vertically not horizontally.
7. Have a budget – build on paper first – based on what you want to accomplish.
8. Accessorize – plan your office supplies, carpet, lighting, giveaways etc.

Once you use these pointers you will see increased traffic and develop better leads. An attractive, inviting booth leads to success.

PRE-PROMOTING YOUR EXHIBIT TO MAXIMIZE YOUR SUCCESS

Although the Chamber promotes events through a variety of advertising and promotional venues, additional participation on your part will maximize the results you aim to achieve. The Chamber's goal is to entice the target audience to attend the Showcase – the Exhibitor's goal is to attract prospective buyers to visit your booth. Depending on your budget, resources and manpower there are a number of options to utilize:

- **Direct Mail** – Notify existing customers about the upcoming event by sending them a personalized invitation to visit your booth. For prospects, ensure you research a specific representative's name to include in the mailing address.
- **Telemarketing** – Again, customers are influenced by personal invitations. Ensure your approach is scripted and prepared to target to the appropriate contact person.
- **Appointments** – Some people prefer to avoid the crowds and line-ups. Make some of your key appointments ahead of time.
- **Trade magazines and papers** – If you are placing an advertisement, take advantage of the lower special rates offered in a trade publication. If you have a new or special offer, clearly explain all product offer details.
- **Press Releases** – A powerful promotional tool to obtain free publicity. Send your promotional information to the editor of your local newspaper(s). Ensure your release includes catchy phrases and descriptions to capture the readers' attention.
- **Co-op Advertising** – Approach your suppliers to assist with advertising costs.

PROMOTION IN YOUR BOOTH

Once visitors approach your booth, your goal is to keep them there. You want to ensure that, after they leave the venue, they will remember you.

Your sales approach is, of course, important. However, there are a few other ideas that are helpful in creating a lasting memory.

- **Premiums** – Choose a give-away item that ties into your product or service and have your company name, phone number and website imprinted on it. Do not display them at your booth for visitors to ‘help themselves’ – rather, give them only to those who show interest.

This will provide value and a token by which to remember you.

- **Demonstrations and Sampling** – This is a very effective way to attract attention. Visitors come to see, hear, smell, taste and experience things. The more interactive you are, the more you will be remembered. Your demonstrator should be knowledgeable, articulate and captivating. Remember – they are representing your company.
- **Literature** – Like premiums, promotional brochures and pamphlets should only be given to those who have shown an interest in your product or service. Another option is to only keep a few copies on hand as “booth copies” and mail a copy to your qualified visitors after the show. This gives you a reason and a contact to follow up.
- **Celebrities** – High profile athletes, television personalities, politicians and local heroes have drawing power. Be sure to publicize their appearance times.
- **Contests** – Contests or draws are an effective way to collect names for your mail list – but keep in mind that some attendees participate just for a chance to win the contest – not all ballots will be qualified leads. If the draw relates directly to your product or service, the entrants are more likely to be interested in your product.

Not all of the above will apply to your business. Choose what method is best suited to you and to your goals of the show. A well-planned promotion will enhance your success at the show.

PROMOTION AT THE SHOW

Take advantage of these opportunities – often they are provided at no cost to you. Be proactive and make arrangements early – chances may be limited.

- **Show Guide** – Free listings and/or inexpensive ads are usually available. Often, Show Guides will showcase interesting or new products. Contact the Chamber to review your options.
- **Seminars** - Participate in or sponsor a seminar at the Show – it's a great way to raise your profile.
- **New Product Display** – Ask if a New Product Display section will be hosted at the Show. Usually, these displays are well promoted and conducted in a high profile location.
- **Other Ideas** – Be creative. For instance, the use of a theme character or mascot walking through the aisles will draw attendees to your exhibit. Be sure to check with the Chamber to ensure your creative idea follows the guidelines and Show rules.

Like anything, the more you put into it, the more you get out of it! Talk with the Chamber team and take advantage of the many opportunities that are available to assist you in maximizing the success of your exhibit.

WORKING THE BOOTH

The behavior of your staff in the booth is of utmost importance. An attractive booth will lead the visitor to you – the actions of the booth staff will determine whether or not they come in or keep walking by. There are some basic rules to follow:

The Do's

- **Preparation** - know your products and services and your booth well
- **Honesty... is the best policy** – if you're not sure of the answer, promise to get back to them after the show – and don't forget to follow up
- **Knowledge... of the show** – Be able to help out prospects with bathroom facilities, stage, eating areas etc.
- **Well Groomed** - Choose your attire to suit the show and the audience
- **Tidiness** – ensure your booth is kept tidy throughout the entire show
- **Friendly and Respectful** – Don't judge prospects – treat everyone equally

The Don'ts

- **Don't Eat** – You are not approachable with your mouth full – people will walk right on by
- **Don't Sit** – Be ready to greet people walking by – chairs should only ever be for visitors (I recommend not even having chairs)
- **Don't Congregate** – If you are busy chatting with your colleagues you'll likely miss out as people do not like to interrupt others
- **Don't knock the competition** – sell your products on your own merits
- **Don't leave your booth empty** – if you need a break ask your neighbour to assist if that's possible.