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The Magic of Using Booklets for Tradeshow Giveaways

By Paulette Ensign and Susan Friedmann, CSP

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Candy, squeeze balls, pens, and key chains — these provide questionable value to anyone visiting or staffing a tradeshow booth. More and more meeting and marketing professionals are considering something a little different – booklets. They are a way to attract higher quality prospects, reap a handsome return on the investment of time and money in attending shows, and help set a company apart from the crowd.

What is a booklet? The ultimate purpose of a booklet is to educate a target audience. It contains tips, techniques or strategies to help accomplish certain tasks. Typically it measures 3 ½" x 8 ½", has 16 to 24 pages, fits perfectly into a purse, pocket, or briefcase, and can conveniently be mailed in a standard #10 business envelope.

The following five points highlight how you can use booklets as a powerful marketing tool to increase sales from tradeshow leads.

1. Why booklets make a great tradeshow giveaway item.

Booklets have a lasting value, more than many handouts currently used at tradeshows. Yet booklets are not overpowering in any way. One major purpose in exhibiting at a show is to educate your target audience about how you can provide solutions to their challenges. A booklet packed full of a useful tips might address those challenges. In addition, it heightens your company's credibility as an expert in the industry, and draws the prospect to you when it's time to purchase.

Your company's name on a coffee mug or pen doesn't quite have the same impact when a prospect is looking for solutions to their challenges. Rather when they easily read your information in a booklet, you're perceived as knowledgeable. Also, you leave the reader with the distinct impression that you are looking to establish a rapport, and a business relationship with them. Handing out booklets separates you from those with a dish of candy at their booth, or those who offer yet one more shopping bag. And,

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the cost of booklets is less than many other giveaways and can effectively and easily be used throughout the year in other parts of your sales and marketing efforts.

2. Who uses booklets as a giveaway?

Anyone in any industry who is selling or exhibiting at a trade show is a candidate for using booklets as a unique promotional tool. A company can write and produce their own booklet, have a booklet produced for them, or purchase copies of someone else's booklet on a topic of interest for their target audience. Small, mid-sized, and large companies alike use booklets. The minimum purchases are usually completely manageable, and there is an economy of scale as you purchase larger quantities.

3. What kind of information to include in a booklet?

The best information to include in a booklet is common sense, grass roots, basic, practical "how-to" content on a topic relevant to your business and important to your customers. The material can be solutions to everyday concerns, which people often overlook. Sometimes the "magic pill" answer to challenges turns out to be information that is known but merely forgotten. The booklet acts as a reminder. It can also serve as new information for novices to an industry.

4. How else you can use a booklet to market your company?

Once you have produced a booklet, you can often find other organizations that can benefit from it. This then helps to recoup your production costs, should that be of concern. For example, a manufacturer could sell it to distributors. You also continue marketing your own company, and generate new revenue in the process.

Other uses include direct mail campaigns or licensing the rights to your booklet to another company. Licensing might also involve translating it into other languages to reach additional markets. Licensing agreements mean that the client produces the booklet. Your company grants specific rights, by written contract, for the client to do all the production of the booklet manuscript that your company owns.

Identify prospects in your own industry by looking at the vendors, suppliers, and manufacturers. Each is a marketing niche. Approach them in a common-sense way. Remember that you are providing solutions to many of your clients' problems.

5. What common mistakes do companies make when exhibiting?

One of the biggest mistakes companies make when exhibiting is in repeating what other exhibitors are giving away, or repeating what the company has done year after year regardless of the results. An uninteresting handout makes the statement that a company has put limited thought into their clients' needs. The importance of educating the clients about how you can help them cannot be overstated. When your company makes one more sale because someone reads the booklet you gave them, the investment of purchasing or creating the booklet pays off handsomely.

Getting a return on the overall investment of the tradeshow is ultimately the primary reason for

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attending the show at all. Some industries, such as the pharmaceutical industry, are now making a concerted effort to pull back on money spent on excessively expensive and inappropriate giveaways, and are turning toward giveaways with educational value.

Using a booklet as a tradeshow booth giveaway creates magic as you enjoy better-qualified leads that produce larger sales over a longer period of time with well-educated clients. A small investment in the booklet is definitely worth the large return.

Tradeshow Giveaway Tips

By Rick Sheldon

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Tradeshow Giveaway Tips

First begin with marketing your tradeshow prior to the show. Let your potential customers or clients know that you have a gift waiting for them when they stop by your booth.

When a new prospect enters your booth, make sure to get a business card. Don't just let people wander into your booth and snag your giveaways. They cost you money! Our Motto: No Business Card, No Gift!

If you want to make a big impact at a tradeshow, try handing out Tote Bags at the front door. You want everyone at the show sporting your bag and displaying your name. Don't forget to have a flyer about your company or your products in the bags.

If you want people to come to your booth, try handing out a toy such as a Yo-Yo. We have seen shows where everyone in the aisle is trying to work their new Yo-Yo's, and those who aren't are asking "Where did you get that Yo-Yo?". Don't forget to give all the other exhibitors a Yo-Yo as they will be playing with them all show long and ultimately sending people to your booth. You can even take this one step further with a contest and a prize.

When you hand out a Promotional Product, make sure you attach a flyer or a business card to the product. Remember you are prospecting for future business, so make your Tradeshow Giveaways count.

We hope that maybe some of these tips will make your next tradeshow more successful.

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