

Trade Show Tips

A Planning Guide for Exhibitors

Provided by Ron Plasschaert – Promotional Marketing Consultant
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1. **Set smart goals for the event. Develop clear goals objectives and write them down. Specific, measureable, achievable, realistic, time-related goals will assist in evaluating management of future events.**
2. **Pre-Show Promotion. Three weeks prior to the event, use the information available in the Sponsor's and Exhibitor's section and previous years attendees, as well your own targeted prospects to send a pre-show mailing to let attendees know about your company, your products, and the people who can help them at your booth. Include your booth number and a floor plan of the event with your booth location highlighted. Consider including a complimentary pass or parking voucher.**
3. **Draw traffic with a premium, not a give-away. You should never have "freebies" at a trade show. Please contact me for information on how to do this effectively.**
4. **Pre-construct your booth at your workplace at least one week before the event. This will ensure you pack every tool you need to assemble it, and give you time to plan for any changes that need to be made. You don't want to find out one hour before the show begins that the clamp for the main support of your display is at the office.**
5. **Appoint the trade show staff at least 6 weeks prior to the event. A lot of time and money is spent on preparation for the show, and the people chosen to represent your organization are often just told to show up. Remember, they are a direct representation of you and your company, and should be trained for the show.**
 - **communicate the goal of the event (see number 1)**
 - **teach policies in advance**
 - **establish a professional dress code with which everyone is comfortable (including footwear)**
 - **invest in name badges – you will become more approachable and increase rapport when visitors can see your first name**
 - **create a staff schedule that allows for a one hour break at least every four hours**
 - **prepare a list of key questions that you can ask every visitor that will help you qualify (or disqualify) prospects**
6. **Use eye grabbers. Most people scan exhibits as they walk down the aisle, and their gaze doesn't generally make it to the back walls of the booth. Most people focus on the parts of the booth that are close to the aisles.**
7. **Use lots of light. Don't get lost in the shadows of the show floor.**
8. **Keep the booth simple and clean. The fewer the words, the greater the impact – sometimes less is more.**
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10. **After the show, schedule time to follow up on leads! You will only stay fresh in your prospects mind for 2 days. Your prompt handling of requests will show potential clients that you value their time and provide quality customer service. Have a direct mail piece ready to mail the day following the closing of the event.**



Exhibitor Budgeting Checklist

On average, trade shows or conventions account for about 5% - 20% of an annual marketing budget. To help you get a clear picture of where your trade show dollars are going so you can make wise choices with your spending decisions, use this simple budgeting guide:

Premium & Promotional Gifts	\$ _____
Space Rental	\$ _____
Display & Graphics	\$ _____
Marketing Materials	\$ _____
Freight & Shipping	\$ _____
On Site Services (electricity, rentals)	\$ _____
Pre-Show Promotion	\$ _____
At-Event Promotion	\$ _____
Hospitality	\$ _____
Personal Expenses	\$ _____
Miscellaneous (10% - 15% of total items listed above)	\$ _____
Travel, Meals & Accommodation	\$ _____
TOTAL TRADE SHOW BUDGET	\$ _____



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Ron Plasschaert is a promotional marketing consultant with M.P. Russo & Associates Inc. For more information about preparing your exhibit and effectively marketing for the Expo, you may contact Ron at 1-888-677-8776, extension 228 or via e-mail ronp@mprusso.com.
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Some Do's and Don'ts

DO	DO NOT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - your homework before the show to ensure it will attract a large number of your targeted market. You want to ensure all the time and money invested in the show is not wasted on people not likely to do business with you - plan well ahead; “Good fortune is what happens when opportunity meets with planning” – Thomas Edison. - have a predetermined list of goals for the event. For example, generating X number of appointments, closing X number of sales - make it easy for people to get into your booth; avoid having your table or display right by the aisle separating your people from the crowd; make it inviting - be polite to everyone; the assistant today could be the president tomorrow - make eye contact with people approaching your booth and invite them in - be aware of your body language - say thank you to visitors who stop by, fill out a ballot, or provide you with information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - eat, chew gum, chat on your cellphone or check your e-mails while in your booth. Save that for break. - sit down at any time during your shift; you will be more approachable standing near the front of your booth; also be aware of your posture and body language – actions speak louder than words - do all the talking with attendees. You can help them more by listening where they need your services - use your industry jargon when talking with attendees, as most will not comprehend their meaning and become frustrated - rely on memory; write down important information as you get it, consider having a “leads” notebook - consume alcoholic beverages before or during the event - wear heavy fragrances, such as perfume or cologne



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