

Tricks of the Tradeshow



Trade show exhibits are what we do. We've spent a lot of time at trade shows ourselves, as well as helping clients get ready for their trade show event. We've learned a few things along the way.

Here are some planning / tips to help you succeed at your next event:

- Develop a realistic trade show budget that allocates money where it is most needed.
- If you are not sure of the number of shows you will be attending per year, you may want to consider renting your display, instead of buying. Typically, if you are renting three times a year, you should consider buying your own display.
- Choose a booth that offers flexibility, allowing you to change the size and shape of the display. There's nothing worse than being stuck with a booth you don't want.
- Design your exhibit layout so visitors can move easily without feeling crowded. Keep the atmosphere intimate, and be sure to remove any barriers between yourself and your audience.
- Use signs and graphics to focus visitors' attention on your message, but don't try to accomplish too much. One or two large sharp images are far more effective than a booth filled with small visuals
- Always make sure your booth is well lit. Proper lighting will draw attention to your exhibit from a distance — which after all is what you are trying to do.
- Have your booth checked, both hardware and graphics, prior to going to the event to avoid unexpected surprises during set-up.
- Make sure your booth has a secure transport case so that it shows up at the event intact and ready to go.
- Think integrated marketing. Brand your exhibit through your promotional activities, via the Internet, etc.

At the trade show:

- Create a strong first impression. You only have one chance to accomplish this. Be friendly and upbeat, and please... put the cell phones away.
- Do not sit, read, smoke, eat or drink in the booth.
- Avoid questions, such as: "Can I help you?" or "Are you enjoying the show?" Prepare three or four open-ended questions to engage visitors at your booth.
- Keep the message simple so as not to overload visitors with information.
- Use product demonstrations but be sure they tie in with your product message.
- Consider offering a give-away or promotional product that ties in with the exhibit's overall theme.

After the show:

- Make sure you have a definite, structured follow-up plan for after the show. Have a clear goal in mind for what you want to accomplish and measure it. Many companies miss out on this important step.