

Tradeshows Tip Sheet

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Booth Behavior and Management

If you really want to show some bottom line results in your next tradeshow – without investing a lot of money in marketing or promotions, or a new booth or fancy video displays or handouts, this issue will show you how to do just that.

Just get your people – your staff – to perform at the top of their game.

A well-trained, enjoyable booth staff can bring in two to three times as many leads. And it really doesn't cost a dime. All you have to do is get your staff up to speed on how to greet visitors, answer questions, gather information and qualify leads on a consistent basis.

Well, that may SOUND easy. And admittedly, your staff may come from all areas of your company. Many may not know what they're getting into. Others may not even want to be there. Still others might be the partying

types: once you get them into a far-away city, they'll stay up half the night and show up a bit, er, uh, muddled, shall we say?

So there's more to it than just the idea and concept of having a well-oiled, well-trained tradeshow booth staff. Let's take a closer look.



Where Do You Find Them?

It takes a certain type of person to excel as a tradeshow booth host or hostess. They've got to be out-going, friendly, quick, enthusiastic and knowledgeable about the company's services and products.

Beyond that, it's a good idea for your booth staff to understand your audience and potential clients, so they can 'talk the talk' once the show is going.

According to author Ruth P. Stevens in her book "Trade Show and Event Marketing," you should first look to pick your staff among call center personnel, area sales people, business partners, re-sellers, distributors and vendors. "When choosing the sales

people," says Stevens, "choose neither the most seasoned nor the rookies." She even suggests outsourcing in some circumstances, as long as they're sufficiently trained.

Your booth staff could come from virtually anywhere within your company ranks as long as they hit the main qualifications of friendliness, enthusiasm and company knowledge.

Your booth staff can come from virtually anywhere in the company. Look for outgoing friendly people that can be good ambassadors.



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Wear Comfy Shoes

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Don't Eat In The Booth

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Greet Everyone With a Smile

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Don't Sit Down

Staff Training

Why should you train your staff? You assume they know your company, they're friendly, out-going and all that. So what would be the point of investing time and money to train them on something they already know?

With proper training, your booth staff can better understand the company's goals and how to achieve them. They'll have tools at their disposal to meet and greet visitors and ask qualifying questions. They'll be able to do this under the stress of a tradeshow setting where things happen faster and expectations are higher. With hundreds or thousands of visitors coming through your booth, a well-trained staff member can deftly handle questions, disqualify tire-kickers and politely move them

along, and figuratively pounce on the qualified leads to make sure all pertinent information is gathered and follow up methods are in place.

Beyond that, the training can help the booth staff understand the audience make-up, how to handle any members of the press that may approach, know the booth set-up, storage availability, products and more. With fewer than 3 out of 10 companies offering any consistent training to their booth staffers, any company that invests in booth training stands to gain valuable ground on competitors.



Details, Details – Keep Your Eye on the Little Things

1. Arrive early. Keep the booth tidy. Wear your badge on your right shoulder. Greet visitors with a smile.
2. Prepare a handbook for each booth staffer. Cover staff schedules, client meeting schedules, product info, local information such as maps and contact numbers, company emergency contact information, booth information and other pertinent info.
3. Know your booth neighbors. Introduce yourself. It helps make the show go smoother and give you someone to talk to during slow times.
4. Don't leave early. Research shows that many buyers are waiting until the final few hours of the show to strike deals.
5. Watch your body language in the booth: keeps hands out of pockets, arms unfolded. Speak clearly.
6. Don't eat or chew gum in the booth.
7. Don't talk on the cell phone (unless it's important – and then keep it short).
8. Wear comfy shoes and clothes.

Booth Staff Behavior Can Make or Break the Show

You can nitpick these things endlessly, but it's important to recognize that the little things do count. Selling on a tradeshow floor in a bustling glitzy environment is unlike any other kind of selling. It requires focus and knowledge. If your staff is aware of their objectives and you've taught them well, they'll

leave the show with a stack of qualified leads and a trail of happy customers and prospects.

As a booth manager, it's your job to keep the ship running smoothly. Daily staff meetings before the show floor opens helps your staffers know exactly what's going on and keeps their mind in the game.

