



TRADE SHOW MASTERY GUIDE



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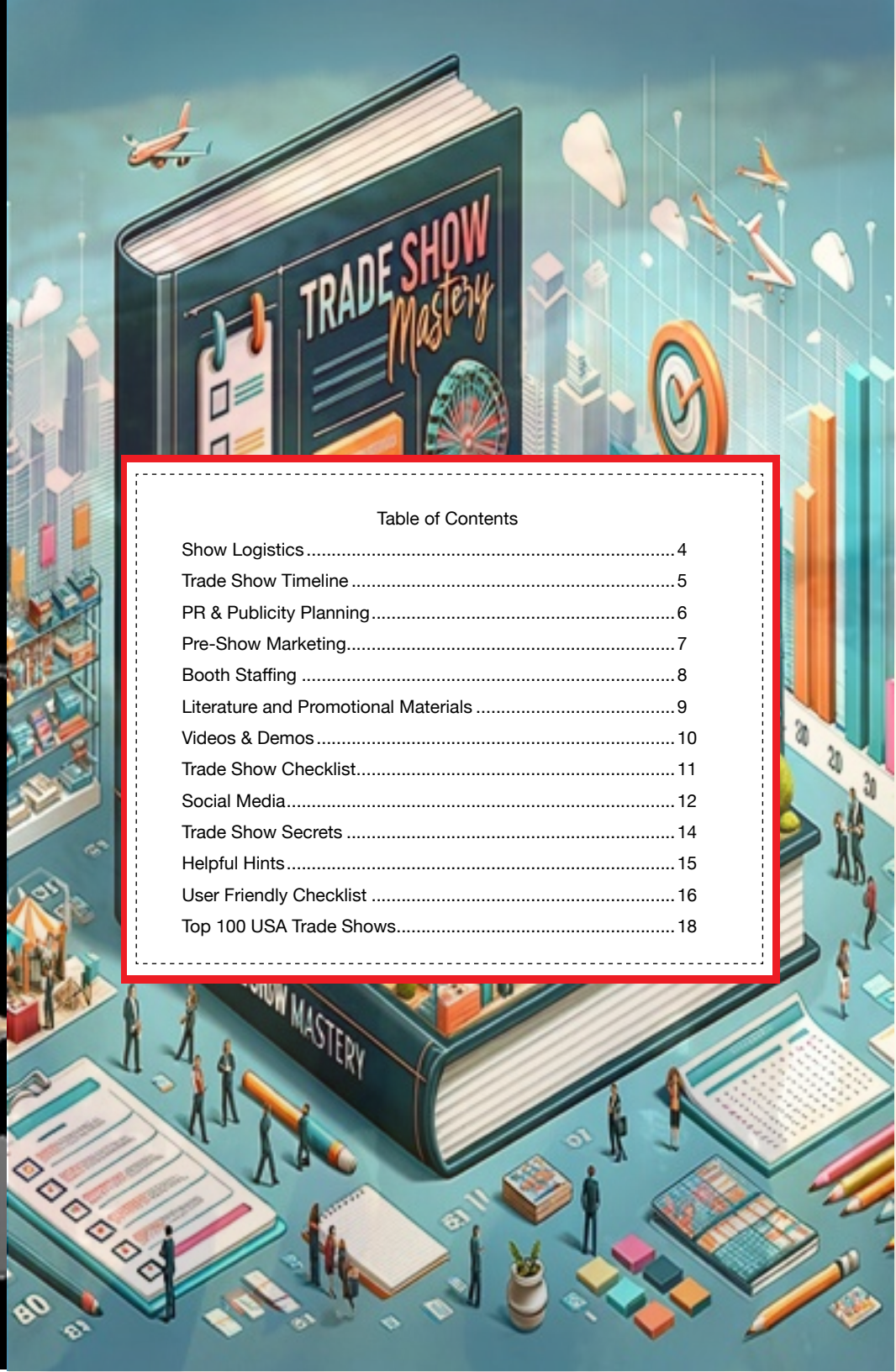
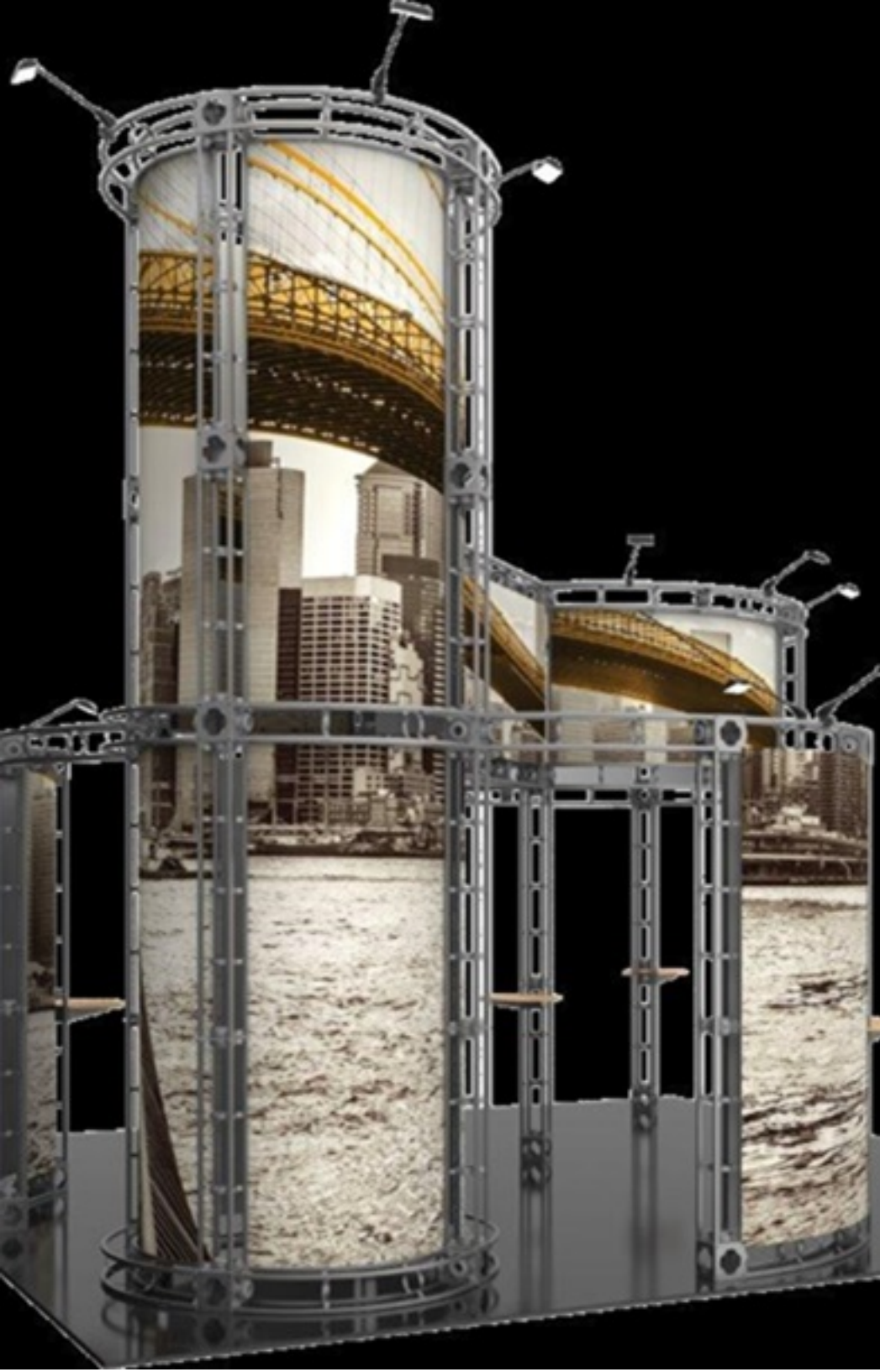


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SHOW LOGISTICS

Show Logistics are all of the arrangements that must be handled pre-show. When you're planning to exhibit at a show, it's important to know about the city you're visiting, as well as the rules and regulations of the convention center. This includes the associated unions and contractors. Do not miss a step, especially if you are budget-conscious, and who isn't today!

TRADE SHOW PLANNING TIMELINE

9 TO 12 MONTHS BEFORE SHOW

IDENTIFY THE TRADE SHOW OR SHOWS YOU WILL EXHIBIT AT

Develop a detailed trade show budget & forecast your return on investment. Be sure to set goals. Your goals for the show and who your team will be. Register & reserve your booth space with the show organizer and request full details on exhibit requirements & identify your booth space needs. Ask yourself, what will you be doing at the show? Showing product? Having meetings with clients & prospects?



6 TO 9 MONTHS BEFORE SHOW

DETERMINE YOUR EXHIBIT DESIGN, LAYOUT & GRAPHIC NEEDS

You can handle your own design & production or take your time to select an exhibit firm that meets your needs, based on capabilities, design talent, cost & delivery timing. (Remember, not all exhibit houses are full service as they claim). Identify what trade show giveaways & promotions you will use to attract visitors to your exhibit. Determine the literature & marketing materials you will need at the show. Begin design & printing work to ensure that you have your literature done in time for the show.



3 TO 6 MONTHS BEFORE SHOW

ORDER YOUR GIVEAWAYS/PROMOTIONAL ITEMS

Confirm delivery dates & make sure you are submitting all your exhibitor forms on time. Determine staffing requirements, develop booth schedules & plan training sessions. Order uniforms/shirts if necessary. Identify how you will ship your display & other items to the show. Begin making travel, hotel & transportation arrangements. Launch pre-show marketing initiatives & use social media as well as email marketing to encourage attendees to see you at the show. Add your booth number & invitation to visit you at the show to your email signature.



1 TO 3 MONTHS BEFORE SHOW

PREPARING YOUR THINGS FOR THE SHOW

Put together materials you plan to pass out at the show. Don't forget to register booth personnel for exhibitor badges. Finalize your exhibit & confirm shipping date. Schedule dinners or other meetings to be held at the show with prospects & customers.



1 WEEK BEFORE SHOW

FINAL DETAILS

You want to confirm shipping, reservations & double check that all action steps on the timeline have been covered. Print out exhibitor badge confirmations. Pack all items on your Trade Show Supply List.



PR & PUBLICITY PLANNING

A well-thought-out publicity approach to a trade show can yield thousands of dollars in free advertising as print space or air time. Plan your event with publicity in mind, seek media sponsorships, create helpful media kits, make it easy for the media to cover the event and brainstorm story ideas. Typically trade shows have media staff or a PR contact. A central aspect of PR planning will be to find out from them who will be covering the show. Ask for specific names and find out which print media, broadcast media and any online sites they represent.

You must be newsworthy to have a good chance of getting media attention. Without question, you must prepare a press release to announce your exhibit. Once again, an interesting or out of the ordinary angle is all editors think about here. You must be different and unique. You must give editors and producers specific reasons why they should visit you over all the other exhibitors. Perhaps you have a new product to announce, a new member of the management team to introduce or a position that you are taking on an industry issue. That makes your company newsworthy.

Many companies use celebrities or an industry expert to draw crowds. Announcing celebrity attendance and schedules is done via press releases, and private invitations and inclusion in any trade show media. Other ideas for announcements beforehand include asking them to stop by for a free gift or a chance to win something extravagant, or to get their picture taken with your celebrity or in an expensive car. Acquiring attendee lists beforehand can be invaluable. Messages to the list of what you'll be exhibiting will help draw attention to your booth and increase your trade show traffic. This is also effective when following up after the show.

NEWSWORTHY
MEDIA ATTENTION
PLANNING & PUBLICITY
BROADCAST
ADVERTISE
ANNOUNCE

PRE-SHOW MARKETING



Pre-show marketing is a big ticket to your show success. You can't expect attendees to line up to visit your exhibit if you haven't promoted anything or made it known that you're going to be there. Have your show and booth number on all of your communication tools. Clients like to be invited someplace and appreciate the time you take with them just to check in. Take advantage of this time and reach out to as many clients and prospects as you can.

Write a press release announcing show-related news. Invite editors to stop by the booth, or set up appointments between them and your spokesperson. Use tag lines such as: "see us at Booth N1540 at the International Seafood Show" in press releases and other communications leading up to the show, as well as including it on your email signature. If you have a giveaway or something else interesting, say that too. "Michael Jordan will be autographing his new book" or "Visit our booth and take a picture with Beyonce." Emails will gather momentum as you can use the

tradeshow's name in the subject of the email, people will probably read your email blast.

Although much has been said about postcards and snail mail having died – using this before a trade show can be a golden invitation. Just offer something cool or an expensive drawing item at your booth, and attendees will beat a path to your space. This will mean that they keep the postcard handy once they receive it and even during the tradeshow, which means whatever else you put on there gets seen over and over again. Just do not forget to put your booth number on there!

Finally, trade shows are a rare chance for face to face meetings. Set appointments with industry read magazines and blog writers, as well as existing and potential clients. This is a great time to meet with vendors as well as potential partners. Start calendaring and keep your appointments leaving plenty of time for the walk-ins!

BOOTH STAFFING

Too often the booth staff that is at the show is a result of their being available or in the right location to be drafted for services. But when accuracy precedes momentum, the staff is chosen for their skills in the unique exhibition environment, rather than their location or availability. That particularly means everyone need not be a sales person, rather tech people that have back door product knowledge.

Someone has to be there to greet browsers, engage them in conversation, and take their questions, this is where sales people shine. Sending a new staff person is not always the wisest decision as they may not have all the answers about products or services. For every new staff member, an experienced employee should be sent as well.

Pre-show training is important! Your staff needs to know what is expected of them. They need to be briefed on all new programs that should be emphasized. They must know how to run the demos and presentations, and they should know some basic trouble shooting. Nothing looks more unprofessional than demos that don't work. Anyone who works at shows should be aware of company goals for being there. They should participate in pre-show training, should know the products on display, and be prepared to answer basic questions about them. Most importantly, they should exhibit behavior that makes attendees feel welcome in the booth at all times.

If you sent out a pre-show promotion and a client brings in a coupon, does your booth staff know what it is for? If you have the option, pick a booth captain at least three months prior to the show and make sure that adequate staff training occurs. Your chosen booth captain should be able to convey what is expected, what makes a good staffer, how to have the right conversation, how to listen to an attendee, and what the appropriate etiquette looks like.

Give people who approach your trade show display a friendly greeting and welcome their questions. Here are

some quick rules:

- Be sure that body language is friendly.
- Don't stand there with your arms crossed over your chest.
- Chat with booth visitors, and find out what aspect of the business they're most interested in.
- Be prepared to offer specific solutions to their questions.

The trick is to draw them in without intimidating or overwhelming them.

What is proper booth etiquette? not eating, drinking, sitting, talking with booth staffers, and using technology devices. Any of these behaviors can make attendees keep walking past your trade show exhibit. The cell phone should be checked at the door – it is unacceptable and user-unfriendly.



LITERATURE & PROMOTIONAL MATERIALS



Choose the right marketing materials that will best support your booth objectives. Marketing dollars are very commonly spent on the same materials over and over again at a show. Are they working? Discuss with your team what the main message you want to translate is. Are you introducing a new product, do you want prospects to get on your email list? Whatever it is, gear your marketing materials to the message you are trying to achieve. For example, if one of your objectives is to get your newsletter out there, have your booth staffers carry iPads to encourage attendees to sign up on the spot. Attendees appreciate the convenience to sign up at the show, and the iPads are a great technology to incorporate in your booth literature and handouts. Seventy two percent of the literature collected at trade shows is thrown away before the attendee leaves to go home. If you want to hand out literature make it inexpensive, general and include something that the attendee can use while at the trade show.

If your marketing collateral needs to be updated or redesigned, take care of this early. You don't want to run the risk of having no brochures to hand out. Info request forms for filling out prospect information—clear forms eliminate guesswork. Consider giveaways to generate attention and a sense of fun. These don't have to be expensive. Pens with your web address and a catchy slogan can be very effective and stay on the desk or in the hand of the prospective client.

There are many ways to deliver collateral to show attendees, especially since everyone has a preference on how they like their materials. You should have hard and electronic copies to snail mail or email after the show or at the end of the show day. Postcards are a great tool as they are an affordable takeaway option and not as bulky as a catalogue. Don't forget to put your booth number on your materials because you'll never know who will come back.

Printing takes longer than you think – design early and order with enough time to handle problems. Branded table throws, colorful banner stands, logo'd giveaways, swag bags, and even furniture must be planned and shopped for much earlier than you think. See Giveaways under Show Logistics.

MATERIAL OBJECTIVES
RELATION
MERCHANDISE
PROMOTION
MARKETING SPECIALS DIRECT LITERATURE
BUYERS EMAIL PROSPECTS
EBRAND
COLLATERAL

VIDEOS & DEMOS

The demonstrator understands how their product can be presented to address the visitor's needs and what the BIG IDEA is as the takeaway for the visitor to remember when they leave the trade show exhibit. The demonstrator understands how their product can be presented to address the visitor's needs and what the BIG IDEA is they want the visitor to remember when they leave the trade show exhibit. This does not occur if we select demonstrators and only tell them what their timeslot is to work the exhibit. Accuracy means planning, preparing and practicing the demo before the first visitor sets foot in the

exhibit.

Let's be honest, not every company has that special someone that can do a live presentation. Effective product demos and live presentations can turn prospects into clients in minutes. On the other hand a poor presentation may tip the scales in the other direction. There are companies that can provide live marketing specialists for you. They can be hired to do as little as acting as your spokesperson for two

to three days ...or as much as providing a complete marketing campaign.

How do you create a corporate video to coordinate with your company branding on the show floor? Media is not just for the big guys anymore. A video can showcase the best parts of what your company has to offer through the words of the people that love it most! Who better to believe than current clients or employees to share in their words how amazing your company or product truly is.

Your brand and marketing are vital in increasing awareness, new business and staying a step ahead of your competition. What you look like to the world should demonstrate what your company stands for: your set of values and your unique selling proposition. When people see any of your marketing materials or your trade show exhibit, they should immediately recognize your company and its personality. Additionally, corporate videos move from the show floor to your website and reach thousands of potential clients.



TRADE SHOW SUPPLY CHECKLIST

Bring a Box of Everything! There is no successful way to go to a trade show without your "Box of Everything." This box of stuff will make your life easier every time you go to a tradeshow. You can start with a small, inexpensive plastic box from Walmart or go for the gusto right off with a warrior case – roto-molded, compartmentalized, and ready to go to war. You won't use all the stuff every time, but I guarantee you will use an unpredictable subset every time.

- All Purpose Cleaner (Wipes are the best).....
- Bowl for Business Card collecting
- Box Cutters & Scissors
- Business Cards
- Calculator
- Change of Shoes (comfortable).....
- Chargers for All Devices
- Container for Giveaways
- Empty Boxes (You will have things to bring back)
- Extension Cords
- Fingernail Clipper & File
- First Aid Kit (lots of band aids)
- Folders.....
- Pens, Glue Stick, Highlighters, & Sharpies
- Hand Sanitizer
- Laptop Charger
- Medicine for colds, headaches, stomach aches.....
- Mini Tool Set.....
- Note Pads & Post-it Notes
- Paper Clips & Binder Clips (assorted sizes).....
- Paper Towels
- Photos of what your booth should look like.....
- Rubber Bands (assorted sizes)
- Safety Pins
- Snacks.....
- Staple Gun.....
- Stapler / Staples.....
- Tape (Asst - double sided, electrical, packing).....
- Bags - Trash and Ziploc
- Velcro Tabs
- Water
- Zip Ties & Cable Ties.....
- Business Card Binder Kit (organize the cards you get).....

STED DEMONSTRATION
SUCCESS
CAMPAIGN ATTENTION

SOCIAL MEDIA

Both small and large companies use social media as a way to connect with their customers. In the same way trade shows are using social media to connect with both the exhibitors at the shows and attendees. Trade shows of any industry can easily bring in thousands of people so how do you get people to remember to visit your booth or how do attendees make sure they don't miss any speakers? Social media is the answer. Social media can be a powerful way to break through the overwhelming distractions in a convention hall and drive traffic to your booth as well as keep all attendees informed of the events for the day.



USING FACEBOOK

SOCIAL MEDIA

Whether your company is tweeting on twitter, posting on Facebook, uploading videos to YouTube or using LinkedIn to connect with and develop stronger relationships with your prospects and clients, social media is an incredible asset to leverage and expand your trade show marketing. This allows you to create pre-show buzz, drive traffic to your booth, increase your brand recognition, expand networking opportunities & deepen relationships, and promote special offers.

Follow the trade show's Facebook page. Post questions regarding the trade show, the special events at the show and other relevant information (like where to stay or best places to eat in town) that will help you get more engagement and exposure. Promote the trade show, your booth number in the exhibition hall on your company brand page. Change your cover photo at the top of your page promoting your trade show special offers or contests. And don't forget to "friend" attendees or fans of the trade show exhibit's page.



USING INSTAGRAM

Instagram is a visual medium that allows brands to connect with not only their customers, prospects, and leads, but potential show attendees through the show's official hashtag. Post pictures or brief videos with your branding and directions where to find you on the trade show floor. You can also video your presence at the trade show in your Instagram stories. Don't forget to cross promote your presence through industry hashtags and the show's hashtag. While posting to your Instagram, this content can also appear on your Facebook through the connected accounts. Reach your audience in the many places they hang out.



USING TWITTER

Find out if the tradeshow is using a hashtag (example: #tradeshow) to share news and events with attendees and start using it. Follow any of the users who are using the #tradeshow hashtag you identify based on their Twitter feed to be a prospective customer. Follow the show organizer on Twitter and retweet their posts. Oftentimes when you retweet them, they retweet your tweets or comments, giving your business more visibility. Publicize your booth number. Offer a sample or free trial of your product/services for a retweet. Twitter only contest. Have people visit your booth, take a selfie there and use a special hashtag and the event hashtag to post it to Twitter.



USING YOUTUBE

Create quick little testimonial videos from customers. If you have a current customer visiting your booth, it's a great opportunity to capture a quick 30 second video testimonial. Take a video of the activity at your booth. Show off the number of people visiting the booth or interview an employee working in the booth. Participating in the trade show contest, a presentation being given or special event speaker. Don't forget to link to your company's website within the description of the video as you upload it to YouTube. And make sure your description describes what is happening in the video. Don't just upload videos with no information.



USING LINKEDIN

Join groups and engage in "conversations" or start one yourself in trade groups related to the show. Share thoughts about the industry or market to establish yourself as an authority in your industry. Use your LinkedIn "share an update..." to show your upcoming contest or post your company's most recent press release. Connect with people going to the show. Tell them where to find you at the show. Start building a relationship with them. Don't forget to look for similar business interests/connection that you have in common with fellow attendees. Use that "common ground" as a reason to have a conversation at the trade show.

TRADE SHOW SECRETS

A good looking trade show display is not enough. You never get a second chance to make a first impression. It's a saying that should serve as a motto for every trade show booth staff. A good first impression is half the battle. First you must pre-plan, prepare, and practice. Then you hit the show floor where you need to know how to create a favorable first impression time and time again, over the long hours and days that you'll be at the trade show. When you're at a trade show, what you're selling is you.

PRESENT YOURSELF, THEN YOUR PRODUCT

Today's buyers are nervous. Some have been through the dot-com bubble. They have seen the 2008 market crash, and corporate scandal follow corporate scandal. Yet they still have to do business. How do they know who they can trust? First Trade Show Secret: People have to 'buy' you before they can buy your products.

Trade show attendees are constantly watching. If your body language conveys the fact that you don't want to be at the show, would prefer not to engage with attendees, or are just going through the motions, they'll pick up on that and go elsewhere. Arms folded, on the cell phone, talking with fellow exhibitors sends a clear message that you are not interested in me. Second Trade Show Secret: People won't come in if your body language says "Go away!"

The over-talker engages with a constant stream of chatter. Talking is important, but listening is more so. Shift the focus from your sales pitch to actually listening to the customer and you'll find your results immediately improve. Ask attendees questions, and listen to their answers. Give them your full attention. The fact that you're focused on the attendee is one of the easiest, most effective ways to create a positive first impression. It sets a good precedent, establishing how you will do business with this client further down the road. You're laying the foundation for that positive, profitable relationship. Third Trade Show Secret: Focus on the attendee for maximum results.

To begin new relationships, you must first create a positive impression. Take heed of the fact that people need to trust you before they can feel comfortable doing business with you, avoiding offensive body language, and paying attention more than you talk will help you do exactly that. Remember pre-plan, prepare, and practice – then create an environment of intimacy with the show attendees.

HELPFUL HINTS

Ask yourself, am I organized for the show? Preparing for a show well in advance can save you both time and money. You will be surprised at the add-on costs if you don't meet certain deadlines. If you follow a budget and a timeline, problems will be at a minimum. Read the show manual. Everything you need to know about the show should be there, including a proposed or final schedule, registration information and forms, floor plans, exhibit specifications, invitations for potential speakers, and other important details.

HAVE A GOAL

A goal helps you make the decisions below and provides a yardstick for whether the tradeshow was "successful," and therefore whether you should do more. Do you want to increase visibility, gain exposure to a large number of customers who might be interested in your products, or check out the competition? Create a unique identity for your booth staff. Decide on the dress code for your staff. Matching blazers, T-shirts, or even bow ties will make your representatives easily identifiable.

THE BEST FOOT FORWARD

Plan your PR ahead time. Plan your event with publicity in mind, seek media sponsorships, create helpful media kits, make it easy for the media to cover the event and brainstorm story ideas.

INVITE CLIENTS AND PROSPECTS

You should plan to send e-mails blasts, snail mail and make telephone contact with clients and prospects that you would like to invite, to have them stop by your booth. Many people do not attend trade shows, much less make it to your booth space because they are not invited.

DECIDE ON YOUR MAIN MESSAGE

Just like your home page, you get 3 seconds to convince someone to stop at your booth. Keep in mind the goal is to get people to stop, not to explain everything about who you are and what you do! Boil it down to a single, short sentence.

SCHEDULE A VENDOR PRESENTATION

Most shows allow vendors to give presentations, sometimes for a fee. Always do this. Even if just 25 people come listen to you speak that is 25 people you get to talk to in depth for 30 minutes. This is far more valuable than talking to 100 people at your booth for 5-60 seconds.

WEAR COMFORTABLE SHOES

You'll be standing for much longer than you're used to; comfortable shoes are a must. You can also bring floor pads designed for people who stand all day. Always order padding under the carpet!

USER FRIENDLY CHECKLIST

Application Process

- Fill out application form.....
- Select Booth Space.....
- Payment for booth space.....

Exhibitor Forms

- Audio visual rentals
- Booth Staffing
- Carpet rental.....
- Catering.....
- Cleaning
- Computer rental
- Drayage (Material Handling)
- Folders.....
- Electrical.....
- Exhibitor Appointed Contractor
- Floral.....
- Forklift.....
- Furniture rental
- Graphics
- Hanging Sign Labor.....
- Internet
- Labor (install and dismantle)
- Lead retrieval system
- Method of Payment.....
- Photography.....
- Rigging
- Security

Marketing Materials

- Brochures (literature)
- Business Cards
- Giveaways
- Handouts.....

Travel

- Airfare
- Ground Transportation
- Hotel.....

USER FRIENDLY CHECKLIST

Shipping

- Carrier selected
- Labels printed.....
- Payment made
- Shipping forms completed.....

Post Show

- Contact made with leads
- Leads distributed.....
- Leads qualified
- Literature mailed.....
- Graphics
- Hanging Sign Labor.....
- Internet
- Labor (install and dismantle)
- Lead retrieval system
- Method of Payment.....
- Photography.....
- Rigging
- Security

APPLICATIONS
BROCHURES
INTERNET
HOTELS
FOLDERS
FORMS
GIVEAWAYS
DUE DATES
PAYMENTS
GRAPHICS







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If you have any questions or need assistance with your trade show booth, rentals, accessories, or any related exhibit services, please don't hesitate to contact us. We're here to help make your next trade show a resounding success!