



INNOVEST SME

Accelerating Small Business

Successful Trade Show Management *and* Staffing

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*Good ideas are common
– what's uncommon are
people who will work hard
enough to bring it about.*

ASHLEIGH BRILLIANT

PREFACE

Being a part of a trade show can be a wise investment for any company. But preparation is important because it can ‘make or break’ how well you succeed during the show. Employees must realize that they are acting as a representative for the company and should be knowledgeable of its products and services. Preparing your staff for the trade show is a big job, so get started early!

*You hit home runs not by
chance, but by preparation.*

ROGER MARIS



Connect
WORLD
istly
<http://bit.ly/CMWORLD>

PRE-SHOW PREPARATION

Preparing for your trade show is no easy task and can take a good amount of planning and advanced groundwork. Not only do you need to plan for things such as supplies or travel arrangements, but the staff needs to be fully prepared and ready to greet customers. It is often helpful to create a checklist or manual that can help you make sure you have all of your bases covered.

PREPARE FOR PHYSICAL ISSUES

Trade shows are not as easy as some people may believe because it involves a lot more physical stamina than expected. While you may have chairs to sit in and take a break, the majority of the time you will be standing on your feet or pacing the front tables with customers. Employees need to be prepared for the physical strain a trade show can have on their bodies, such as body aches, muscle strains, and even plain exhaustion. When preparing for the show, review with your employees what they can expect. Remind them of a proper dress code (and uniform if required) and ways of looking professional (e.g. wearing a nametag). Let everyone know this is not a casual event and should not be handled as such. As a

bonus, keep some over the counter pain relievers and bottles of water in the booth at all times.

DEVELOPING A GREAT ELEVATOR SPEECH

One of the most important things to create and practice is a great elevator speech. An elevator speech is usually a short summary that introduces and plays up the characteristics of your product, making it a key role in introductions, sales, and deals. When developing an elevator speech, note that while every employee may have a different spin on the product, everyone should have a generally consistent message about it. Ensure that you develop and practice your elevator speech and review it with the rest of the team.

Keys to a great elevator speech:

- Use upbeat and positive language
- Avoid making the speech too ‘wordy’
- 30-90 seconds in length is typical
- Keep terms simple and clear
- Include periodic questions to draw in the customer

SETTING UP A SCHEDULE

During the show, your morale and drive can start to wane without a break or shift change. You will need a chance to get away from the booth and move around for a bit. This gives you the chance to use the restroom, get

a drink or a snack, or just stretch their legs. Once it is determined how many employees will be attending the trade show a schedule should be developed including needed breaks, lunch times, and/or shift changes. Make sure everyone has an even amount of time between them and that everyone is aware of when they are scheduled to take their break. A great idea is to also add in some time to walk about the floor. This will provide some great networking opportunities and can lead to some great ideas.

It is important that employees realize that if they are late coming or going to a scheduled break, it can throw off the entire schedule. Be aware of things like traffic, travel times, and other events that can throw the schedule off. Build in some over lapping time to compensate for these events if you suspect they will or can be an issue.

CONNECT WITH ATTENDEES

Of course your booth will not be the only one at the show, so it's a good idea to connect with the other attendees that will be there with you. Learn what they have to offer and what they are bringing as this can help you determine who might be an ally and who might be competition. Many times the show organizers will have a list open to the public of companies or businesses that will be there, leaving an opportunity for you to contact them first and get their attention to know that you will be there as well. Some easy ways to market and connect with them is to find out what social media they are using (Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn) and use them to communicate easier. Before the day of the show, send out some

marketing campaigns or advertisements letting the public know that you will be there and where to find you.

PRACTICAL ILLUSTRATION

Allen was holding a meeting for the company's third trade show event that was coming up. He wanted to make sure the employees were fully prepared and would help make sure everything was ready for the big day. First Allen discussed their job duties and what would be expected of them. He reviewed the proper dress code and how to introduce themselves to customers. While in the meeting, the employees made a schedule for each of their lunch times and breaks to make sure someone was covering the booth at all times. Lastly, Allen was able to obtain a list of some of the other vendors that would be in the vicinity of their booth. He reviewed it with them and encouraged the team to go out and connect with them and get to know the people that could be their competitors.

*I think there is always a
need for pure design. With
pure design, you don't need
so much decoration.*

J I L S A N D E R



A large display of Panasonic monitors arranged in a curved wall. The monitors show a nature scene with butterflies. The Panasonic logo is visible on the top right of the display.

Panasonic

Panasonic
Ideas for life

BOOTH CHARACTERISTICS AND SET-UP (I)

Your booth will be one of the first things that will attract customers in and make them want to talk to your employees. Simple design strategies such as color scheme and layout will make a difference, but other techniques such as samples or prize giveaways can also lure in the traffic. A trade show will consist of dozens, if not hundreds of vendors, so you want to be sure your booth will stand out.

STAND OUT

To stand out at a trade show, you have to do things a little differently. One simple way is to include bright colors and shiny signs in your design because as corny as it may sound, colors attract customers almost immediately. Lay out your tables and products so that customers feel welcome to approach and don't feel the need to scoot by. Once they are at the booth, continue to stand out with great customer service and fun presentations. No one will stick around for a mono-tone speech about the latest product! Before they leave, make them remember you by having a great giveaway item or door prize. Customers will lose things such as flyers or brochures, but are always on the lookout for 'freebies'.

Tips for standing out more:

- Use bright colors
- Design the booth to be open and welcoming
- Ensure employees are friendly and courteous
- Offer a prize or giveaway item that is unique

CREATE A BOOTH MANUAL/CHECKLIST

When preparing for a trade show and getting ready to setup your booth, it is important to remember the other details such as travel arrangements and contact numbers. Before the team leaves (and preferably before every show), the group should create a booth manual or checklist to use for a reference as well as a log/journal. Ensure that it has all the contact information the employees will need, including managers, the trade show organizer, and even numbers for each other in case a problem comes up and the team will need to seek assistance.

Include any information that may be needed during the show, such as product sheets, pricing quotes, shipping information, etc. Don't forget information that pertains to travel arrangements, such as hotel names, flight numbers, or even an address to the trade show facility. The purpose of the manual is to help employees feel prepared for the show and create a reference material they can go to for anything they may need.

TECHNOLOGY

In the society we live in today, we can hardly complete any task without the help of technology, and a trade show is no different. The first thing to ensure is that the booth has access to power, usually by a power outlet in the wall or a shared power station to operate any equipment that may be used. If the booth will need internet, check with the show organizer to ask about a wireless connection or ask if you will need to have a special access code.

When preparing and setting up your booth, be sure to check the equipment early to detect any problems or missing connections. If you discover any problems, alert your team and team manager in order to try and fix it right away. If needed, contact the show organizer and seek any help they can offer. It is always a good idea to bring your own custom tool kit to service any of the equipment you may have, including the little things such as batteries, tape, scissors, bulbs, cords, etc.

SCOUT A HIGH TRAFFIC AREA

A high traffic area is always a plus at any trade show since it can bring a lot more attention to your booth. Some high traffic areas include spots by the entrances or restrooms since customers will have to pass you to get there. While it is important to be in a high traffic area, it is better to avoid any crowd congestion areas (such as food courts or lounge areas), since that can actually hurt your attendance rather than help.

Although some trade shows assign your booth location for you, many offer for companies to ‘buy’ or pick a booth location. In this case, it is advised to shop early and seek some of the best spots before they are gone. Register your company early and ask in advance about any floor plans or booth layouts for the show. If possible, scout out who your neighbors will be and what they will be bringing. Knowing who will be in your surrounding area can be a plus if they bring in traffic, but can also be a bust if they don’t seem like the type to have many attendees.

Common high traffic areas:

- Near exits and entrances
- Near restrooms
- Near food concessions, but distant from eating areas
- Corner booths
- Main aisles

PRACTICAL ILLUSTRATION

Celeste has arrived at the company’s trade show booth and wants to set up early. She found their booth location by the front entrance, which she is sure, will be a high traffic area and hopefully bring in lots of shoppers. She hung the brightly colored curtains and backdrops that the team had decided on and brought out the special handout items the employees would give out to the customers. While the lamps were powering on, Celeste tested all of the computers and projection systems. Luckily

she already had the wireless connection password, so she was able to connect to the internet without a problem. Once the computers were running, Celeste was ready to begin the show. She just had to wait for the doors to open for the customers!

*The only important thing
about design is how it
relates to people.*

VICTOR PAPANEK

BOOTH CHARACTERISTICS AND SET-UP (II)

It is important to make sure that your booth not only stands out, but that it represents the company as well. Some booth designs can seem generic and ‘run of the mill’ with the simple table and chair set up. Your booth should not only attract attention, but attract potential customers. When visitors come to your booth, ensure that they know which booth they are visiting and what they can find there.

SIGNAGE

Signage is a key part of any trade booth. After all, how will visitors know where your booth is or what your company has to offer if there are not any signs around? Common types of signs include banners, marquis signs, and even simple posters. They should not distract from the product or the staff, but should help pull customers in and help direct their attention. The use of big and bold letters stresses importance and excitement, although it is best to use few words and text to keep from sounding jumbled. The signs should be hung high enough for visitors to see from a distance, but not too high where they will miss it when walking by. Having the right

signs in the right place will increase the traffic flow and grab the attention of the many visitors.

Tips when creating signs:

- Use big, bold type
- Use bright colors – but avoid neon
- Define who/what/where/when
- Ensure signs are at ample height for readers

MATCH YOUR BRAND

Conformity is an asset when hosting a trade show booth. Uniform in color and style will help customers and visitors recognize your booth and company logos. After all, we recognize a Coca-Cola booth by their famous red color or a booth for Disney by the big cursive ‘D’. When designing your booth, think about what design characteristics make your company and logo stand out. Is there a certain color that is more prominent than others? Is there a type of font used that makes the name stand out? Of course the use of the actual logo is helpful also, since many consumers are quick to notice a logo or picture when making purchases. Lastly, don’t forget the importance of brand matching with the staff, such as company uniforms, or shirts and hats with company logos and colors and even right down to the employee name tags. The key is to keep things consistent but use in different mediums so that it is not overwhelming.

PRIVATE AREA

Trade shows are great for reaching out to a people in a public setting where the numbers of prospects are nearly unlimited. However, when a staff member is speaking with a qualified visitor and needs to pursue more information, it is a good idea to have a private ‘conference’ area or space in the booth somewhere, preferably in the back or away from the main traffic line. This area allows for the employee to speak privately with potential customers and focus their attention on them alone. It makes the customer feel appreciated and free to speak about what they want or need. The meeting area should have plenty of light and far from any presentation equipment to avoid noise or distractions. Ensure that there is plenty of paper and pens available, as well as business cards to offer your return contact information.

FOCUS ON A MESSAGE

One downside to a trade show is that you cannot display everything your company may have to offer in one show. Even if your company decides to purchase multiple booths, focus on only a few that really need to be promoted. It can be several individual items or even a group or line of products. If the trade show has a theme, try to organize products or services that can fit into the theme. Trade shows are often the best place to promote new items or items that are growing in popularity since the traffic levels are higher and the customers attending trade shows are usually looking for something different.

Whatever your company decides to feature, train the staff to focus on these products and that they know all of the necessary information for them. Since you only has a few minutes with each person, focus on the featured items and offer plenty of information about them. If you are approached about other products or services, have a brochure or pamphlet handy and offer your contact information to speak with them one-on-one about it all.

PRACTICAL ILLUSTRATION

Johnny has finished preparing his company's booth for the upcoming trade show. The Yellow Dog Company is introducing their new line of hot teas, so Johnny had a banner made with popping words such as HOT and NEW, which he thought would help bring in more customers. He also placed some smaller signs on the tabletops that described the new teas and their flavors. Johnny also included some brochures of the company's other products, in case customers wanted to buy more than just teas they were featuring. The booth was decorated in the company's signature yellow color and featured cutouts of the famous dog logo. Finally, Johnny made sure there was a secluded table and chairs in the back of the booth for private conversations or sales that were away from the front-end traffic. When Johnny looked at their final booth, he knew it was created for a winning team.

*Giving a good performance,
giving it all is what
it's all about.*

HENRY ROLLINS

WICKED
AUDIO

YOU
BE THE
JUDGE

Hear the difference

SLR 650G
GPS/Laser Detector/Camera Detector

Internal GPS Receiver
& Lifetime AURA™

Alerts users to speed & red light cameras,
crowd speed traps and dangerous intersections

Cobra

& Cobra

WICKED

Empire
BRANDS

WICKED
AUDIO

TOSHIBA
Innovation

JOB

ADS

RDS

Visitor



YOUR
STYLE

WICKED

YOUR
STYLE



DURING THE SHOW (I)

Now that you've prepared the team and set up the booth, it's time to get to work! The trade show has started, so it is important to keep your mind in the game and eyes on the prize. Welcome the customers in to see what your company has to offer. Remember your training and preparation and you'll be able to run a smooth and successful show.

COMPANY OBJECTIVES

Remember that the purpose of attending the trade show is to inform the public about your product(s) and generate some leads to gain more customers. The goal is to make promising leads and eventual sales while informing and educating the public about what you have to offer. It is important that team members remember this when they are putting on a presentation and don't slip back into casual mode. Sometimes the fun events and atmosphere of a trade show can make employees forget where they are – and what they are there for. Remind employees to stay professional and that they are representing the company.

Remembering company objectives:

- “What are we here for?”
- “What do we hope to achieve?”
- “How can we accomplish that as a group?”

- “How do we want to represent our company?”

HIGHLIGHTING YOUR PRODUCT

The beauty of trade shows is that they often have a wide variety of companies with an even bigger variety of products being offered. However, this can make it harder for your voice to be heard. Now is the time to praise the benefits of your product and what it can do for its buyers. Many companies find it beneficial to create a short presentation the employees deliver to the customers, often called a **Unique Selling Proposition** (also known as a unique selling point). The purpose of a USP is to boost the benefits of a product and differentiate it from other products. It builds up its greatness and how lucky anyone would be to have it. BUT – don’t overdo it. Sometimes we can get carried away and deviate from the realism of the product. Stick to the facts and don’t exaggerate of the greatness of the item. Be prepared to answer any questions customers may have about your product and be knowledgeable about its function.

Some customers may ask how your product compares to the competition, but don’t let the green-eyed monster come out. Avoid speaking negatively about them or talking down about them since this can make your company seem petty and untrustworthy.

DO SOMETHING MEMORABLE

Trade show visitors will not remember every booth they visit or see while they are walking through the trade show floor. Your job is to make your booth memorable by creating a buzz during the convention. You already

know your product is great, so make your presentation just as great. Many companies have made interactive presentations, such as a trivia game or games of chance (spin the wheel, draw a number). Other ideas have been to include a type of treat or food item, particularly something the customer will have to stop and pick up. Wrapped suckers or candy bars can be taken without a thought, but a plate of cookies or a cup of cocoa will lure customers in and make them linger long enough to speak with the staff.

Of course, common amenities that can be uncommon at shows can also draw in attention, such as using a sofa in your booth or having a tabletop fountain. Whatever you decide to do, make it relatable to your product and tie it back into your company so that customers will become involved and take your name with them when they leave.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Dozens of forms of social media have been created recently linking people all over the world. Sites such as Facebook, Twitter, and Foursquare allow users to document where they are and what they are doing in real time. This can be a great thing for trade shows, as they not only benefit from customers that post from their booth, but the employees themselves can post to the public about their location, what is being offered, and how long they will be there. Staff can post hourly updates or send live messages about special events coming up. Social media can be a great tool for advertising the company's presence at the show and draw in much of the public that may not have been aware. If you want to advertise pre-show,

launch a campaign on a social media site and promote people to stop by your booth. Offer some sort of incentive or prize since the programs allow you to post photos and descriptions.

Common social media tools:

- Facebook
- Twitter
- Tumblr
- Instagram
- LinkedIn

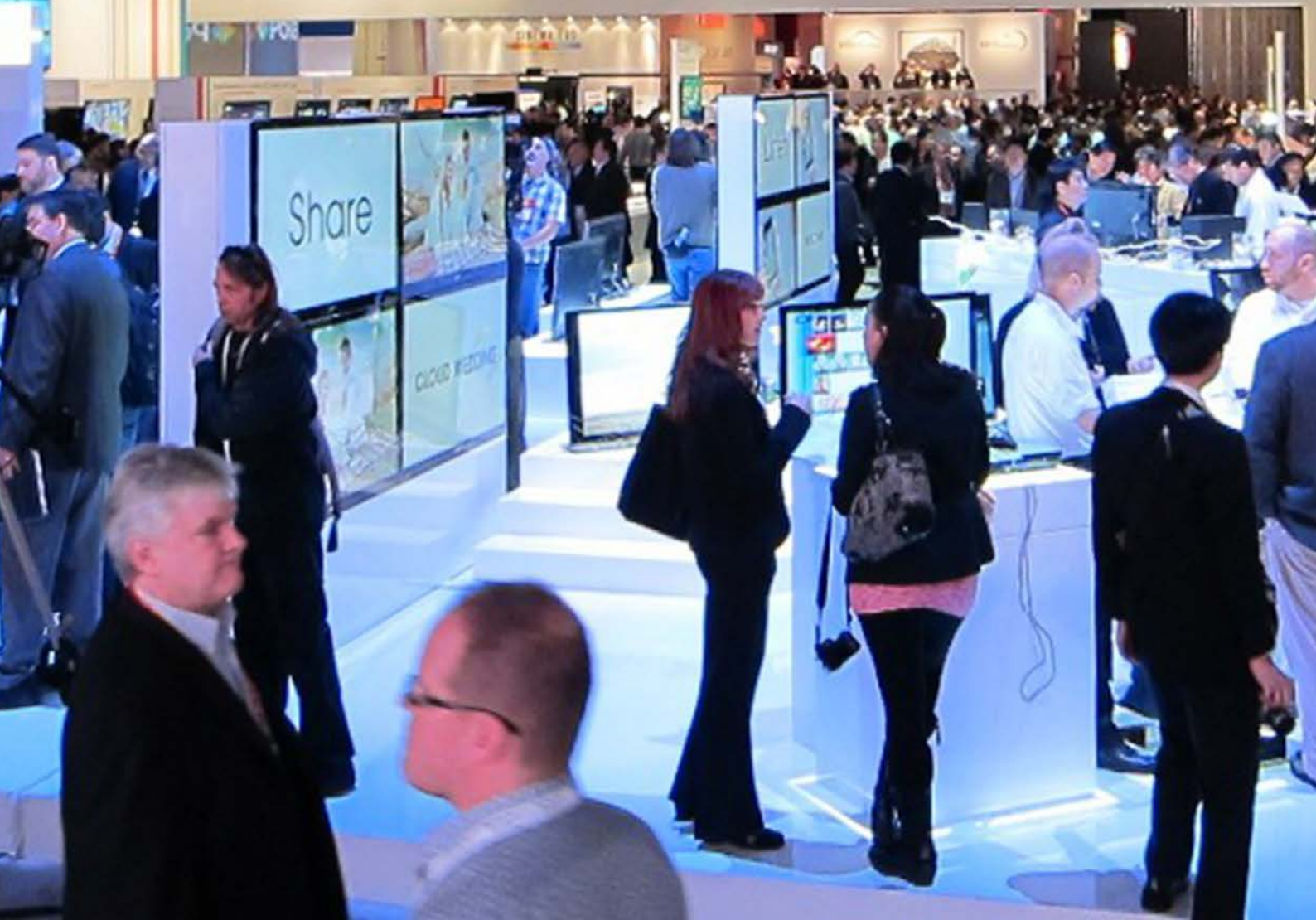
PRACTICAL ILLUSTRATION

Francis was enjoying her first day of the company's new trade show. She observed some of the other booths and was interested in shopping at a few of them, but reminded herself that she is here on company time and to educate visitors about the company's new product. Her company was featuring a new line of exercise equipment for major gyms, so Francis prepared key statements and facts about them that will emphasize their benefits and advantages. As customers approached the booth, Francis demonstrated the machines and allowed customers to try them out. Sometimes she would hold mini competitions to see who could do the most sit ups, pushups or miles on a, which made the customers more interested. During the show Francis made live tweets about the great equipment being used and connected with the 'competition' winners on Facebook where they shared their opinions and ideas.

*Every time I've had a
bad performance at an
event, I've come back more
determined and focused.*

SHAUN WHITE

Play. Watch. Listen. Share



DURING THE SHOW (II)

The trade show is underway and the customers are flowing. Now is not the time to slip up and forget your training! Remember the little details, such as customer approaches and even employee break times. In the meantime, don't forget to scope out the competition and surrounding booths. The show is on a roll so keep it going.

CLASSIC DO'S AND DON'TS

There are many things we can do during the show to benefit you as well as work against you. You want to ensure that your company's time at the event is worth their time and effort. Knowing some basic Dos and Don'ts of a trade show and ensure that your company will keep their booth professional and benefit from their investment.

Do:	Don't:
Make eye contact and shake hands with the customer. This is a simple gesture that shows you're interested in them.	Do not wander outside of the booth to gain customers (i.e. flag them down).

Keep your booth professional and clean. Don't leave trash on the ground or papers strewn around.	Don't be rude to visitors or customers. Don't talk on your phone while customers are present.
Takes notes on potential leads and exchange information. Offer a business card or email address.	Don't over-talk to customers and try to make a one-sided sales pitch.
Entice customers to visit your booth with a refreshment or small prize.	Do not leave the booth unattended at any time. Always ensure a staff member is present.
Associate with other vendors to drive up even more business. Many customers can come from other vendors, so don't exclude your neighbor.	Don't assume anything (i.e. customers will call you, they won't return, they will remember your name). Make them want to come back and remember your company.

GAMIFICATION

Gamification is the process of using game-like structures and ideas in a non-game-play context. Over the past few years, this theme has grown in popularity. A common favorite is the classic game show theme booth, where customers have a chance to win a prize based on the playing of a game show type contest. Some companies have chosen a more classic

theme and have based their games on classic board games, such as Candyland, Monopoly, or RISK. One company has been known to create a small scavenger hunt of clues throughout the event, leading customers back to their booth to learn the answer and the product.

These types of events make the customer become part of the presentation while at the same time educating them about your product. They become engaged in the 'show' and are a part of the action rather than a simple spectator. Customers will always remember something they were a part of rather than something they simply observed.

WALK THE FLOOR

The other vendors in the trade show can also be a buffet of new ideas and camaraderie. It's a great place to open up to other ideas, designs, and concepts that your company may not have tried or been aware of altogether. When time permits, take a chance to walk the trade show floor and notice the other booths and companies. Stop by booths that share a similar interest or product and observe how they are set up and function. Greet and visit booths that could be your competition and observe some of their techniques; you never know what kind of partnerships could develop. Don't be afraid to trade ideas or offer/receive advice. Take notice of the other design booths, such as the different design and layout ideas and see what you do or don't like about each one or whether it would work for you or not. After the show you can review everything you've seen or noticed and determine if your company could benefit from trying something new or different that you learned about.

KEEP THE DISTRACTIONS AWAY

Trade shows can become hectic and crazy when they bring in large groups of people. Your goal is to draw in your customers and have enough time to give them all the great information about your product and company. Unfortunately, you only have a matter of seconds to catch a possible customer's attention and talk with them before they can become distracted and move on to another booth. While having a handy giveaway prize or food incentive can help, it should not distract the customer from you and your presentation. Information about your product and fielding questions about it should dominate your customer's attention.

Keep distracting items out of the booth or to a minimum. Fun and colorful decorations are great, but be sure they stay as a decoration and don't distract from the original purpose. Create an area in the booth where you can step aside with the customer and draw them away from the 'main street' section of the booth. Don't let them feel isolated – instead try to make them feel as though you are only focused on them. They will often return the favor.

PRACTICAL ILLUSTRATION

Sheena was working on the third day of her company's appearance at the local trade show. Her company was featuring fruit baskets and fruit basket delivery for the growing area, which Sheena thought would be a big hit. While at the show, she made sure to keep the booth looking professional by cleaning up any trash around and ensuring employees had the proper dress code. When she spoke with customers, she smiled

at them and stayed off of her personal cell phone when they were around. Sheena and her teammates decided to use a game show-like setting for the booth's presentation and had trivia questions about different kinds of fruit for the interested customers.

They seemed to enjoy the gaming setting rather than plain flyers or cards. Before it was time to pack up each day, Sheena made a point to walk the floor and observe how and what the other booths were doing. She complimented the ones she enjoyed and made notes of what she could try out in future trade shows.

*Communication –
the human connection –
is the key to personal
and career success.*

PAUL J. MEYER

Las Vegas

LG
Life's Good

SMART
YOUR TV?



CEA
CINEMA
Smart TV

CES

Central Hall
Booth #s 7000-15999

This way also to: South Halls 1-4

LG
Life's Good

SMART IS...

HIGH
RESOLUTION DESIGN
TESTING LAB

CES Social Media Lounge



CES Social Media Lounge
powered by F, M, and more

Welcome
to the
Social Media
Lounge

Check out
the
#CES

QUALIFYING VISITORS

Qualifying visitors and prospects is an important aspect of a trade show success. You may have a nice looking booth, some great promotional materials and a prize or gimmick to lure the customers in. But if you do not qualify each one and learn how to engage those that appear to be a good lead, you could go home with nothing. Learn to utilize the few minutes, even seconds, you will have with each visitor and seize the opportunity while it is there.

KNOW THE ANSWER

You are representatives for the company and should always be prepared to answer a customer's questions or concerns. Listen to what the customer wants and offer the answer they need. Be honest with the customer if you do not know, but offer to take the time to find out for them. Before the big day, gather your team in a meeting and go over the company's crucial information. Review some questions that may or not be asked and see if your employees know all of the answers. If time permits, hold a dress rehearsal and let team members take turns playing the customer and asking the group questions. When the team is better prepared, they will feel more confident when giving answers to potential customers and clients.

Before the show:

- Hold a meeting to go over possible questions and answers
- Review needed information and check for understanding
- Determine if a team lead is needed and who employees can go to for help
- Establish help tools in case an employee gets stuck (contact numbers, a manual, etc.)

ENGAGE WITH QUALIFYING QUESTIONS

Asking the right question is a great tool to use in order to qualify more leads and customers. After all, you don't know they are a customer until you know what they want or need! But while you are trying to find out what they need, qualifying questions can also determine if you will be a good fit and how you can better close the deal. While asking about what the customer wants, ask about their company or business, what they are shopping for, and what their purpose is. Find out who makes the decisions and how you can get in better contact with them. They'll love talking about themselves and their company while you can better decide how to 'make it a date'.

Sample qualifying questions:

- “What do you like most about the product/service you're currently using?”
- “What do you want to change about _____?”

- “What can our company do to help you?”
- “Who in your company determines what vendors you use?”

BODY LANGUAGE

Body language is an important cue to pay attention to because it will often send messages that the customer is not saying and can often tell you what your next step should be. Sometimes the gestures are done on purpose while some are done subconsciously. If possible, try to mirror some of the customer’s gestures to show you are listening to them – they can pick up on what you’re doing. Avoid using gestures such as crossing your arms or squinting your eyes, as these can make customers pull away. Keep your body language positive and be inviting to your customers to make a great impression without having to do all of the talking.

Common body language gestures:

- Crossing the arms
- Making hand gestures (waving, swinging, pointing, etc.)
- Shifting in your seat
- Leaning in to listen or speak to someone

LISTENING SKILLS

You are the main resource to the customers during a show, but you can’t fill this role if you don’t listen to what the customer is asking. Customers can be shopping for a certain item or looking for a long term business

or purchase. Poor listening skills can ruin your chance to help them find what they need. Try to engage qualifying customers with open-ended questions and conversation. Invest your time in these customers because they are more likely to become potential leads or even future customers. You don't want to be the person who is too busy trying to deliver his sales pitch that they don't listen to the customer's needs or wants. Engage the customer with questions about themselves and listen to the different aspects of their life – whether it's about their home life or professional job. By listening more than talking, you'll find the common ground you need to engage with the customer and can better approach how to close a deal. People love to talk about themselves and what they want, so let them!

On the other hand, limiting your time with customers deemed unqualified can be beneficial as well. Your time is valuable, so spending time speaking with customers that are not interested shouldn't hog your attention. Use your listening skills to look for cues that can tell you what a customer is feeling. Do they seem interested in your product? Are they giving adequate answers to your questions? If you are not feeling any returned initiative from the visitor, save your time and politely move on.

PRACTICAL ILLUSTRATION

Andrew was preparing his team for their first big trade show. Some of them had attended a show before, but some of them were new. First he reviewed all the information they would need for the show, including product information and contact numbers. He then went over some

sample questions that could be asked by potential clients and ways to answer them. Andrew also reviewed what kind of questions to ask in order to engage the customers and find out more about their needs. Lastly, he wanted to remind them to be better listeners than talkers and to be mindful of what the customer is saying and doing. When they combine these skills altogether, Andrew knows they will have a successful trade show this year.

*Sales are contingent
upon the attitude of the
salesman, not the attitude
of the prospect.*

WILLIAM CLEMENT STONE



LOUNGE WEAR

EST
Korea

G1614
Korea

F

E

D

C

B

ENGAGING THE RIGHT PEOPLE

People attend trade shows for a reason. They are usually there to solve a problem or find a way to meet a need they have. Let them find it in your booth! It is very important to welcome potential customers and 'host' them in your booth home. Ask them what they are looking for or why they attended the show. Communicate with them and the answers will come.

PROSPECTS

We don't want to make customers feel as though they are unwelcome to our booth just because they do not seem like promising clients. However, we can make these customers feel special and then let move on. The main goal is to find prospects that can lead to future clients. This is best done spending time with each customer and scoping out what they are looking for. It only takes a few seconds to engage a potential prospect, after which they may move on or stay depending on what you have to offer. After grabbing their attention, you can dig deeper to see if they would be a perfect fit for your product or service by continuing to ask engaging questions. If the customer seems promising, take notes and offer your contact information to help stay in touch.

TIME WASTERS (CATCH AND RELEASE)

Time wasters are defined as customers that are not interested in your service yet keep you from communicating with other customers by taking up your time and efforts. Some of them are unintentional, in which they come to your booth looking for a product or service, but then after speaking with them, they realize they don't need what you have or want to keep looking around. These individuals may politely move on but take a business card for future reference. Others are intentional, in which they want to come by and seem important enough to discuss a possible purchase, but then they either change their mind or do not have any purchasing power with their company.

Unfortunately, you may not realize this until after you've spent your time and efforts with them and their potential sale. It's hard to tell these type of customers to 'buzz off', but you do have to get them to move on if you're going to engage other qualifying customers. Politely let the customer know that you have another appointment coming up or that you need to speak with some of the other customers in the booth at the time. This should let the customer know that the conversation is over and a hint for them to move on. It is a skill that will take some time to develop, so keep practicing.

PRESS

Many companies forget the important step of preparing a press kit or a prepared statement before attending their trade show. A press kit or statement is a way to let everyone know about your company and

the product it is offering at the trade show. It can also provide media outlets, such as television crews, radio stations and the show organizers, enough information to post a story after the event is over if they choose. It's commonly included in an electronic form, such as on a DVD or USB drive so that it can be transported easily between hands. Ensure that all components are labeled with the company name and information and make plenty of copies to leave with each contact person.

Common items to include in a press kit:

- Press release statement
- Fact sheet
- Biography/information sheet
- Contact information

COMPETITORS

One problem some companies face at a trade show is in having to deal with their competitors – and realizing the correct way to handle them. But the key is to stay open with them and not appear as though you are some secret agent trying to steal their ideas. Greet your competitors when they come to your booth and be cordial when visiting theirs. When visiting their booth, ensure that your badge is visible and readable so that they can identify who you are. Hiding or tucking in your badge can seem deceitful.

When competitors approach your booth to talk, they will try to pull information from you. Be sure you are only sharing information that is open to the public and keep confidential business information to yourself. If you have customers that try to ask how your competitor's products compare to yours, the best way to answer is to focus on the product and leave the competition's name out of it. It saves you (and them) from playing the 'one up' game.

PRACTICAL ILLUSTRATION

Everett was speaking with a group of customers about his company's new software products that were being featured at this year's trade show. Some seemed very interested and asked several questions about it. A few others seemed indecisive and were not asking many follow up questions. Everett had a feeling they would not be very good leads, so he addressed them individually and offered a business catalog for them to take with them and consider making a purchase at a later date. He then returned his attention to the other few that were remaining. Everett asked several questions and got the customers to open up about their needs. One of them asked how his product compared to the competitions, but Everett simply restated the benefits of the product, shifting the focus from a 'name game' to what the product can do for them.

*The secret of man's
success resides in his
insight into the moods
of people, and his tact in
dealing with them.*

J. G. HOLLAND

ko

Nikon T

R VIDEO PRODUCTION

Tuesday, January 7
2:15 PM - 2:45 PM

Corey Rich
Nikon HD-SLR Video:
Keeping your Camera in Motion



Nikon

THE RULES OF ENGAGEMENT (I)

Engaging with the right customers isn't always easy, but it's something we can master in order to draw in customers. No one is an expert in sales or working in a trade booth – it takes work and practice. Some of the things to remember is how to approach a customer and gather information about them. From there you can offer a solution and come out on top.

START WITH AN OPEN-ENDED QUESTION

Customers like to tell companies what they want, but often times they won't give it up right away. Some may be shy, while others want to see what your first move will be. When speaking with customers, it is important to be friendly and ask questions to help draw out information. But avoid the standard “yes or no” questions that will leave your customers with very little to say. Start the conversation with an open-ended question that will get the customer thinking about their answer and will provide more information than just ‘yes’, ‘no’, or ‘maybe’.

Sample open-ended questions are:

- “What brings you to the show today?”

- “What type of product are you looking for?”
- “Tell me what you like best/least about your current product.”
- “Are you looking for something different/similar?”

RECORD ALL PROSPECT INFORMATION

One of the purposes of participating in a trade show is to gain prospects for potential customers. But the effort would be pointless if there was not a way to record the prospect's information to access and review at a later time. Don't rely on your memory alone to record a customer's information. Over time the information can be forgotten or misplaced. When setting up the company's booth, establish a system that allows employees to write down or record a prospect's information while it is still fresh in their mind. If the employee is speaking with a customer on the main line, provide plenty of notepads or paper with pens and pencils to allow the employee to jot down quick notes, such as name, company and contact number.

If the employee is speaking with a customer in the private area, notepads and pens can still be provided, but allows information to be recorded electronically if desired (phones, PDAs, laptops). Having these tools handy will benefit the entire staff and ensure that more information goes home with them at the end of the day.

BE SPECIFIC WITH YOUR MESSAGE

When speaking with visitors, remember to keep them engaged by asking qualifying questions and determining if they are a potential lead. During this introduction, the conversation and questions may seem general and somewhat vague until you determine what to do next. If you determine the visitor is unqualified, politely excuse yourself by letting them know you have another appointment or meeting to attend. This allows you to focus your time and effort on qualified customers and achieve more potential leads. When speaking with a qualified customer, ask them to be specific about what they want and be specific with them about what you can or cannot offer. Stay on the same track in your conversation and try not to include different aspects of the conversation all at once. If more or different information is needed, request a follow up session or another time to meet. This allows more time to speak about other opportunities without the pressure of being in a crowd.

GET A COMMITMENT

You can't make a visitor buy your product or pledge a future order, but you can still have them commit to something in your company. Many times customers will offer a commitment to make a purchase and will even give their order information at the trade show. Others may be more hesitant, and less likely to give anything. Start out by having them commit to another meeting, such as a follow up meeting or some other casual meeting to talk more about what they need and what your company can do. Once they have more information they can commit to a sale or to

an order request from their purchasing department. Gather any contact information needed and ensure that they can contact you or another person in the office. If the staff member tries to force the sale onto the customer or force them to commit to buying something, the customer will become uninterested and will go somewhere else for their needs. So it is important to start small and have the customer commit to one thing at a time and work the way up to the bigger commitments.

PRACTICAL ILLUSTRATION

Jane is speaking privately with a potential customer and wants to know if they will make a sale today. She starts by asking them some open-ended questions, such as what they were doing at the show and what kind of product they were looking for. The customer gave lots of helpful information that Jane was able to collect and use. While they were talking, Jane took lots of notes about the customer's needs, as well as the contact information and best methods to use. Before they parted ways, Jane wanted to secure a commitment from the customer but didn't want to push the sale, so she had the customer commit to a follow up meeting after the show to discuss the products more and discuss a possible purchase then.

*You don't close a sale, you
open a relationship if you
want to build a long-term,
successful enterprise.*

PATRICIA FRIPP



FORCE 10

FORCE 10

sg

intel

The Mallik

PBS

CISCO

PBS
GridWorld

GridWorks

sg

SGI Partners

APS

Group

inet

Arctic Region
Supercomputing Center

Top of the world

SYSOP

SYSTEMS
AND OPERATIONS

BEAUTY OF THE BEAST

RULES OF ENGAGEMENT (II)

Engaging with customers takes a great deal of time and effort for the company, but the rewards can be well worth it. It is important that your business is open and inviting to the public. Over the top gimmicks or absentee workers can drive customers away. The goal is to engage customers – not over market them.

HAVING A WELCOMING ENVIRONMENT

The environment of your booth can speak louder than the employees in it or the give-a-ways that it offers. How open and welcome your booth appears can affect the traffic flow to your booth and can affect how customers view your business. One simple rule is to ensure that employees always have a smile and greet the customers. A booth with an open layout that allows visitors to walk around and move throughout the booth will appear more open than a standard set of table and chairs. Lastly, before any visitor leaves, shake their hand and thank them for coming – it lets them know they can come back to you if ever needed.

Tips:

- Always have a smile
- Ask questions to keep customers engaged
- Have an open layout for customers to move around
- Thank visitors for coming

THE DOS AND DON'TS OF BUSINESS CARDS

A business card may be small, but it can speak volumes for an employee and its company. When creating business cards, it is best to keep the layout simple with only a few colors or font type. This makes the card readable and professional looking. When using them at a trade show, business cards can be a helpful tool to qualifying customers and potential clients. It is always best to bring plenty of business cards, but keep an eye on who you give them out to. Visitors that come by the booth and are unqualified have no need for your business card, so don't hand one out as they go by. Customers that appear to have potential and request more information will need your business card to be able to reach you in the near future. Many customers often write notes or quotes on the back of business cards to remind them of why they came to your booth, so make sure there are plenty of business cards – and pens- in your booth.

Do:	Don't:
Use color on a business card to attract attention.	Use more than two types of font.

Use a clear photo or logo on your business card.	Use centered or staggered alignment, which can make your text hard to read.
Offer qualifying customers your business card to have for future reference.	Hand out your business cards as a give-away item or prize.
Take notes on business cards to remind customers of your product/service.	Under-guess how many cards you will need – bring plenty for the entire duration of the show.

OBSERVATIONAL SKILLS

Observation is a key skill at trade shows. You must observe the traffic flow, the flow of the booth; observe for any problems in the equipment and so on. But most importantly you should observe the visitors that come to the booth and what brings them there. Was there something that caught their eye? Did they see something you offered that they needed? Did they want the free candy bar in the give-away bowl? When they approach, observe their actions as you speak with them, and ask engaging questions. Can you recognize why they are approaching or if they will become a potential lead? On the other hand, when visitors pass by without stopping, do they show why? Do they not need your product? Does the loud music in your presentation turn them away? Do they not like bright colors on the booth walls? Whatever the reason, you're sure to find valuable information for improvements and changes for your next

show. You can simply ask some customers what they do or don't like, but other opinions will have to be learned through observation alone.

WHEN NOT IN THE BOOTH

One of the most basic rules of a trade show is to never leave your booth unattended at any time. However, that doesn't mean you cannot ever leave your booth as long as you have a team that takes breaks or rests in shifts and turns. When outside the booth, such as in the restroom, show aisles, lobby areas or even in the concession, there are potential customers, as well as business partners all around you. Be prepared with your company and product information in case you are approached. Some customers find it easier to talk with someone outside of the standard booth, and will open up over buying a soda. Don't try to steer them back to the booth, but carry business cards with you and give them one to let them know where to find you, during and after the show.

Be prepared for business partners, as well as competitors, to approach you and attempt to strike up a conversation. Many think they can catch you off guard outside of your booth area and may ask about information that is not open to the public. Always greet them with a smile but let you know you cannot talk about such matter here and offer them a business card. Your booth is not the only place for business, so be ready to handle it no matter where it comes up.

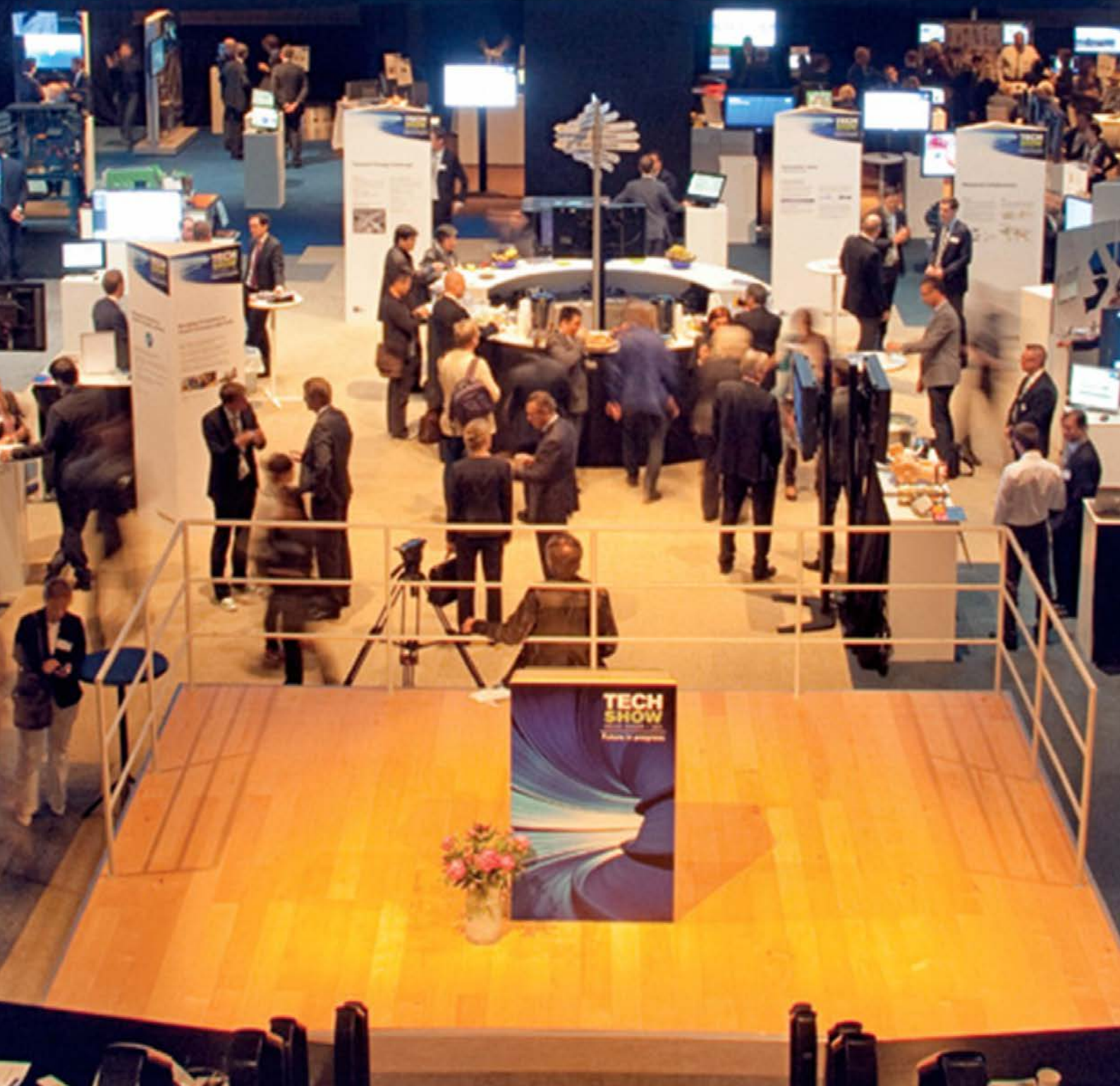
PRACTICAL ILLUSTRATION

Kirk is reviewing a few last minute preparations for his team and their trade show booth. He reminded them of the need to have a welcoming environment for the customers, and how employees should always have a smile and welcome customers to the booth. Kirk stressed the importance of having great observational skills and of being aware of their surroundings. Keep an eye out for approaching customers and notice what is either bringing the customer in or maybe making them turn away. Since employees can bring their own business cards, Kirk asked each one to look over their cards and make sure they are professional looking and readable. He told them to bring lots of cards and prepare to hand them out to potential leads. Lastly, Kirk reviewed with the group what to do when they are not in the booth, such as staying courteous to others and being prepared to talk about the product if approached.

Always be closing. That doesn't mean you're always closing the deal, but it does mean that you need to be always closing on the next step of the process.

SHANE GIBSON

The Research Centre
virtual innovation lab
global R&D partners
innovation tools



AFTER THE SHOW

The show is over and it's time to go home. You look over your progresses and see that you have made some great leads. But now what? The work isn't done just because the show is. Now is the time to follow up with your leads and continue to make contact with them. They may have your business card, but it is your responsibility to bring them in the rest of the way.

REVIEW INFORMATION AND RANK YOUR LEADS

During the show, take quick notes on the different leads and prospects you encounter and determine which ones you will pursue. Look over the information you may have obtained from them, such as phone numbers, email address or business locations. Did they ask to be contacted on a specific day? Do they have a preference pertaining to what number you should call? Make a list of the leads you should contact first and why. Did they have a big order to fill? Were they working on a deadline? These are all things to consider when reviewing and ranking your leads and trying to establish what step you will take next.

Tips:

- Sort leads by potential (hot, warm, cold, etc.) and contact the 'hot' ones first

- Determine what each lead needs/wants and who should deliver it
- Review how each lead wanted to be contacted and decide the best way to do it

FOLLOW UP WITH YOUR LEADS

The next step after the show is to make follow ups on the leads you have. Review your list of how they wanted to be contacted and follow through. The key is to deliver what you have promised them without delay. The longer you wait to respond, the more likely they will find someone else.

The best way to follow up is by a phone call or face-to-face meeting. This allows you to speak with the customer again and make things feel more personal. Customers will appreciate the direct contact and will be more open to taking things further. Remember to bring your brochures, flyers, catalogs, price sheets and other materials that the customer may have requested during your first visit.

For leads that did not seem promising, or 'cold', follow up with them by email or postal mail letter. This allows you to keep your name on their mind and keep them as a contact, but does not add pressure to the customer about coming back in soon.

SEND INFORMATION PROMPTLY

In the business world, it is urged to not wait more than 48 hours to follow up with a lead and send them the information they need. Following up right away keeps you on their mind and in their decision-making. Send

an email with your contact information and thank them for their time. If the customer requested more information, such as a brochure, catalog, or sample; don't forget to add your name and the date of the show to refresh their memory. Offer to set up a meeting or consultation to find out if (and what kind) of information is needed further. Delivering their information quickly shows the customer that you are serious about keeping their business and are true to your word as a member of the company. Remember to personalize the information for the specific recipient with their name and credentials, as well as the date/times of the show where you spoke with them. This is not only thoughtful, but proves you were paying attention. Contacting your potential customers shows that you are interested in their needs and can pave the way for future business.

Examples of information sent during a follow up:

- Brochures
- Samples
- Catalogs
- Portfolios
- Price or quote sheets
- Company contact information

LESSONS LEARNED

Every employee can take away something different from their time at the trade show. Some of the main things to consider are what plans or tactics

worked or didn't work for your booth/company. Was it very effective? Did the company reach any goals? Would you change something next time? Address these questions within a few days of the trade show's closing so that any details or thoughts are still fresh on your mind. Recall the amount of traffic your booth received and if the information you had with you was helpful or lacking anything. Gather your team for a meeting to discuss these matters together and to hear their different views and opinions about the show since each employee will have something to contribute.

One of the most important topics to address is the simple fact of was it worth the company's time and efforts and would you ever do a trade show again?

PRACTICAL ILLUSTRATION

Bruce was wrapping up from his first trade show. After he helped the team clean up and they traveled back to the office, he settled at his desk to look over the show's progress. He reviewed and organized the leads he had made by how promising they seemed and made notes about how he wanted to follow up with them. Some he would send some catalogs and brochures while some would probably receive a thank you letter that offers to keep in touch. He wrote a list of which ones to contact right away and to make his phone calls first thing Monday morning. After closing up his desk, Bruce decided that his first trade show wasn't so bad. He got to communicate with a wide range of customers and gained some great sales experience.

*The golden rule for
every business man is this:
“Put yourself in your
customer’s place.”*

ORISON SWETT MARDEN

CLOSING THOUGHTS

- **Debbi Fields:** The important thing is not being afraid to take a chance. Remember, the greatest failure is to not try. Once you find something you love to do, be the best at doing it.
- **Anita Roddick:** Nobody talks about entrepreneurship as survival, but that's exactly what it is and what nurtures creative thinking. Running that first shop taught me business is not financial science; it's about trading: buying and selling.
- **David Rockefeller:** Success in business requires training and discipline and hard work. But if you're not frightened by these things, the opportunities are just as great today as they ever were.
- **Guy Kawasaki:** The best reason to start an organization is to make meaning – to create a product or service to make the world a better place.
- **Michael Gerber:** The entrepreneur in us sees opportunities everywhere we look, but many people see only problems everywhere they look. The entrepreneur in us is more concerned with discriminating between opportunities than he or she is with failing to see the opportunities.



Rick Chisholm made history when he single-handedly changed the professional Audio Visual industry by breaking all the rules and capitalised over 50% market share in Australia with very little capital, no partners, mergers or lenders and set up the first franchise operation of its kind in the world in the late 1990's and early 2000's.

As a 7x founder of companies and 30x businesses such as Innovest, AI Machine, Lightsounds, LSW, Light Emotion with revenue in excess of \$300 million and having employed more than 1,000 staff over the last 35 years. Rick is known as the Start-Up and SME Guru and is Author of a number of books including Business Success for Life. Unlike many mentors, he actually walks the talk and has a number of businesses under management in such areas as Automation, Events management, Importing, Distribution, Retailing and E-commerce.

His BIG passion is Business Education empowering Businesses Owners through knowledge and skills. Whilst Rick has experienced great success, he has also endured many failures. Rick has faced and overcome the exact same challenges you are facing now.



Tala Chisholm is an SME specialist who has owned and managed several small to medium sized businesses in the last 20 years, several of which were eventually sold. She has extensive experience in the fields of retail, franchising, licensing, dealerships, education, importing, distribution and consulting.

Her expertise lies in building and implementing customised cross-platform database and software solutions for businesses, automation, IT, web marketing, advertising, graphic design, business administration, process refinement and implementation. Her business experience ranges from bricks-and-mortar Giftware retailing to highly technical fields such as Security, CCTV, Entertainment Lighting and Audio sales, hire and installations as well as e-commerce.

Throughout her career she also trained and mentored Franchise business owners as well as internal division managers. Some areas of training included retail operations, management practices, business strategy, accounting, cash-flow, marketing, customer service and IT. She has also headed up the drafting of Operating Compliance Manuals for Franchise operations and implementation of all the elements involved.



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