



Twenty-Five Ways You Can Increase Your Business with Tradeshow Marketing

1. **Tradeshow Marketing is Ultra-Targeted.** You are marketing to a group of decision-makers who have PAID to be at the show you're exhibiting at. And since they are in your industry, they WANT to be marketed to by YOU.
2. **Leverage.** Since you have such a focused market that's passing by your booth, the cost of reaching those people with targeted marketing tools goes down with each one you hand out.
3. **Train Your Staff.** Since the tradeshow floor is unlike any other selling location, your staff had better know what they're doing. They'll need to be able to quickly qualify a prospect, figure the customer's needs and grab contact info for follow up. Since most companies don't train their staff, any investment in this area will put you miles ahead of your competition.
4. **STAND OUT IN THE CROWD!** If that means giving away free smoothies in exchange for an attendee's contact info or hiring a juggling team, you'll want to draw people in. Once you've accomplished that, your trained staff will be able to handle the qualifying and follow up process.
5. **Pre-show Promotions Pay Off.** One rule of thumb is to budget the same amount of money for pre-show marketing as you do on the actual show. The fifty-fifty approach gives you ample funds to zero in on your target before the show, contact them via direct mail, telephone or other method, and make sure that they show up at your booth once they get to the show - perhaps by offering them a special premium when they show up.
6. **Make sure you're going to the right show.** Some companies keep going to the same shows year after year - just because that's the way it's always been done. It behooves you to have regular discussion on whether the shows you're targeting are the ones you really need to be going to in your industry, especially if your industry changes and evolves quickly.
7. **Exhibit Proper 'Booth Protocol' at ALL TIMES.** This means no eating in the booth, no sitting back and chatting with your co-workers when people are walking by, pick up all litter and put out of site, stash personal items out of site, use the carpet-sweeper often...all the stuff your mother told you.



8. **Set Measurable Goals.** Do you want to make sales, generate leads, or set appointments? Decide what you want to do, then set a specific goal. And track the results to see how you did.
9. **Follow up.** It sounds simple, but it's easy to forget and let several weeks – then months – slip by. Put a system into place that ensures you make contact with ALL of the leads you generated and all of the customers you gained.
10. **Evaluate.** Record your successes and failures and have a post-mortem within a week of getting back to the office. Find ways to improve next time. Keep the file on hand and make sure you refer to it before your next show. If you only exhibit a couple of times a year, it's easy to let a lot of those ideas slip away unless you make notes and refer to them the next time around.
11. **Tradeshow Investment Stretches Beyond Dollars and Cents.** You're putting your time and energy into the show, too. And you're spending staff time, marketing dollars, mailing costs, giveaways, space rental and more. Take a hard look at the indirect costs, and make sure you add them to your ROI equation.
12. **It's a Team Game.** Your 'tradeshow manager' may be the main go-to guy or girl, but everyone on the tradeshow staff needs to participate fully. Things get done better and faster, results increase and it's more fun. Share the load.
13. **Keep your eyes open at the show.** When you get a moment, talk with other exhibitors; share ideas, find out what works (and doesn't) for them, and see what they have to offer. They could be potential partners, vendors or customers.
14. **Display your product or service in the best possible way.** Don't be complacent about how it's always been done. Come up with creative ways that show off your stuff...do you give away a printed version of your website? Should you use a laptop or a large screen? Do you need large graphics or a 3D physical element? Think of new ways to catch people's attentions...because its certain that your competitors are doing the same thing.
15. **Use tradeshows to debut new products.** Not only is it a great time to showcase a new product, it's also a good time to test more than one promotional approach. Get feedback from dealers, customers or prospects on your two or three different marketing approaches before it goes to a wider audience. Nothin' wrong with a survey, if handled right!
16. **Sleep well.** It's amazing how much more enthusiastic you are about your job and your company when you've had a good night's sleep, and how much more effective you'll be. Hey, maybe you could even convince your boss to get you a massage the night before the big day?
17. **When it comes to giveaways, key chains are not the answer.** Unless you're giving away a chance to win a car! Don't just pick a giveaway out of a catalog because it looks neat. Your giveaway should be designed to increase memorability, motivate, communicate, promote and/or increase recognition of your company. Many times an experienced promotional person can create a clever giveaway that does all of the above.
18. **Read the Show Manual.** Don't wait until the last minute. Pre-pay your booth costs, including electricity, carpet rental, etc. Prompt discounts can give you up



- to ten percent immediate savings. Work with your exhibit house if you need help on this.
19. **Develop a Theme.** A good theme is more than just a hook to hang your hat on, it's a way of drawing attention. If it goes against the grain, it can draw even more attention. Can you picture a high-tech company using an 'old west' theme? How about an organic food producer dressing the staff in golf knickers? Again, think of your target market and look for ways to hit their hot buttons – which sometimes may not be the obvious ones.
 20. **Brand Awareness Runs Deep.** Since your company's advertising, promotions, public relations and sales are on display at a tradeshow, this give you an excellent opportunity to boost your brand awareness. And since everything your company stands for is in display, there should be total consistency, clarity and focus before, during and after your show.
 21. **Pick Your Best People.** Sometimes the best tradeshow sales people are not your other, regular salesman. Since it's a different game on the tradeshow floor, the same rules don't apply, and your 'regular' sales people may feel out of place. Here you're going through the paces very quickly: qualifying, informing, and gathering information for follow up. The people in your company with the talent for excelling at tradeshow may not be the people you expect!
 22. **LISTEN TO YOUR VISITORS.** A big complaint about tradeshow sales people is that they talk too much. So keep these tactics in mind: don't do all the talking, don't interrupt, be sure to look at the person you're talking to, don't play with coins or other items in your pockets (shows nervousness and disinterest), and above all – SMILE!
 23. **Put Your Plan In Writing.** It may sound simple, but the very process of putting your plan in writing helps the whole process become more real, and forces you to think about all the various elements of the show and how they relate to each other. Exhibiting at a trade show is not like buying a gallon of milk at the supermarket. Instead, it's a project with a beginning, a middle and an end with dozens, sometimes hundreds of players.
 24. **Don't Overlook the Small Niche Show.** If there's a smaller regional show that lets you stand alone and still reach a good portion of your target market, it may be one of the best tradeshow investments you can make. With the right show and right approach you could become the big fish in the little pond.
 25. **What Do YOUR PEOPLE Think?** These are the folks who are on the front line, handing out samples, getting the attendees involved and gathering the crucial follow up data. In your de-briefing, give them an opportunity to sound off about what went right and what went wrong, Give them a chance to offer suggestion about how to improve the tradeshow experience next time. And hey, you may uncover your next company superstar!