



## Exhibitor Tips

### Creating an Effective Exhibit

How your booth looks will have an impact on your trade show success. Use these tips to help you along.

#### 1. Elate the senses

Make sure people coming to your booth can experience your product or service. Let them touch, see, feel, hear or taste it. Are you selling decorative pillows? Display them in an appropriate setting and have samples that buyers can touch. Have you developed a new software package? Be sure to have multiple computer terminals available to try the package.

#### 2. Keep it simple

Don't go overboard with booth graphic. One large picture that can be seen from afar may have a greater impact than many small ones. A single catchy slogan that describes your business may say more than long blocks of text.

#### 3. Gimmicks work

Gimmicks and giveaways can also drive traffic to your booth. Hold a contest; give away pieces of candy; hire a masseuse and offer free back rubs. Just make sure that the gimmick fits your company's image and sensibilities of your clients.

### Promoting Your Presence

Remember that the best trade show planning will fail if nobody knows you are there. The Center for Exhibition Industry Research (CEIR) estimates that as many as three-quarters of show attendees know what exhibits they want to see before they get to the show. Strong pre-show promotion will let your customers and prospects know about your exhibit. These tips will help.

#### 1. Work the phones

A month to four weeks before the show, start calling your top customers and prospects to set up meetings. Many people arrive at a show with a firm schedule and have little or no time for other booths, so it's important to get on that schedule as early as you can. Be sure to confirm all phone meetings a week or so before the show.

#### 2. Send out mailings

LeadingAge Iowa will provide you with an excel spreadsheet of pre-registered attendees about three weeks prior to the conference. Try a simple pre-show mailing focusing on one or two benefits of dropping by your booth. Be sure it includes show contact information, including your booth number.

## **Planning Your Follow-up Strategy**

The time to plan your follow-up strategy is before the show begins. That way, you can reach prospects with your follow-up message while the show is still fresh in their minds. Here are some things you should know about follow-up.

### **1. Make follow-up a priority**

According to the CEIR, 80% of show leads aren't followed up. Make lead follow-up your number one priority after a show, taking precedence over just about everything else -- including catching up on what you missed while you were out of the office.

### **2. Write your follow-up mailer before the show**

Your post-show mailing can be as simple as a thank-you note or a brochure with a cover note. Write it and have it printed out before you leave for the show, so you can send the mailing immediately upon your return.

### **3. Qualify leads during the show**

Rank your leads by level of importance and interest, and base your post-show efforts on these priorities. Phone your hottest prospects within a week after the show ends -- the longer you let them sit, the staler they'll become. Send everyone else some kind of follow-up mailing.

### **4. Keep your promises**

Be sure that you keep any promises you made at your booth. Have enough brochures and product sheets on hand before the show so you can send out requested information promptly.

## **How to put together a Tool-Kit for exhibiting...this could save your day!**

1. Scissors, utility knife, packaging tape, Velcro™ adhesive hook and loop.
2. Permanent marker wide tip.
3. Permanent marker narrow tip.
4. 12 Address labels with your company name.
5. Screwdrivers: regular and Phillips head.
6. Blank card sized paper for door prize drawing along with a bowl or basket to place entries into.

## **Additional items you may want to include:**

1. Small pliers with wire cutting capability.
2. Wide hooks that will fit over rod that holds drape.
3. Picture wire.
4. Hole punch.
5. 4 small sheets of poster board for emergency signs.

## **What if some or all of your display materials don't arrive at the show? Here are some things you may want to have with your luggage just in case:**

1. A couple of company of product posters rolled in a tube.
2. 200 business cards.
3. An emergency supply of brochures.
4. A rolled banner with your company name.