

Tradeshows Tip Sheet

This month: Attracting Buyers

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Is Your Exhibit a Buyer Magnet?

Every tradeshow is different. Some show organizers do a terrific job of attracting attendees. They have a stack of dollar bills to promote the show. They have great relationships with media writers and broadcasters than can talk up the show in various media outlets. They can attract the big exhibitors which in turn bring in lots of attendees.

But look at it this way: no matter what show, each exhibit at that show starts out on equal ground. Whether a stellar show or not, each exhibitor is left up to their own devices to bring buyers to the booth and keep them there long enough to make a connection or make a sale. So what can you do to give your booth an edge over your competition?

Let's examine some of those ideas...

Then there are the shows that are the lost dogs of the tradeshow marketing world. You know the kind: you show up to set up the exhibit and find that you have to wheedle your way into getting your electrical outlets hooked up on time and the show help is - well, not much help.



Graphics: The Killer App

In a sea of eye-popping color and rotating floating banners competing for eyeballs, your graphics have to do their job. So exactly what IS the job of a tradeshow booth graphic package?

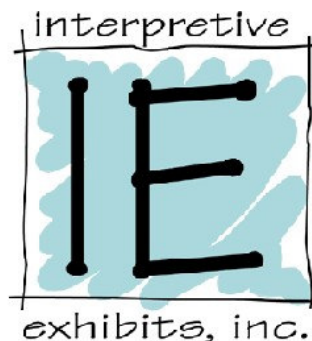
Let's start by determining what your graphics should NOT do. They should NOT try to spell out all of the details of your product or service. Leave that for a one-on-one conversation or a brochure. Graphics should NOT be a quick afterthought that is slapped up on a backwall just to cover up the show's booth designation. And graphics should NOT be sloppy, old and outdated or showing obvious evidence of repair.

So what *are* graphics supposed to do? Their main purpose is to draw people into your booth. They

should be well-designed with the sole purpose of answering the visitor's question: "what's in it for me?"

This can be done a number of ways, but the tried-and-true approach is to put either your logo at the top (if it's well-known enough to cause a reaction in and of itself) or a compelling question or statement that relates to what your product or service can do for them. If your company is relatively new you're better off using the compelling or challenging statement at the top and putting your logo or company name second in the heirarchy.

If your graphics are doing their job, the right people will be attracted to your booth and others won't be interested.



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Regardless of the specific objective for visitors at each show, make it as easy as you can for them to complete the process.

A Smile is Worth a Million Bucks

Let's face it: people don't travel thousands of miles, spend thousands of dollars on travel and hotel rooms and cholesterol-laden restaurant meals just to visit your booth to see the graphics or to pick up a brochure. If that were the case there would be no need to include a single person in your booth.

But your visitors want to TALK to someone and ENGAGE with a HUMAN BEING. Once you get the attention of your visitor, the worst thing you can do is present an uninterested, stand-offish staff person. C'mon, these people have travelled thousands of miles to see you! Don't put 'em off! Treat them right: greet them with a warm smile, an engaging question and an attitude that says "I'm GLAD you're here!"

One reason tradeshow marketing is still popular

Make it Easy for a Visitor to Buy

Every show is different, and your goals may change from show to show. But there is one overriding objective: bring more business to your company. In some shows that translates to creating relationships or maintaining current client relationships. In other shows you may want to just sell, sell, sell!

No matter how that big picture objective translates, make it easy for the client to take the next step. If they want a follow-up call, have an easy way to schedule that call. If they want to make a purchase, make it as seamless as possible. Sometimes that may mean handing them a clipboard and pen so they can fill out an order form – or doing it for them while they're standing there.

Bottom Line

It's been said that the devil is in the details. And so it is with your tradeshow booth. Creating a booth that's a 'buyer magnet' is in ensuring that all of the details are in place. While we've gone over a number of issues – graphics, booth staff and the buying or follow-up process – don't stop there. At least once a year, if convenient, plan on

and successful for many exhibitors is that it is the ultimate face-to-face sales engagement. Phones and webinars and e-mail and Blackberries and digital communication are fine. But when you see someone and shake their hand you're engaging in an age-old human activity.

By greeting your visitors warmly and making them feel welcome you're taking a major step to begin a fruitful relationship with them.

People do business with people they like.



Handing just a clipboard doesn't do any good if they don't have a pen. It's the little things that make the transaction easy. If you take credit cards, have a system in place that is convenient and quick (and tested!).

Examine all of the steps of the process, whether it's selling, filling out a contact form or scanning a badge. Is there a step you're missing? Are there too many steps? Walk through it with someone that's not familiar with the process to make sure that it's as fool-proof as possible. The minute you leave out a step or make it too complex you risk losing a customer.

setting your booth up away from the show and look for ways to improve the look and the process. And while you're at the show, pay attention to how the booth and your staff actually function. Improve the process and keep in mind that the it will evolve and improve from show to show.