



## **Trade Show Marketing & Sales**

### **FAST FACTS:**

1. People attend trade shows to find solutions to problems, not buy product
2. Fewer than 20% of all leads are followed up on by most companies
3. Most companies spend 18% of their marketing budget on trade shows, second only to advertising expenses
4. Give-aways attract people to your booth, but most are thrown out once the attendee returns to the office- so don't spend a lot of money on them

**TRADE SHOWS DON'T ACCELERATE THE SALES CYCLE. THEY GIVE YOU THE OPPORTUNITY TO MOVE A LARGE NUMBER OF CUSTOMERS AND POTENTIAL CUSTOMERS FORWARD IN THE CYCLE- ALL WITHIN A FEW DAYS.**

### **WHY GO TO A SHOW:**

- Introduce one or more new products
- Identify new prospects and build your prospect list
- Put products in the hands of prospects
- Meet targeted and difficult to see prospects
- Identify decision makers
- Advance the sales process for targeted accounts
- Extend your sales network within a customer's organization
- Build new partnerships for marketing products and services
- Find new suppliers
- Enhance or change the company's image
- Investigate the competition
- Reposition products or change brand identities
- Introduce a new business- either a start-up or one formed after a merger or acquisition
- Recruit staff

## **TRADE SHOW BOOTH DESIGN**

### **1) IDENTIFICATION**

- Shoppers Do Not Just Walk Isles- They Read Department Signs
- Hewlett-Packard Saw A Huge Increase When They Used Departmental Signage
- Using Images- Not Words On Departmental Signage Works Even Better

## 2) 'A PICTURE SAYS A THOUSAND WORDS'

- **Attendee's Eyes Spend 1/10<sup>th</sup> Of A Second Focusing On Your Images As They Pass Your Booth- Words Will Not Get Their Attention!**
- Billboard Advertisers Have Learned **Using More Than Eight Words Reduces A Billboard's Effectiveness By 50%!**
- Using Images Allows The Potential (Or Existing) Customer To Match The Initial Image Presented To The Actual Product On Shelf

## 3) COLOR MAKES A DIFFERENCE!

- **Rochester University Found That The Color Orange Is 64% More Effective Than Blue, Gray, Brown, Or Tan In Capturing A Person's Attention-** That Is Why Traffic Cones, Hunter's Safety Vests, And Prison Jump Suits Among Other Things Are Bright Orange. Name The #1 Selling Laundry Detergent- Tide- What Color Are Their Boxes? Bright Orange!
- Cincinnati Machine Used A Bright Yellow For Their Trade Show Booth. Exit Surveys Found That The Change To A Bright Color Made Their Booth – AND THEIR MESSAGE – More Memorable!

## 4) BOOTH DESIGN IS JUST LIKE REAL ESTATE- LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION

- *The Most Viewed Area In A Booth Is At The Six Foot Level. Everything Above And Below The Six Foot Area Is Only Quickly Scanned By The Passer-By*
- Take A Picture Of Your Booth. Mark Off Everything Above And Below The Six-Foot Area And See If Your Booth Conveys Who You Are And What You Do. Is It Exciting Enough To Draw Someone Into Your Booth?

## 5) WHAT PEOPLE FOCUS ON AT TRADE SHOWS

- Researchers At The University Of Iowa Identified The Ways Attendees Sort Through Thousands Of Visual Images To Find The Ones That Appeal To Them
- When People Look At Multiple Objects, They Focus On One At A Time, Moving From One To The Next, In About 1/10<sup>th</sup> Of A Second
- The More Complicated An Image, The Longer It Takes To Comprehend It

## 6) "WHAT'S IN IT FOR ME?"

- Attendees don't care about grandiose design- they want to know "What's In It For Me?"
- **If attendee can't look at the booth and understand in 2 seconds what the exhibitor can do for them- your trade show is in trouble.**
- **If you have to explain to attendees what you do- your booth design isn't working.**
- Too many exhibitors feed their own egos by concentrating on 'great design' rather than the message- the most successful designs are clean and simple. The most recognizable / most remembered logo in the world? Ford's Blue Oval.
- **One of the most common misconceptions about booth design is that the booth is about the exhibitor. The booth is about the attendee- it is only about the exhibitor in as much as it must present the solutions the exhibitor offers for the attendee.**

## **PRE-SHOW:**

- Send out press releases to industry trade journals
- Adjust your ad in industry trade journals to announce 'see us at the show, booth # \_\_\_'
- Mail postcards to clients / prospective clients announcing your booth # / free give-away
- Phone potential clients you know will be at the show to make arrangements to meet them at your booth. Build rapport with the (potential) client before the show so that you are already one step ahead when they come to your booth.
- Take advantage of show related advertising offered by industry publications and show management
- Place an incentive in your pre-show mailing for the customer to visit your booth- DON'T OVER-PROMISE AND UNDER-DELIVER ON YOUR INCENTIVE!

## **INCENTIVES MAY INCLUDE:**

- New products on display
- The opportunity to meet the leaders in the organization
- Invitation to meet technical experts in your organization
- Invitations to special activities, a hospitality suite, an educational seminar, a sponsored meal, a sporting event or unique entertainment
- Educational books, CD's or videos
- A contest with exciting prizes
- Gifts for valued customers
- Novelty items for anyone who stops by
- Free services: computer / internet access, free long distance call, free fax

## **AT THE SHOW:**

### **WHY CUSTOMERS COME TO YOUR BOOTH**

- To meet the company behind the sales representative
- To comparison shop quickly and easily
- To learn about new products
- To evaluate new features on existing products
- To visit current suppliers
- To meet potential suppliers
- To check out prices
- To expand their industry knowledge

## **WHAT'S AN EXHIBITORS' ROLE AT THE TRADE SHOW?**

*To make it easy for customers and prospects to meet and exceed their expectations!*

## **MEET & GREET:**

- ALWAYS introduce yourself with an open-ended question
- Ask what visual merchandising approach they are using as an opening to what you can offer them
- With the right questions, you can find out what potential customers have heard / think about your company
- Don't spend a lot of time with non-buyers

## **TRADE SHOW SALES TECHNIQUES**

### **QUALIFY YOUR VISITOR**

- **You must understand who your visitor is so you can ask the proper questions.** Are they in a decision making position? You'll ask a CEO different questions than you will someone in middle management
- **If the person does not have a say in the decision making process, you'll want to give them information but you won't want to spend a lot of time with them.** You can excuse yourself by something such as "I know you've got a lot of people to see at the show, so I don't want to take up a lot of your time. Here, however, is some information I'll call you to see if you have any questions"

### **LET THE VISITOR DO THE TALKING**

- Before you begin telling them your company's life history, **ask them what THEY are looking for**
- Always use open-ended questions
- **Always take notes when the visitor is telling you what they need.** As you write down what the visitor needs, note what products / services you have to offer that match the visitor's needs, **so you are prepared to say only what you need to say when the visitor is done talking**
- **By letting the visitor do the talking, you are making them feel cared for while you find out what things you can sell them!**
- **The conversation between you and the visitor is almost like an interview- for both parties- and you have to be the moderator.** If the discussion gets off course, you have to get it back to business. You don't have time to discuss non-business topics during the Q&A portion of the visit. (That doesn't mean you shouldn't use common ground topics to get things started...)
- **The visitor is looking for short, direct, concise answers.** Think in sound-bytes. The more quickly you can present a solution to their problems, the more quickly you can close a sale
- **You should prepare a 2 –3 line summary of what your company has to offer, in both practical and emotional terms, for the visitor**

### **WHAT TO DO WITH THE 'CHATTY KATHY' WHO JUST WON'T GO AWAY**

Everyone's been saddled with the person who just won't shut up and worse- just won't leave. If they've just spent a ton of money with you, you'll probably be a little more patient, unless the next person is spending even more money...

***The bottom line:*** *you've only got a few hours selling time each day in which to make money. Usually, you've only got 12 – 16 total hours of show time and it's not uncommon to have 10 to 25 thousand dollars tied up in a show, so you want to make the absolute most of the show*

**ESTABLISH AN ACTION PLAN WHILE THE VISITOR IS IN YOUR BOOTH.**

Schedule to:

Send additional information

Arrange a meeting with the visitor to make a full presentation at a later time

Write the order at the booth

Inform the visitor that you aren't sure that you can help them at the moment and ask them what they would like to do

**WHAT TO DO WHEN YOU ARE SWAMPED WITH VISITORS**

**(A TERRIBLE PROBLEM TO HAVE)**

- When educational seminars or luncheons let out, you are apt to have a rush of people at your booth
- *What do you do when you are SO popular, you have more people at your booth than you can talk to directly?*
- **You turn it into a spectacle and bring attention to how popular your booth is!**
- Gather the people so that everyone can (hopefully) see your presentation.
- **After every product / service you mention, stop and ask if there are any questions, so you keep things interactive- otherwise you'll lose people**
- Studies show 17% of unattended people will walk away after 1 minute- 58% will be gone after 3 minutes!

**IF YOU DO CLOSE A SALE, MAKE A SPECTACLE OUT OF IT**

POP BALLOONS

TAKE PICTURES WITH YOUR CUSTOMERS

RING BELLS

ANNOUNCE IT:

*"[YOUR COMPANY] IS PROUD TO ANNOUNCE [ ] AS A NEW CLIENT!"*

**PROMOTE DURING THE SHOW:**

*Realistically, you only get a few orders at a trade show- from existing clients or potential clients you have been nurturing prior to the show*

**YOU HAVE THREE MINUTES TO CREATE A POTENTIAL DEAL!!!  
DESCRIBE WHAT MAKES YOU DIFFERENT THAN THE COMPETITION THROUGH  
WITH DESCRIPTIVE, IMAGE CREATING LANGUAGE**

<b>TRADE SHOW SELLING VS. FIELD SALES</b>		
<b>ACTIVITY</b>	<b>TRADE SHOW</b>	<b>FIELD SALES</b>
FACE TO FACE TIME	3 MINUTES	30 MINUTES
LOCATION	NEUTRAL TURF	PROSPECTS TURF
INITIATOR	PROSPECT	SALESMAN
IMAGE CREATED BY	THE COMPANY	SALESMAN
PROSPECT INFO	YOU KNOW LITTLE / NOTHING	YOU KNOW INFO
CLOSE	GIVE INFO / FOLLOW UP	MAKE / FURTHER \$

## **THE KEY TO TRADE SHOW SUCCESS IS NETWORKING**

You have to look both short AND long term when it comes to people you talk to. Figure out which companies you want to begin nurturing a relationship with now so that you can earn their business later. Develop a target list that projects two to five years into the future.

### **CAPTURING LEADS:**

- **ESTIMATE THE NUMBER OF LEADS YOU EXPECT TO CAPTURE**
- **HAVE A MEANS TO CAPTURE THEM**
- **CATEGORIZE EACH LEAD ACCORDING TO YOUR FOLLOW-UP PLAN**
- **DETERMINE HOW YOU WILL RESPOND TO THEM AFTER THE SHOW**
- **SCHEDULE POST SHOW APPOINTMENTS**
- **SET A TIME FRAME FOR RESPONSE AND STICKING TO YOUR GOAL**

To establish a realistic estimation on the number of leads you will generate, consider the number of people manning your booth at any given time, the number of people they can legitimately talk to per hour, the number of people attending the show and the length of the show. Traffic patterns will vary by time of day, so a per hour average can be misleading. This will, however, give you a formula to benchmark your success at following shows as well as a guide for personnel to know how many leads they should be generating per show.

Have a "Lead Log" in the booth to track notes on the lead (what you talked to the person about [personal & professional] so you can mention the info in the follow up letter and impress the lead with how memorable they were to you); prioritize the lead (low / medium / high).

**80% OF LEADS ACQUIRED AT TRADE SHOWS  
ARE NOT FOLLOWED UP ON!**

### **THE KEYS TO GOOD FOLLOW UP:**

1. *START WORKING THE LEADS AT ONCE*
2. *PRE-QUALIFY LEADS*
3. *FOLLOW UP REPEATEDLY*
4. *ENCOURAGE FOLLOW UP*
5. *TRACK RESULTS*

### **ANALYZING THE COMPETITION:**

- **WHAT CORPORATE MESSAGE ARE THEY CONVEYING AT THE SHOW**
- **NEW PRODUCTS THEY'RE INTRODUCING**
- **NEW SERVICES THEY ARE OFFERING**
- **NEW PRODUCT FEATURES**
- **LONG-TERM DIRECTIONS OR GOALS**

INFORMATION YOU WANT TO HAVE ON COMPETITION:

1. SAMPLES OF LITERATURE
2. A DESCRIPTION OF THEIR BOOTH SIZE; IMAGE & EYE CATCHING FEATURES
3. STAFF ENERGY LEVEL
4. BOOTH LOCATION & CROWD AT BOOTH
5. NUMBER OF PEOPLE STAFFING BOOTH
6. CALIBER OF DEMONSTRATIONS
7. CALIBER OF BOOTH STAFF
8. PROSPECT ATTRACTING TACTICS: GIVEAWAYS, CONTESTS, HOSPITALITY SUITE, EDUCATIONAL EVENTS
9. USE OF TECHNOLOGY

**THEN LOG IT!**

**MEASURING SUCCESS**

The Center for Exhibition Industry Research and Business Marketing Magazine found these cost averages for lead generating activities:

**LEAD GENERATING ACTIVITY  
AVG COST PER LEAD**

<i>Trade Shows</i>	\$50
<i>Telephone / Internet Prospecting</i>	\$60
<i>Direct Mail</i>	\$90
<i>Advertising</i>	\$120
<i>Field Prospecting (Sales Calls)</i>	\$250-350

**THE OBVIOUS THINGS WE ALL SOMETIMES  
FORGET...**

- Wear comfortable shoes. There are many dress shoes on the market that have soles designed more like walking shoes to make your feet more comfortable.
- The suit and tie / dress days of trade shows are (thankfully) giving way to a more casual atmosphere. Uniformed polo shirts and khakis are becoming more prominent at trade shows and not only make those working the booth more relaxed, but seem to make attendees more so as well.
- If you have a large enough staff, take shifts at the booth. It's always good to go for a stroll, stretch your legs and relax. It'll also give you a chance to check out the competition (not that any one of us would spy on the competition...)
- Keep a bottle of water hidden in the booth. Exhibit Halls are often very dry and combined with all of the talking you'll (hopefully) be doing; you'll definitely need it. Don't drink too much, though, you don't want to miss a good sale while you're taking care of business...
- And speaking of drinking, remember- alcohol dehydrates you, so if you want to be in top shape, don't over do it while dining with co-workers or clients.

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