



## The 10 Commandments of Successful Exhibiting

### 1. Know Your Audience

- Who is the "perfect prospect" at this show for your product or service and what are their current problems? Focus on defining which of the show attendees' are in your target market and determine their current needs to offer solutions.
- Review the Exhibitor Prospectus for stats on number of anticipated attendees, historical data on job titles, purchasing influence, budgets, etc.

### 2. Prioritize Top 3 Reasons for Attending Expo

- To sell your products or services (or gather sales leads)
- Promote new products/product launch
- Enhance your corporate image or corporate message as an industry leader (branding/awareness)
- Cement existing client relationships
- Conduct business meetings
- Identify and recruit new distributors/dealers/representatives/employees
- Educate your audience regarding your products and/or services
- Perform competitive and market research
- Attend educational sessions

### 3. Set Goals & Objectives

- Your goals & objectives should be in keeping with your corporate mission and integrated with your overall marketing plan, keeping your prioritized objectives in mind.
- Set realistic goals based on show attendance, number of exhibiting hours, exhibit size, booth staffing and budget.
- Plan your logistical exhibit timeline based on the tactics needed to support your predetermined goals.

### 4. Identify What You'll Showcase

- If the expo is supporting a new product launch, time is of the essence in having marketing collaterals, training for your exhibit staff and the actual product ready for display or demonstration.
- If you have a large product line, display only a sample, pertinent to your audience's identified needs.
- Expo attendees want to experience your product or service in your exhibit, not just walk through it.

### 5. Produce an Attractive Exhibit

- Use color, light & movement
- Retain attendees in your booth using presentations, demos, or entertainment and a well-trained exhibit staff to convey your corporate message.



## The 10 Commandments of Successful Exhibiting (continued)..

- Keep your exhibit open and inviting; don't block more than 20% of your aisle space with counters, walls or excess exhibit staff.
- ### 6. Use High-Impact Graphics
- The "look" of your graphics should impart your overall marketing strategy (integrated marketing) and specific show message.
  - Leverage your best ideas from other media (advertising, print media, promotions, giveaways, etc.) into a consistent presentation to gain brand recognition.
  - Plan your exhibit graphics as large, colorful "visual speed bumps" to attract attendees attention and communicate your message.
  - Effective graphics create an interest in your product or service by telling potential prospects what you can do for them in approx. 3.5 seconds.
  - Use graphics to state your unique selling position (what differentiates you from competitors).
  - Use graphics to qualify who you want to meet (i.e. "Dealers Wanted")
- ### 7. Promote, Promote & Promote!
- Be proactive in inviting the attendees you'd like to visit your exhibit. Industry studies have shown that exhibitors can double the number of qualified leads at a show with an effective promotional campaign.
- Plan an integrated promotion strategy for all three timeframes of a trade show...pre-show, at-show & post-show.
  - Work with show management to obtain a targeted list of pre-registered attendees' names for pre-show promotion: postcards, e-mail or letter with complimentary show passes.
  - Determine on-site promotional opportunities (i.e. event sponsorships, show bags, lanyards, etc.)
  - Pick promotional items that have a high perceived value, will be kept by the attendee and have a tie-in to your message to make it more memorable.
  - Give promotional items as a positive reinforcement to only those who complete a lead form or attend a demonstration or presentation for higher perceived value.
- ### 8. Prepare Your Exhibit Staff
- Trade shows are a different type of sales venue with specific rules and expectations. Just as you would not send an actor on stage without a script, props, and a rehearsal, don't send your exhibit staff to a trade show unprepared.
  - Recruit friendly, courteous, enthusiastic, knowledgeable and professional booth staff.



## The 10 Commandments of Successful Exhibiting (continued)..

- Hold an exhibit staff meeting in the booth to introduce the booth captain & VIPs. Review exhibit layout, lead gathering systems, promotional programs, presentations, partners & work schedules.
- Corporate management should sponsor a mandatory off-site exhibit staff dinner or breakfast to:
  - Share corporate show strategy & goals with your staff
  - Conduct product training
  - Review booth etiquette & body language
  - Train how to effectively greet & engage attendees, quickly qualify using probing questions, demonstrate to prospects and disengage unqualified attendees. The most memorable part of the attendee's exhibit experience is staff interaction!

### 9. Use a Lead Form

- Plan ahead with your sales department to determine what pertinent info they'll need to follow-up after the show, including demographic data (from the attendees scanned badge or business card), product interest, role in purchasing process, timeframe to buy and requested follow-up.
- Determine if you will rent an official lead retrieval system on site (standard or customized), purchase a customizable system, or customize your own pre-printed forms to be completed manually.

- Determine your lead rating system for after-show follow-up (i.e. A=Hot, B=Warm, C=Cold)

### 10. Follow-Up!

- Provide promised follow-up within 72 hours if e-mailed; 10 business days by US Mail.
- Fact: 80% of all printed materials gathered by attendees at trade shows are thrown away before they make it back to the office. Use expensive collaterals in post-show follow-up of qualified leads. Hand out business cards with your URL and print your show messages on the back.
- Write your follow-up letter before the show; reference the show name, your booth theme, etc. Thank them for visiting your booth; reiterate the features/benefits of your product/service in the letter, and mention your proposed follow-up. Mail this letter with literature, coupon, article reprints, case studies, etc. to reinforce the sale or, if responding by e-mail, hyperlink to your website for easy access.
- Follow-up in the pre-determined manner.

Source: *The 10 Commandments of Successful Exhibiting -- Planning Your Trade Show for Maximum Results*, April 18, 2003, Candy Adams, CTSM, CME, CMM, CMP, [www.BoothMom.com](http://www.BoothMom.com)