

Secrets to Trade Show Success

According to the Center for Exhibition industry research, more than 100 million people attend trade shows in North America annually. The same study reports that trade show expenditures exceeded \$50 million dollars per annum supporting the fact that Trade shows are still a great investment. Regardless of your industry, an effective trade show booth will draw potential customers in and help them understand your product or service. Presenting an effective trade show presence involves much more than your logo and a catchy phrase.

Phase 1: Planning

Your trade show presence is more than just a booth. Visualize it as an extension of your overall marketing strategy. Your theme and overall design should be considered in the context of your strategic marketing plan. It is important to establish detailed goals for your trade show booth or exhibit. Do your due diligence in finding out what your competitors plan to exhibit and develop your strategy accordingly. Garner as much information as possible about the customers and prospects who will attend the event in order to mold your message and greet them personally.

Phase 2: The Build Up

Pre-show promotions are a great way to generate interest from customers and prospects and encourage them to visit your booth or exhibit. It is vital to make use of both online and traditional media to achieve maximum exposure. Online promotions should include saturation of social media channels, an event-specific banner on your website, invitations to check-in on social media apps, tags on all employee emails, and an email campaign with links to a web landing page highlighting special offers available only to trade show attendees. For offline promotion, consider generating QR codes, traditional invitations and ads in industry specific journals. Generate a list of your most important prospects and send them complimentary event tickets with an invitation to visit your booth at specific times. Plan a special product demonstration, Q&A with company specialist or a “champagne social” for these attendees.

Phase 3: Draw Attention

The objective of a trade show display is to attract attention to your brand. “Cookie-cutter” booths that resemble the other vendors serve little to no use. Your booth should elicit interest and provide a memorable visual experience for your prospects. If you are unsure of how to generate such an experience, contact a reliable event production company that specializes in trade show display design and production. This is a great

way to get “bang for your buck” and see that ever important boost in return on investment.

The Billboard Test

The billboard test is an industry standard for advertising efficacy. Studies have indicated that approximately three seconds is all the time you have to grab a potential customer’s attention. Does your display communicate the primary message of your organization in less than three seconds? If not, it’s time to regroup. It is important to pique enough interest in your display to bring your prospects in for that elusive second level of messaging. Make sure your message is strong and on point and that everything in your booth supports it.

Visual Appeal

Creating visual cachet with your trade show space is paramount. We all know colors can communicate a variety of emotions. Research color palettes and their potential emotional response before selecting your color scheme in order to achieve the desired results. Never underestimate base human instincts and always be aware of cultural significance and variations if your prospects hail from a foreign land. Lighting is another important factor in a successful trade show display. When possible, visit the site ahead of time and request a space with the best possible ambient light. If this is not possible, speak with your event production specialists about additional lighting for your booth. Use spotlights to highlight the most significant features of your exhibit. Colored lighting and gels allow for extensive customization of your space and should be used to accentuate your theme. A well-lit booth is both attractive and inviting.

Mass Appeal

It’s important to remember that interactive displays are among the most popular at all trade shows. Appeal to all the senses of your guests. Frequent product demonstrations, moving displays, video presentations, games and music are great ways to appeal to your potential customers, create a memorable experience and reinforce your brand.

Phase 4: The Devil’s In the Details

“Minor” details can make or break a trade show exhibition. Something as minute as clutter in your booth can convey a devastating message to a prospect. Make sure your staff is motivated to engage with your customers. Contact incentives can really improve staff engagement and reap benefits for your organization. One of the most often overlooked details of a successful trade show booth is traffic flow. Evaluate the expected flow of your visitors and remove potential “road blocks” that can deter prospects or

cause irritating bottlenecks sure to result in a loss of interest and the resulting loss of revenue.

Phase 5: Get to Work!

When your trade show exhibition ends, the real work begins. The contacts you make at a trade show can be some of the most valuable contacts you will make all year. Follow up with your prospects as soon as possible. Simple “thank you” notes, coupons or additional incentive offers can really improve customer response in the period immediately following your event. Your staff should be ready to move on these leads in short order, the sooner the better!

By following these simple steps you should see an improved response from your trade show exhibitions.