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**Increase Sales By Thinking Beyond Your Standard Trade Show Display**

**By Matt Kelly**

The most incredible, cutting-edge, innovative product or service in the world is not going to generate revenue without a valiant marketing effort. Attending trade shows is a smart initiative to get exposure for your company - but if you are not paying close attention to the details of your trade show display, you are missing an opportunity to showcase your company above the competition.

Your trade show display creates a backdrop for you to meet new prospects and hopefully lay the foundation for a lucrative relationship with them. When a trade show attendee stops by your exhibit, they are stepping into your portable office, and you are offering a snapshot of what your company is about. If you want to keep a prospect in your trade show booth for more than a couple of seconds, you must be able to quickly establish trust - and projecting a polished, professional image, combined with a personable staff, sets an excellent foundation of trust.

Adding accessories to your trade show display can make a huge difference in the efficiency and effectiveness of your presentation. Literature racks provide information for passive prospects to get what they need without feeling any sales pressure, or offer information that may prompt the prospect to ask questions. In addition, an offer on the banner stand or the multimedia demo is an opportunity to spark the prospect's curiosity and drive traffic to your booth. While the flooring you use for your trade show exhibit may seem insignificant, it contributes to the overall tone of your trade show exhibit space.

Here are some tools to help your trade show display attract attention and create a comfortable stage for you to connect with attendees.

**Literature Racks**

An excellent tool for organizing and displaying your printed materials, literature racks can prove quite valuable if your sales team is preoccupied with another prospect, or if the passer-by wants more information. Rather than waiting for an available salesperson, and growing impatient doing so, the prospect can still get information about your company. And when your sales team is talking with a prospect, rather than sifting through boxes or piles of brochures and flyers that are spread across the table, they can quickly and easily grab the information the prospect needs. With the available space on

## Increase Sales By Thinking Beyond Your Standard Trade Show Display

your table, you have more room to display your product, offer samples or do your product demos.

### Banner Stands

Portable and lightweight, banner stands help attract attention to your space. You can display your company logo with information about your business, announce a special event, or offer information about a new product on these handy marketing pieces. Floor models stand between seven- and nine-feet tall, while hanging banners can be as large as ten feet. You also have a choice between fabric or vinyl.

### Trade Show Flooring

Because this part of your trade show exhibit is rarely noticed, you may think you can get away with

skipping this one. But keep in mind that ambience goes a long way when trying to separate yourself from the competition. Whether you are looking to duplicate the appearance of a wood finish, a stone or marble finish, carpet or texture, there is likely a flooring option that will work for you, no matter what color or style you are looking for. And with your sales team standing for several hours over multiple days, trade show flooring is a must as it can reduce standing fatigue. Keep in mind, if you purchase your own trade show flooring rather than renting it from the trade show exhibit hall, you'll save money.

### Multimedia

We are living in the age of email, podcasts and webinars. Whether it's something as simple as a game show, an "infomercial" type format or you've decided to make room in the budget to produce a full product demo, you should have some sort of multimedia tool featuring your product. Not only does this make you a little more cutting-edge than the standard exhibitors, but this is also an opportunity to begin building some type of association in the prospects mind - hopefully positive - with your product, whether it is fun, efficiency, innovation or style.

If you don't go above and beyond average expectations for your customers in your daily business practices - from the helpful voice that greets prospect calls over the phone to following up with the customer after the sale - your company will be passed over for a competitor that does. And at a trade show, where the competition is only a glance away, the same principle applies. Always keep in mind that your trade show exhibit is an attendees' first introduction to your business - and first impressions are lasting.

As with any other area of your business, put your best foot forward with your trade show exhibit and the results are sure to follow.

Mat Kelly is the president of ExhibitDEAL, the Original Exhibit Wholesaler specializing in trade show accessories and displays. The company provides literature racks, banner stands, trade show flooring and table top, pop-up and custom displays. For info, visit:

<http://www.exhibitdeal.com/>

## **Nine Tips on How to Set Goals for Your Trade Show Exhibit**

**By Dick Wheeler**

It is often said that if you don't know where you are going, you may miss it when you get there. And, as Malcolm Forbes also points out, "If you don't know what you want to do, it's harder to do it." This is good advice especially in the trade show exhibit arena. It is crucial to establish goals and set objectives before you plan to exhibit at a trade show. As with any important marketing effort, you measure success by how well the activity performs against your stated goals. For example, ask how many hot leads do I need in order to justify the cost of our exhibit? What is my projected close rate needed to warrant my trade show booth budget? You get the idea.

Start by being clear when you consult with your top management and marketing teams as to the reasons why your company wants to exhibit in a particular trade show. Ask the tough question -do you plan to have a trade show display because your competition is exhibiting or is it because you want a set return on your trade show investment? Analyze in advance what you want to achieve from your trade show display, convey this to your exhibit team, and put it down on paper.

Here are nine key goal setting recommendations from "Tips & Techniques For Exhibiting Success" by Nomadic Display:

1. Trade show display objectives should reinforce your corporate marketing goals. Clear, concise trade show exhibit objectives need to be in sync with your overall marketing plan, not function independently of it.
2. Is increasing your brand identity at the trade show a key reason to attend? How will you brand your trade show exhibit? Will your logo be part of the branding? Will you incorporate your brand on all your handouts?
3. Do you expect to increase sales on the trade show floor? If so, by how much? Be realistic and set attainable sales figures.
4. Outline your expected trade show results. The more specific, the better. Are you planning to introduce new products or services at the trade show? If so, what are they and how will you showcase these new products/services?
5. Is an important emphasis of your trade show display to educate your target audience? If it is, will you have on-site speakers, website presentations, handouts at your trade show booth display?
6. Do you expect to gather industry information and customer preferences at the trade show? Do you have a formal survey and will you offer incentives for people to fill out your survey?
7. Is one of your goals to attract new business? If so, how many new orders do you feel are realistic?
8. Is recruiting new dealers or distributors a priority? If so, how many new dealers or distributors will be at the trade show?

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9. Do you expect to educate customers? How do you plan to do this? Free literature Handouts? Internet presentations? In-person talks by your top management?

By putting your goals in writing, you have a list that you can manage and measure. Your specific goals need to be realistic and timed. Make deadlines and meet them.

You already know that trade show displays can enhance your marketing plans with measurable results. You now need to focus first on your goals and objectives so that your measurement and return on trade show investment are indeed meaningful.

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

[www.proexhibits.com](http://www.proexhibits.com)

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