

## 7 Steps Towards A Successful Trade Show Participation

Organizing a good trade show participation necessitates preparation, creativity, and perseverance. Almost all business-to-business (B2B) organizations evaluate trade show performance in terms of the number of leads, opportunities, and return on investment (ROI) generated, the amount of effort put into the event ultimately determines its success rate. A company's investment in trade shows is important and costly. As a result, you will need the figures to support your argument that it is a good marketing investment and platform.

Here are seven suggestions for a successful trade show:

### **1. Plan ahead of time.**

One of the most important things you can do in the lead up to a trade show is to prepare ahead of time. It is never too soon to begin. Notify your team of your travel dates so that they can book tickets before the price increases. Before those preferred hotel runs out of rooms, secure room blocks and be mindful of the cut-off date for payment deductions.

Pre-show campaign organizing is essential in addition to event logistics. Is a new product being released at the same time as the event? Do you have any big news to announce during the show's week? Will you need to order giveaways and print product sheets? Start scheduling trade show emails at least four to six weeks ahead of time. You will want to let your customers / clientele (existing, past, lapsed, lost) know you are at the trade show, and you can use email to send out crucial announcements, teasers, and invitations to meet the team.

### **2. Have the sales, marketing and executive staff ready.**

Communication is essential and a useful method in trade show planning. Be aware that various teams typically attend trade shows, including marketing, sales, and the executive team. As the event approaches, make sure everybody is on the same page and has all the pertinent details. Put meetings and booth hours on everyone's schedules (in the right time zone especially for overseas trade shows). Make a logistics guide to ensure that nothing is forgotten and that everyone shares the same brief and details. Telephone numbers (especially mobile numbers) for anyone on the staff should be included in the paper in case you need to call them when on site. Create a few copies and store them on a portable laptop for easy and quick access by everyone in the team when traveling.

Invite anyone who will be attending the trade show to a "prep call" a week before the event. Prepare a slide deck with information about the hotel, location, booth hours, dress code, and other housekeeping products, as well as a rundown of planned booth meetings and networking activities.

### **3. Make arrangements for pre-show booth meetings and sessions.**

Sales and marketing teams should collaborate to pre-schedule booth meetings with prospects, buyers, and associates at all trade shows. Set a reasonable target for your team (for example, take last year's pre-scheduled meeting number as a starting point and raise it by a realistic percentage e.g., 10%? 25%?). In addition, create a shared calendar to give the sales team visibility into the booth schedule so they are aware and know which executives will be available and present during each day of the trade show.

### **4. Engage in social media.**

Before and after the event, post and share photographs from the event on the company's social media. Invite guests to stop by your booth to join a draw, pick up a freebie, or see a demonstration. Be sure to include your booth number as well as the event hashtag so that guests can identify and locate you easily.

## **5. Giving away prizes.**

Note, fun giveaways can attract more visitors traffic to your booth. Budget for giveaways / freebies or host games to lure visitors in. Do not be afraid to be inventive in the offerings. Food is something that everybody enjoys (though caution and care must be taken into considerations during the current pandemic). Where possible and permissible, invite attendees to visit your booth to enjoy a cup of espresso or a cone of ice-cream by renting an espresso machine or an ice cream truck. This will help break the ice, open conversations and, potentially, qualify opportunities.

## **6. Scanning, scanning, scanning!**

Schedule a meeting with the onsite staff 30 minutes on the first day before the trade show opens. Make sure they understand the layout of the booth, the giveaways / freebies and activities that have been planned. Enable them to test out the badge scanner after you explain how to use it. You would be shocked how many badge scanners differ from one display to the next. It is also crucial to use the scanners, which allow you to type in notes during your chat. This will help the team's post-show follow-up efforts. Scan the badges of all visitors to your booth. It would be a shame if you missed out a good lead and did not forward it onto the sales team.

## **7. Conduct a debriefing and follow-up.**

After the trade show, hold a debriefing call with your staff. Create a list of what went well and what should be changed. Was your booth in a decent spot with ample foot traffic? Did your idea get through to the audience? When you continue to prepare for the next trade fair, these notes can be useful in deciding what needs to be changed. The value of post-show follow-up cannot be overstated. Within 48 hours of the event's termination, make sure all leads are uploaded into your customer relationship management (CRM) system and exchanged with the sales staff. This information will help you understand booth flow, the amount of interested leads you've received, and new market opportunities. This activity will be used to establish historical data for trade shows and technical activities.

These are the seven keys to a great trade show, work on them and modify them to suit your establishment. They are general guidelines that you should expound upon.