

Tradeshows Tip Sheet

Interpretive Exhibits

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The Buck Stops Where?

Imagine a tradeshow where you've got a great star attraction: perhaps a famous magician, or book author, designed to draw the audience in. All goes well, it seems: you've promoted the event, you got press out of it, you handed out flyers at the show. And when it comes time for the big event, it's a smash. Hundreds of people jam the aisles enjoying the show. Even your booth staffers are having a good time. They're enjoying the show, too!

But once the show is over, the star has gone back stage and the audience has vanished, what do you have left? Did you collect contact information? Are you going to follow up with all of those people that enjoyed the show?

If you answered 'No,' why not? Putting on a show is a great way to draw people to your booth – but be sure you have a plan in place to capture contact information so you can make that all-important follow up.

Stopping People in Their Tracks

Fios, Inc. of Portland uses the image of a blender to showcase their skill at 'blending' all of the various elements of legal electronic discovery. In their marketing approach to large corporations and law firms, Fios wanted to present a more approachable image, so they started offering blended smoothies at their tradeshows. Turns out they gave away a lot of smoothies! Of course, no one got a smoothie without getting their show badge scanned. And it was easy to engage the visitors in a brief conversation while they waited in line for their smoothie.

Beyond food, there are tons of choices for giveaways, but when it comes to interactivity or demos,



stretch your imagination: the CEO of a company that manufactures fire-resistant and fire-proof outfits showed his stuff by walking through fire; Chrysler Group installed a huge activity center, including an off-road track, video games and numerous 'photo zones.' Kettle Foods had show attendees vote on new exotic flavors of chips. How about high-end embossed invitations to a select few for a 'private' soiree? Your creativity is limited only by your imagination, so grab some co-workers and do a little brainstorming!

"The CEO of the company donned a fireproof suit and walked through fire. What a product demo!"



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What does it take to get people to stop at your booth?

- Surveys
- Giveaways
- Contests
- Presentations
- Demonstrations
- Munchies
- ...???

How Long Should Your Presentation Be?

Heidi Miller of HeidiMillerPresents.com says the ideal booth presentation is about 5 – 7 minutes long. Any longer and your audience starts to get antsy. "I've had clients say '5-7 minutes is too short – we need to do TWENTY minutes; do a mini-seminar!'" says Heidi. But the key is to do an introduction, and turn the audience over to the sales folks at the booth.

If you hire a professional presenter, it's their job to take your product or service information and turn it in to a succinct and effective presentation. Naturally, they'll work hand-in-hand with you to fashion the right way to make the presentation, but hey – they're pros and that's their

job, so it shouldn't be a big deal for them to do that.

Your presentation should tease and leave the audience wanting more. Reveal enough real substance, but make sure there is enough left unsaid in the 5 – 7 minutes so that you have a few.

Of course, if you plan and execute it just right, the main question those prospects will ask is: 'How much is it and when can I have it?'

How to Get People in to your Booth for a Presentation

As the time for your in-booth presentation nears, make sure the area is prepared: If you have 15 chairs, for instance, make sure that each chair has an information packet. Your booth staff should stand in the aisle, and mention to each passerby that "the demonstration will start in about 5 minutes - have a seat!" Then direct the folks to a seat, show them the info packet, remind them that the show is just a few moments away and that now is a



good time to read up on the company, the product about to be discussed and any other pertinent information.

The Bottom Line

Interactivity is great - you should try and incorporate some form of it at your next show. If you've been accustomed to just setting up a static small booth and putting your product on shelves or tables, don't try and put on a huge show your next time out. Start small and work your way up. You might try a small three question survey, with a special coupon or small giveaway for the participant. Use some version of the 'one glove' promotion in which you target a handful of prime prospects, send them one glove (or one-half of a two-

part giveaway such as half of a \$5 bill), and offer them a special premium for showing up at the booth.

When they do you'll have the opportunity to engage them in meaningful conversation about your product or service, uncover their needs and hopefully find a solution.

Which is what it's all about!