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**Boost the Sales Power of Your Trade Show Exhibit**

**By Dick Wheeler**

Boost the Sales Power of Your Trade Show Exhibit by: Dick Wheeler

Your company's presence at industry trade shows is critical to stay competitive in a global marketplace. A properly managed trade show display can be one of your most effective and powerful sales tools.

Here are some pointers to consider as you approach the challenge of maximizing your trade show selling efforts:

To get started, enlist the early interest and participation of your Marketing Director. He/she should be a dedicated promotional partner in getting your exhibit program launched. If you do not have a communications department in your company, consider hiring your trade show exhibit company or an outside trade show marketing consultant. If you do not have the budget for a consultant, take the time to educate yourself and your sales team on the basic essentials of trade show selling.

Recognize the importance of trade show exhibiting and give it your very best. Business-to-business marketers in greater numbers every year are adopting the trade show exhibit function as an increasingly valuable component of their promotional toolkit. A study on the nine basic marketing approaches used by the nation's top companies, trade show exhibits rank #3 in marketing dollars spent, only behind advertising and sales promotions and ahead of sales force management, direct and online marketing, premiums, public relations among others. What this means is you need to spend time and effort on exhibiting at trade shows to remain competitive.

Set standards for trade show exhibit quality, design and staff conduct to optimize the trade show exhibit area experience. A well-presented exposition area can be a very compelling attraction especially if you make it a first class event with strict standards for quality trade show displays with a set of guidelines. Portable and custom modular exhibits are now available through professional exhibit specialists who handle the entire design and build function from initial graphics to delivery of the finished exhibit at the trade show site. New lightweight materials and collapsible construction make assembly, breakdown and shipping both easy and affordable.

Train your staff to effectively sell at your trade show booth. Keep in mind who you are exhibiting to, what your specific message is and why visitors to your trade show booth need to know about your product, service or message. Practice your message with your staff to make it clear and brief. Be sure

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you have the informed staff at your booth to answer specific questions in detail. Make sure they are effective representatives for your company and that they have proper trade show booth etiquette -no eating, no lounging, no chatting amongst themselves and ignoring client prospects.

Seek guidance from reliable sources. As the trade show exhibit industry has grown, so have its resources for providing support for those interested in making the trade show exhibit function an important part of their marketing efforts.

As you plan your sales and marketing function, take a closer look at the added value of a well-conceived or upgraded trade show exhibit. In today's business environment, where the high tech conveniences of e-commerce and cell phones eliminate face-to-face encounters, your company is probably craving the high touch experience a trade show exposition can add to assist your sales team.

Dick Wheeler is President of Professional Exhibits & Graphics, headquartered in Sunnyvale, with a showroom in Sacramento, California. The firm is a full-service premiere trade show exhibit, graphics and management services company. For additional information, go to

<http://www.proexhibits.com>

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### **Eight Ways to Control Trade Show Display Costs**

**By Dick Wheeler**

From time to time, clients ask how they can keep control of trade show exhibit costs without diluting their exhibit impact. Here are several suggestions to help keep trade show display expenditures in line:

1. Consider renting a trade show booth rather than buying one.

Renting a trade show exhibit applies only if you are planning a one time or occasional trade show appearance or if you have a simultaneous trade show in another part of the country that conflicts with your exhibit schedule. It does not make economic sense to rent a trade show display if you plan to exhibit more than three times in a given year. Be sure to rent a booth that will fit into the size of the exhibit space. Renting will save you not only on trade show booth construction costs but also the expense of warehousing your display after the trade show is over.

2. Upgrade your existing trade show booth.

If you choose not to rent, you can upgrade your older booth by changing its graphics, relaminating color panels, and redesigning structural elements. This is a much more cost-effective way than starting from scratch.

3. Invest in a pre-owned trade show display.

If you do not already have an existing trade show exhibit booth to upgrade, you can find pre-owned

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trade show exhibits that are greatly reduced from their original cost. Many trade show exhibit houses offer top quality pre-owned exhibits that are well maintained and easily adaptable to new signage, often affording reductions in exhibit design time and construction costs by more than half. You also have options on size, design, scope and price similar to trade show booth rentals with a variety of style and dimension options. Perhaps with little more than a customized graphics upgrade your trade show exhibit can be "out the door and on the floor" in a matter of weeks.

### 4. Consider a lightweight trade show exhibit.

A lightweight exhibit will reduce operating costs such as freight, drayage, and storage. Select a trade show display that packs easily and is uncomplicated to install and dismantle. A custom modular or custom portable trade show exhibit can have the look of a custom exhibit, while reducing operating costs by 50 to 90 percent.

### 5. Pack extra supplies.

When your installation and dismantle company installs your exhibit at your trade show, you'll find that emergency repairs and materials replacements often are costly. So keep a backup supply box filled with items that may need to be replenished at the trade show. Include power cords, tools, light bulbs, Velcro, scissors and duct tape.

### 6. Plan well in advance.

This will help you avoid unnecessary rush charges from not scheduling adequate lead time for the trade show display's graphic design and production requirements.

### 7. Set up the trade show display during pre-show week days.

Avoid costly weekend and overtime labor costs on the trade show floor. Early trade show booth

assembly also helps you to avoid last minute glitches that run up the tab.

### 8. Understand trade show services.

You will frequently require supplemental assistance from trade show services at the trade show exhibit hall. These are representatives and union laborers who provide such support services as installation and dismantling, carpeting, furniture, lighting, phones, drayage and security. If you are aware of the nuances of these charges for trade show services and plan in advance you can save money while avoiding numerous pitfalls.

Experience is the best teacher in keeping trade show exhibit costs under control. If your display team has limited know-how, tap into the wealth of knowledge available from the staff of a reputable trade show exhibit house. Also do your research on trade show exhibit company websites for industry insider tips.

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