

## TIPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL EXPO

**Change your expectations, perception, and attitude!** Trade shows are not a waste of time. Our Expo can be the single biggest sales opportunity you will have this year. This is a great opportunity to meet more people in one day than you might see in an entire month or more. Make it count.

**Set Goals.** The expo is a useful marketing tool to help your company achieve their goals. What do you hope to get out of the expo? Set specific and measurable objectives. How many leads do you hope to end up with? Based on your closing rate experience, what percentage of those should end up as sales? Be realistic in setting your objectives. Consider how many workers you will have in your booth. A crowded exhibit should not be your goal; focus on developing quality leads. You can reach your goals by effectively targeting who your prospects are and marketing your Expo participation to them.

**Promote your booth.** Give your current and prospective customers a reason to visit your booth. The expo provides a great opportunity to personally meet with people you don't often get to see, and a chance to make new contacts. Some ideas:

- Special expo show pricing; make sure it's not something they can get at your business the following week at the same price.
- A chance to win a prize if they visit your booth.
- The introduction of a new product or service- you'll have instant feedback on features, pricing, and other important competitive marketing components.
- A live demonstration of your product; practice so you give a flawless presentation. You have only a few minutes to make an impression- quick product demos are more effective than lengthy, in-depth ones.
- Give them a coupon they can turn in at your booth for a free gift/promotional giveaway that has been purchased just for them.
- In your media advertising include tag lines to promote the expo- such as: "Come see us at the expo".
- Advertise your expo participation on the radio, in newspapers, chamber magazines, and billboards.
- Do in-store advertising with flyers or posters.
- Do inserts in your billings to customers to promote the expo; do something small that would not incur additional postage.
- Mail out personal invitations. The invitations should come from the most prestigious person in the department; don't make the letter too long. Include the name, date and time of the expo, and why it would benefit them to come see you. Don't send them out via bulk mail; make them look special.
- Use your newsletter to promote your expo participation.

**Does your booth clearly convey what it is you have to sell? What your program has to offer?** Design your graphics like an advertisement, and make the benefit stand out. Your sign should read like a billboard with a bold message in eight words or less. Most exhibits make the company name the largest graphic; instead, focus on the benefit.

**Color grabs attention.** Black lettering on a yellow or orange background is 60% more likely to be read than if it's on a white background. Don't hold back- use colors like red, yellow or orange. Bright colors indicate an important message.

**Don't use tables as barricades.** Increase your booth traffic by 25% when you place tables off to the side. Have an open entry into your booth.

**Use good lighting.** The brightest spot attracts a viewer's eye. A well-lit exhibit can increase the visual impact by 50% or more.

**Effectively use your giveaways.** Eliminate the “grab and run” attendees. Don't stack your free giveaways on the table unless you want everyone to have them. Display only one to create interest. The best way to use giveaways is to carry a few with you, and after each conversation give the item as a thank-you gift for visiting your booth. With this approach maybe you can afford a more valuable give-away now that you know they will be given only to those actually interested in your company's product or service. Another approach is to tie giveaways to some form of registration and questionnaire.

**What do you do with the fishbowl?** Don't just collect names in those fishbowls; if the fishbowl is out towards the front of the booth, it will do a great job of collecting names. But is that what you want? If you are looking to collect only names of qualified prospects, put your qualifying questions on the form and require that they be completely filled out to be eligible for the prize. You could also offer to place their business card into the bowl after you have jotted a few notes on the back of their card about potential prospects. Put the bowl towards the back of the booth so they are forced to cross the “invisible” fence to enter your contest. Unqualified visitors will eliminate themselves by not entering.

**Avoid stacking brochures on the tables.** Having only a few of each brochure out creates a “value” for them. It is also more likely that a visitor will stop and talk to you to request one.

**Follow-up after the show is done.** This is where many exhibitors drop the ball. Make use of the names you have gathered; send thank you notes, send out your informational brochures, follow-up on your sales leads, and fulfill your promises to send information immediately.

## Good Boothmanship

**Train your booth personnel.** Tell them exactly what is planned for the show and what your company's goals are. This gives them something to strive for. Develop a 60 second presentation that is quick and to-the-point describing your product/service and the benefits you offer.

**First Impressions!** You only have a few seconds to make a good impression. Visitors look for someone who;

- Is friendly but not overbearing
- Has a friendly smile and looks like they're having fun
- Looks like someone who would be good to do business with
- Is confident and energetic... even after several hours on their feet
- Has a strong, firm handshake

**Take a Break.** Premium and Enhanced exhibitors should contact Stephanie to find out what perks are offered.

**Appropriate booth attire.** Consider the subtle message your attire is sending. Do you want to wear business attire, matching golf shirts and slacks, goofy hats, bright shirts, or crazy uniforms? Do you want to be noticed or do you want to blend in? Whatever you decide, the outfit should be neat, clean, and comfortable. Choose the right shoes to wear; you want to have a cheerful face, not one trying to hide the pain of aching feet!

**Give immediate attention to people entering your booth.** Trade show attendees are impatient. If possible, have at least two people at your booth. Avoid radar vision- don't look at a visitor's name badge first; make eye contact, introduce yourself, and then look at the person's badge. Wear your badge high and on the right side so it's in the line of vision when you shake hands.

**Bring lots of business cards.** Your business card is the least expensive advertising there is.

**Watch your body language.** Don't look like the palace guard, or put your hands in your pocket. If it helps, carry something in one of your hands. Greet people with a smile and act interested in their needs. In smaller exhibits don't stand in the center; stand off to the side, near the front corner of the exhibit.