

# Tradeshows Tip Sheet

## This month: Bringing Home Great Results

### Why Are You Exhibiting?

It may seem like a simple question, but exactly why are you planning on exhibiting at your next tradeshow? Is it because you've always gone to the show and if you don't go people will wonder if something's wrong with the company? Do you attend because you want 'good exposure,' whatever that is? Do you think it's a good place to train your salespeople?

None of those are good reasons.

However, if you're thinking that you are going to SELL something and have a plan on how to do that, you're on the right track. Are you going to collect leads? Do market research? Network with industry pros and colleagues? Meet long-time clients? Find new employees?

Yup, you're cookin' now - those are all good rea-

sons to go to a tradeshow.

And that's the challenge - getting GOOD RESULTS from your tradeshow appearance.

Let's examine a few aspects of getting good results



at a tradeshow. Because hey - if you're not getting good results, why are you spending the money? Let's make sure you're getting the proper bang for your buck.

### Why do Visitors Attend Tradeshows?

The first place to figure out where your results might come from would be to determine exactly why a visitor would attend a particular trade show.

Naturally, a tradeshow is a great place to find out what's new in the marketplace. Visitors will ask 'what's hot this year?'

Visitors to tradeshow are in a buying mood. Often their company will send them to a show with a task of buying something specific - and if they find out that you're offering the best product or service they're looking for, they'll buy it on the spot.

Of course any prudent visitor wouldn't visit a trade-

show without seeing what her competition is up to. They'll check prices, ask for quotes, gather literature, network with peers and catch up on old acquaintances.

One easy way to catch up with colleagues and meet a company's bosses is to ask at the booth 'where's the party this weekend?'" Chances are you'll not only find out, but you might wrangle in invitation. Or, hey, just show up and say 'one of the guys at the booth said I should come.' You'll soon find out if you're welcome or not.

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*Visitors are looking for what's new, what's the best price, product information, networking and learning opportunities*



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Use the opportunity of the tradeshow to do some market research. Find out what visitors like or dislike about your product or service.

### Meeting With Your Customer Base

A tradeshow is a perfect place to meet with your customer base. Think about it. Where else will you find a majority of your customers in one place? With just one trip, and some coordination, you can do several months worth of meetings in just one week. To make this portion of your tradeshow budget pay off, line up meetings with your best clients and prospective customers. Either schedule them for time in your tradeshow booth if you're able to accommodate them there, or rent a hotel suite for a day or two and hold the meetings there.

In fact, if you know that a lot of your clients or prospects are going to be at the show, but you either don't want to pay the going

rate for floor space or would rather have a more intimate setting, renting a hotel suite might be a terrific move. You control exactly who comes to the suite, you control the message. If it's conveniently located within a block or two of the show, it shouldn't be too much trouble to get show attendees to make the short jaunt to your room. Offer an incentive. Make an appointment, and confirm it before the show. Bring your audience to your 'world' and make friends, build relationships and increase your sales.



### Market Research

A medium to large tradeshow will have thousands of visitors. If you're interested in gauging reaction to your pricing strategy or your new product or service, this is the perfect place. Given the fact that most visitors will only pass your booth once, it's an opportunity to test pricing, slogans, headlines, features and benefits. During a four-day show, you could test several different selling points.

Key point: keep track of what works the best. This might mean having one staff person be in charge of changing the various literature, graphics or pricing information – and the day-to-day reaction to the different approaches.

A tradeshow is also a good place to ask visitors to fill out a quick survey. This could be done the old-fashioned way, with paper and a clipboard, or you might set up a laptop for them to punch in their answers.

Remember: keep it short. No more than a handful of questions that relate directly to what you're trying to find out. This information can help you assess your products or services from an audience that is intimately involved in your industry.

### Results Come From Your Objectives and Setting Goals

Having a well-defined set of goals and objectives for each tradeshow will help you determine what – exactly – you want to come home with. Is it sales? Market research? New relationships in the industry? Networking connections? New leads for your sales staff?

No matter what your goal – and all of these and more are important – a tradeshow is a prime opportunity to achieve them. Thousands of people have paid to attend this show – and to have a long look at products and services in your industry.

Don't disappoint the visitors – and they won't disappoint you. Come back a winner, no matter what your goal!

