

10 Tips FOR BETTER TRADE SHOWS



TRADE SHOWS ARE FAST BECOMING THE TOOL OF CHOICE FOR COMPANIES TARGETING BUYERS IN FOREIGN MARKETS. MANY SUCCESSFUL COMPANIES HAVE RECOGNIZED THEIR POWER AND, APART FROM DIRECT SALES, THEY ARE INVESTING MORE DOLLARS IN THIS AREA THAN ANY OTHER PART OF THEIR MARKETING MIX. IN THIS ARTICLE, THE PORTABLES WILL PROVIDE 10 HELPFUL TIPS TO HELP YOU PARTICIPATE IN TRADE SHOWS FOR MAXIMUM SUCCESS.

BEFORE THE SHOW

1. Set goals for your trade show participation

As with any other aspect of your business you must set goals for your trade show. You will want to design a display that reflects your current marketing efforts and advertising. Equally important is that your display should generate interest and excitement! A display with High Impact Graphics will achieve this and "stop them in the aisles". This approach will give your booth staff the opportunity to make presentations to attendees.

2. Read the exhibitors manual

The exhibitors' manual is your guide to what you are permitted to do at trade shows. It covers all aspects of your participation and will outline what items are included in your space rental, such as carpet and drape colours. It will also tell you what height your display can be at the back and the sides of the display.

3. Order graphics early

While money can sometimes make up for poor planning, leaving graphics to the last minute compromises the design process and quality control side of production. You should be ordering your booth, new graphics and promotional items six to eight weeks before show time to avoid mistakes and save on stress.

4. Prepare your staff for show participation

Often the focus for a show is a new product, a display or graphics. However, it's very important that the staff chosen to attend the show has full knowledge of any products being displayed or introduced. They also need to know which literature and promotional products to distribute to qualified customers. Choose your staff carefully; they will represent your company and create a "first impression" for potential customers.

AT THE SHOW

5. Qualify potential customers...Quickly!

The average visitor to your display will spend less than 5 minutes with you. In this time you must qualify them as a customer, determine their needs, record all contact information and form a plan for follow-up.

6. Be thrifty with literature and giveaways

Most literature received at shows is never looked at or, even worse, it is discarded before leaving the show. It is sometimes more prudent to produce a less expensive brochure to distribute with an offer to mail or hand deliver the "better" brochures later. This is an excellent way to generate potential customer names and addresses and further qualify their interest.

7. Teach your staff the "trade show demo"

Demonstrating your products or services at a trade show is quite different than an "in office" demo where there are little or no constraints on time. Ensure that your staff can summarize and present your major features and benefits in less than 5 minutes.

8. Don't over-staff your display

Remember to leave room for your customers! While every representative for your company may be attending the show, not all of them can fit in at the same time and still leave room for customer interaction. Draw up a schedule for staffing the display and stick with it.

AFTER THE SHOW

9. Follow up leads after the show

When you get back to the office after attending a show, there seems to be a lot of "catch-up" work to do. However, it's critical that you schedule time for follow-up calls. Remember, if you're not following up on those hard-earned leads, your competition probably is.

10. Don't overlook your post show evaluation

It is important that you evaluate your show immediately after completion. Did you get the number of leads you expected? Did your graphics communicate the right message? Was your booth easy to setup? Was it large enough? How did you compare to your competition? Did you have enough staff? Would you participate in this show again? Asking these questions will help you better prepare for future trade shows.