

Tradeshaw Marketing Tip Sheet

This month: Reasons NOT to Exhibit

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Reasons to Stay Away from Tradeshaws

As much as we love tradeshow marketing, there are substantial reasons why you should NOT go to shows. This issue of the Tradeshow Marketing Tip Sheet offers a laundry list of why you should NOT exhibit —some serious, some fun. No doubt you can add to this list with your own reasons why NOT to exhibit.



Okay, So Why Should You NOT Exhibit at a Tradeshow?

Don't exhibit when you don't have enough money in your budget. Okay, that's a no-brainer. Let's move on:

Don't exhibit when the show does not have the audience your product or service needs.

Don't exhibit when the logistics of getting your people and exhibit to the show outweighs the potential benefits of exhibiting.

Don't exhibit when your marketing plan is in the midst of changing and you don't have enough time to put the new marketing message in your tradeshow.

Don't exhibit when budget trimming forces you to drop a show or two off of your schedule. In this case pick the prime shows and focus on them and don't exhibit at the borderline shows.

Some of these are tough calls...but if your exhibit is dilapidated, old, looks like junk...maybe it would be better to NOT exhibit at all than show up with an inferior looking exhibit. Or – get

creative and come up with something to fill the space while you work on the budget for a new, fabulous exhibit.

Don't exhibit if the demographics of the show are not a good target for your product or service.

Don't exhibit if you cannot find enthusiastic, energetic, outgoing and coachable people to staff your booth.

Don't exhibit if you don't feel like going to where the customers are.

Don't exhibit if you can't find the time or money to piece together at least a respectable-looking booth with good graphics. Why be one of the booths at the show that people avoid because it actually repels people?

Don't exhibit if you feel that cold-calling, networking at business meetings and advertising work wanders for you – and you enjoy it more than standing in a booth all day greeting customers and prospects.

Make your own list of reasons why you should NOT exhibit at a tradeshow.



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Reasons to AVOID Tradeshows, continued...

Don't exhibit if you are in a product category – that is a commodity market – and you will be exhibiting next to competitors who may be competing almost strictly on price. What is the use of exhibiting if you're selling virtually the same product? If you invite your best customers to a show where you compete only on price, you'll likely be next to competitors that are willing to undercut your price just for the business. Instead, find a way to offer better service than your competition and the exhibit may be worthwhile. Show your potential clients that while the products may be the same there is a definite advantage to doing business with you.

Don't exhibit if you don't like traveling—it's likely that the most valuable industry tradeshows will not be held close to your place of business.

Don't exhibit if you don't want to meet hundreds of possible customers over the course of a few days.

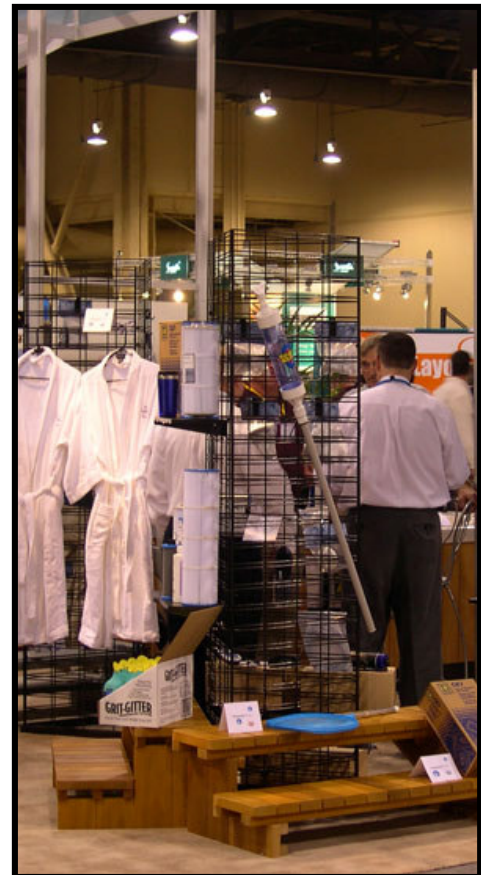
Don't exhibit if your company is extremely busy and you have no intention of expanding or hiring other people. In other words, if you have the perfect business and everyone is making exactly what they like and working exactly how much they want (wait a minute—wouldn't that be boring?)

Bottom Line

Exhibiting at tradeshows is only effective if it's done right. Don't expect to show up, set up a booth and watch the customers flock to you. It takes planning and execution. If you're not ready to make (and follow through on) a good plan, you're probably not ready to exhibit at a tradeshow. Hence the list.

However, if you are willing to roll up your sleeves, work the budget numbers, make (and adjust) a plan, tradeshow marketing is one of the most powerful and most effective market-

ing methods around. And—finally—don't exhibit if you just hate tradeshow marketing, think it sucks and will take all of your money. With that attitude, you're probably right. You get what you believe.



ing methods around.

There's nothing like face-to-face encounters with clients and prospects. That's the big advantage of tradeshow marketing—the human interaction. Seeing faces, gauging reactions, getting personally involved in helping customers grow their businesses.

Do yourself a favor and eliminate the reasons to stay away from tradeshows!