

Exhibitor Tips

Dos and Don'ts for a Successful Experience

Do:

- Keep it professional at all times while working the booth. You don't want to ever block the flow of traffic into and out of your booth. Dress appropriately for the venue. Make sure you eat and drink only during break time and never in the booth! This extends to chewing gum and munching on candy. You should be well groomed and not wear excessive perfume or cologne. Also, always give your undivided attention to customers or potential clients. This means refraining from answering your cell phone or texting during show hours.
- Arrive early and be prepared. Arrive early enough to set up for the day. Most shows will have a setup day before the actual day of the event. Be sure you secure literature and promo items if you leave the booth for any reason. Valuables and promotional items will disappear if you do not secure them, or at the very least, hide them from sticky fingers.
- Listen more than you speak. It is said that you should listen 80% of the time and talk only 20% of the time at the show. The key here is not to "throw up" your value statement onto every passerby. Instead, look at this as a rare opportunity for you to market your business in person. There's plenty of time to shout your value statement in your advertising. Spend the show *listening* to your prospects. You might be surprised by what you hear!
- Meet people. Why stay in the exhibit the whole time? We recommend that you leave one member at the exhibit while another trolls the food and beverage counter and the smoker's station outside. These are the places where you can leave a lasting impression.
- Ask qualifying questions. Qualifying leads as they come by the booth both allow you to more effectively budget your time as well as identify the hottest prospects for immediate follow up. If you're listening close enough, you might not have to ask anything at all.
- Follow up. The number one mistake among exhibitors is to take a break after the hectic show is over. The most important part of any tradeshow takes place after you leave the building. Not putting adequate emphasis on follow up in the months following the show is like running a marathon and taking a nap once you are within sight of the finish line. Send all the leads you gathered thank you notes for coming to see you – and follow up with the most promising prospects quickly. You will be glad you did.
- Be open to creative and new ways of presenting your services. Tradeshow attendees see many exhibits in the course of one day. You need to be unique and engaging for your display to be memorable.
- Use giveaway items that enhance your expert identity. You want items that your attendees will use regularly and reinforce their impression of you as the expert.
- Give your tradeshow participation a fair chance to work. Results may not be immediate, but the business relationships you start at tradeshows today can steadily blossom into profitable partnerships tomorrow.

Don't:

- Don't be afraid to ask questions. A lot of first-time exhibitors are shy about asking the tradeshow staff questions prior to and during the show. Don't be. They are a wealth of information.
- Don't do what everyone else is doing. Exhibition is no place for "me too" marketing. This is the place for you to let your creativity (more than your budget) win you business at the show.
- Don't depend on remembering everyone you meet. Even if you are a memory savant, don't leave the ultimate success of the show to your randomly firing neurons. Take notes during interviews, collect business cards like they're an investment and aggregate all that information.
- Don't forget to promote your exhibition prior to the show. It's not the role of the venue to promote you. The fact that you are there means they've already done what they set out to do – sell exhibit space. It's up to you (and your marketing firm if you have one) to promote your attendance prior to the show and drive traffic to the booth once you're there.
- Don't be afraid to be enthusiastic about your services. If you are genuinely jazzed up about what you do, attendees will sense that. Enthusiasm is contagious – and more importantly, it sells!
- Don't forget to read the Exhibitor's Instruction material/emails. You'll find everything you need to know about exhibiting at that particular show – and discover important deadlines.
- Don't forget that literature is king. Visitors can feel intimidated by talking to people at exhibitions and will prefer to read about a product or service through literature available in the literature holder. This is also beneficial as the more literature holders you have, the more literature there is that gets taken home and looked at.

