



Don't sit in your booth like a bump on a log. Don't stand around looking bored -- and boring. Remember, people come to the show to see your company -- make it visible throughout the entire show with these six tips on selling opportunities.

When you're not on booth duty, you're still on show duty!

If you think you're on sales duty only when you're in the booth -- well, you're just plain wrong. A trade show is more than your booth, more than your time in that space. It's the entire venue, maybe even the whole city and it's your obligation to cast a wide net for prospects and clients.

1. Walk the Aisles and Visit Other Booths

This sounds so obvious, but it's not. You're tired, or bored, or think it's not important. This is your time for market intelligence, to find out what's going on in your industry that will impact your firm (and your customers) in the next six weeks or months.

If the show is broad and includes a full supply chain for an industry, your target prospects may have their own booths. You may not meet the people who make purchasing decisions for your product and services, but you can make contacts that lead you to decision makers. The point is an introduction, not a sales pitch.

Keep a smile on your face and your eyes on name tags as you stroll the aisles. If you spot a customer or targeted prospect, introduce yourself briefly. If the person doesn't seem interested in speaking with you at that moment,

extend an invitation and a reason to visit your booth. Then, move on. Again, the point is an introduction, not a sales pitch.

2. Participate in Educational Sessions

If your company has the expertise and the talent, get on the schedule of presenters. Sponsors are always on the lookout for new speakers or people with a strong reputation in the industry who are willing to introduce speakers.

When possible, attend the educational events offered by other companies. This is your chance to continue to build your network and your own industry expertise. These sessions give you topics of conversation throughout the show and for reports after the show. Make a point to introduce yourself to key attendees or speakers.

3. Spread Out at Meals

Trade shows can be a rare opportunity for sales people to get together but avoid the temptation to travel in packs. Sit at different tables during organized meals, so that your company meets as many people as possible.

4. Entertain Customers and Prospects

Before the show, make arrangements for lunch or dinner with important clients and prospects. Save breakfast and cocktails for impromptu meetings with prospects you meet at the show.



5. Participate in Sponsored Events

Pick an activity, and be assured you can pay to be a sponsor. From coffee breaks to coffee mugs, printing to pastry, lemonade to limos, show management increasingly offers exhibitors the opportunity to co-brand an event. If it's your company's event, you and your management will attend, introduce and talk about your firm and always thank them for participating.

On the flip side, when you attend other special events, you extend your networking opportunities.

6. Use the Internet

Use the Internet before the show. Make certain your show schedule is on your site. Put up info about your participation -- photos of your exhibit, list of staff, contests -- something to entice people to contact you before the show and visit you at the show. Develop an e-mail marketing strategy to connect with clients and prospects. Follow-up after the show with email, and a report to your community about your participation. Whether you have 100 or 100,000 clients, the Internet is your one opportunity to connect with the world.

