

Tips for Trade Shows

- **Think neatness and visibility when putting your trade show display together.**

If your trade show display space will allow, erect a stand-alone presentation board. Use a display board to hang some of your products at customer eye-level to draw them into your display and make sure your name and company logo are more than obvious. Make sure your display is organized and tidy; customers will be turned off by messiness or by having to do too much searching to find what they want.

- **Build the impression of demand into your trade show display.**

Arrange your trade show display table in levels. Put the larger items at the rear, shorter items in front of those, and even shorter items in front of those. Customers will want your products more if they think they're in high demand. Place a strategic sold sign on one or two items. You might even leave a display spot empty, giving the impression that you've been too busy to restock.

- **Have a stock of promotion items that you can use as giveaways at your booth.**

Small items that people can take away and use (while being reminded about your business) are best. Be sure you place these items in a location where people will have to walk into or through your trade show display to get them.

- **Use a prize draw or contest.**

Having some kind of prize draw or contest is a great way to collect contact information from booth visitors. You can give away promotion items to encourage people to participate.

- **Make it easy for booth visitors to get information.**

Use signs in your trade show display to give information about prices, minimum orders, shipping costs, or any other basic information they might need to know, to save them the trouble of having to wait to ask when you're busy with another potential customer.

- **Make sure you have plenty of promotional literature on hand.**

You'll want to have a good supply of color fliers and brochures as well as order forms, price sheets and business cards that you can hand out to booth visitors so it will be easy for them to find all the information they need about your business later.

- **Be ready to do business.**

Be sure you have a good supply of order forms, pens, credit card slips, or anything else you need to conduct sales and keep track of people's orders. Don't forget your supply of business cards!

- **Have your trade show booth manned at all times.**

Someone has to be there to greet browsers, engage them in conversation, and take their questions. If you can't be there every minute the trade show is open, you'll need to have at least one other person help man your booth.

- **Actively engage trade booth visitors.**

Give people who approach your trade show display a friendly welcome, and let them welcome their questions. Be sure your body language is friendly; don't stand there with your arms crossed over your chest, for instance. "Chat" with booth visitors, and find out what aspect of your business they're most interested in. Be prepared to offer specific solutions to their questions. The trick is to draw them in without intimidating or overwhelming them.

- **Follow up promptly.**

Send out email, regular mail, or make the phone calls to follow up on the contacts and leads you made during the trade show as soon as possible. The faster you send them out, the more your business will stand out from the rest.

Trade shows can be incredible sources of contacts and customers for your business - if you choose your trade show venue carefully and plan in advance to have a successful trade show experience.

- **Grab the attendees attention.**

Attendees at any trade show pass by hundreds of booths, sometimes thousands depending on the show. Your company will have only a few seconds, *sometimes as little as 5 seconds*, to catch the attention of a show attendee. Make sure your booth is designed to create a single focal point using easy to read text with clean simple graphics so trade show visitors will understand your message quickly and correctly.

- **Create a booth that makes visitors feel comfortable.**

Remove physical barriers to visitor exchange. Too often booth designers create a booth that they believe "looks cool". While it may, it doesn't encourage visitors to your booth to stop and want to talk to you because they don't feel comfortable. Make it easy for visitors to enter your space and obtain the information they desire. Many booth are designed as barriers with tables between you and your potential customers. A U-shaped trade show space removes the barriers between both operator and visitor and encourages exchange. If visitors are comfortable and want to enter your booth, it is more likely they'll listen to your sales pitch and your show will generate better success.

- **Visit your booth before the show.**

Put your creative ego in check and "visit" your booth just like the trade show attendee will do. Take an objective look at your booth and ask yourself if you would be attracted to the display and would you actually remember your booth.

- **Most importantly, be friendly and inviting. Say "Hi" to those that turn and look toward you or your trade show booth. Strike up a conversation and be sure to have a short introductory speech ready. And... have fun!**