

30+ Trade Show Tips and Tricks in 90 Minutes

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CTSM | CEM | CMP | CMM

TRADE SHOW
Consulting

Booth Mom's Survival Kit

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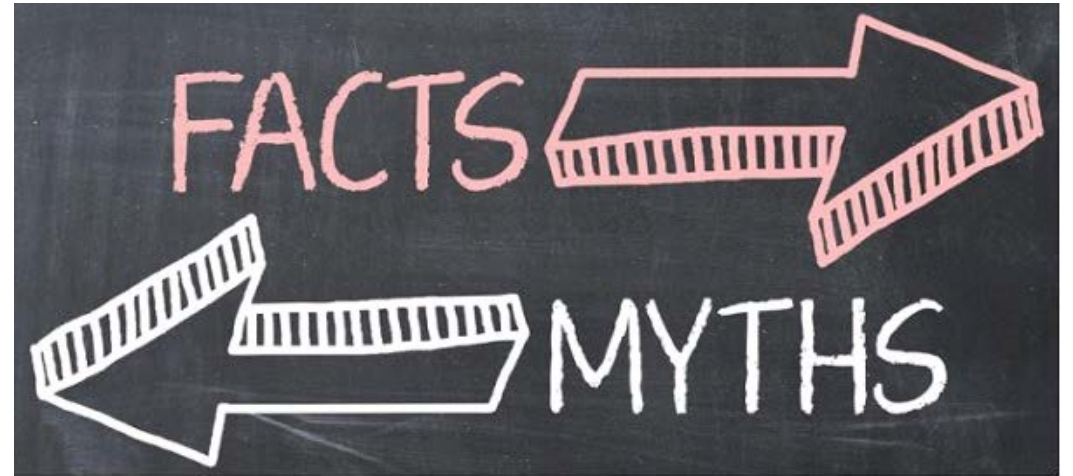
***A successful exhibit starts with
a strategic plan and
a vision of an outcome.***

***“The show’s over.
What happened?
Did you get the results you wanted?”***

“The Booth Mom®”

The 3 Biggest Myths about Exhibiting at Trade Shows

1. **“It’s all about us.”**
2. **“If you build it, they will come.”**
3. **“Exhibiting is an *expense*, not an *investment*.”**



Be a *MYTH BUSTER!*

What's your “big picture” exhibit strategy?

- Profile your perfect prospect (target audience)
 - What's your solution to their problems and challenges?
- Decide what you'll showcase
 - What is your target audience most interested in?
- Determine your top key message(s)

So why are you exhibiting?

- Generate qualified leads to convert to future sales
- Increase awareness of products / services
- Enhance and reinforce company brand
- Interact with prospects and customers
- Educate attendees
- Create / strengthen relationships / partnerships
- Recruit new employees



**Prioritize your reasons and budget
based on your priorities.**

Goal Setting

Are your exhibiting goals consistent with your company's overall marketing and sales goals?



Can you translate your exhibiting goals into actionable objectives?

Writing your Exhibiting Goals and Objectives



GOALS	OBJECTIVES
Broad	Narrow
General intentions or vision	Detailed plans to achieve goals
Intangible	Tangible
Abstract	Concrete
Can't be validated/measured	Can be validated/measured

3 Ways Exhibitors Sabotage Their Trade Show Success

- Not going into show planning with specific objectives.
- Not focusing their solution on their customer's problems / challenges.
- Not training their exhibit staff in the art and science of boothmanship.



*What's **ROI**?*

Return on Investment

- Definition: Amount of revenue gained based on **sales-related activity** for the financial investment made to exhibit.
- ROI was the earliest measurement buzzword explaining the economic side of trade show exhibit program measurement.
- Success of measurement depends upon definition of what a lead is, what are show-related expenses, etc.

*What's **ROO**?*

Return on Objective

- Definition: Amount of benefit gained from meeting non-financial marketing performance elements
- Came about because management required more accountability for trade show exhibit marketing investment vs. other marketing investments
- Objectives that are less easily quantified i.e. corporate image, product awareness, branding influence, press and media coverage, social media, and audience education



*What's **ROR**?*

Return on Relationship

- Definition: The value (both perceived and real) that is accrued by a person or brand due to nurturing a relationship that accrues over time
- Focus on leveraging existing customer relationships for incremental sales, product replacement, and upgrades or referrals
- Forming the relationship based on bonding, personalization, ongoing engagement and customer loyalty

Results Measurement

The process can be as simple or complex as is required and useful.

Measurement programs often fail based on:

- Lack of management support (financial or staff)
- Inability to measure based on sales channel or timing of goal-related activities
- Not measuring what matters to other stakeholders or comparable marketing/sales activities

The Devil is in the Details!

Implementing the Tactics

It's estimated that there are 1,000 decisions that go into planning every trade show exhibit.

You have to understand your exhibit strategy before you can implement the tactics to support it!



10 Major Strategic Decisions

They say there are 1,000 decisions to make before you exhibit and *somebody* has to make them.

You:

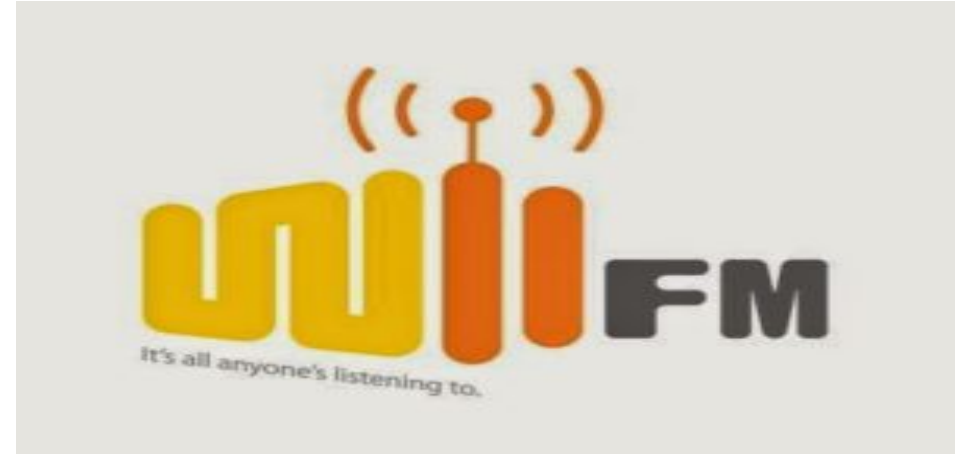
1. Decided to invest in exhibiting
2. Decide who, exactly, your primary target audience is and how to reach them
3. Decide what products / services to show
4. Decide what your key message(s) are to your primary target audience
5. Decide how to promote and to whom (primary vs. secondary audiences)
6. Decide how to best display your products/services
7. Design your exhibit and graphics for functionality and aesthetics
8. Decide how to take leads and what information to gather
9. Decide who on your staff will work in your booth
10. Decide how you'll follow up and when etc.

...10 down and only 990 decisions to go!

Focus on your Customer

There's a radio station that's playing in every show visitor's mind as they walk the show floor past the exhibits:

WII-FM: "What's in it for me?"



They don't want to be **SOLD** on the **FEATURES** of your product / service.

They **BUY** based on the **BENEFITS!**

Exhibiting's like show biz because...

Stage = exhibit

Scripts = icebreakers, elevator speech, qualifying questions, demonstrations, FAQs

Props = products, exhibit graphics, video, brochures or fliers, business cards, lead forms, giveaways

Attendees = suspects, prospects, customers

Actors = your exhibit staff

Role = company host, ambassador, evangelist

Rehearsal = Don't skip it!



Effective and Eye-Catching Exhibit Design

- Design rules: “Story before structure” and “Form follows function”.
 - Determine the story you want to convey to your target market and then the functionality you’ll need in your exhibit before launching into exhibit design.
- Differentiate your brand with extraordinary design:
 - Large graphics, larger-than-life product / logos
 - Non-linear shapes and angles
 - Textures
 - Creative use of space (“ceiling”, floors, walls)
- Use color, light and movement to attract attention.



Maximize your Booth Space

What needs to be in your booth space to support your strategic goals?

- Furnishings (kiosks, counters)
- Equipment (product or AV)
- Demonstrations
- Experiential activities
- Group presentations (theater)
- Meeting space (table/chairs)
- Messaging (graphics and signage)
- Literature display and storage



Plan your Functional Booth Layout

- Don't build barriers: 80% of perimeter aisle space open
- Sufficient open space for exhibit staff and visitors
 - 25 sq. ft. of personal space per person (10'x10'= 4 people)
- Aisle carpet vs. booth carpet color difference is a subliminal psychological barrier
- Exhibit properties that support your goals and objectives
- Display and access to product and marketing collateral
- Graphics and messages need to be seen from all aisles

Effective Exhibit Graphics

- Purpose(s)
 - ID, segment by product/area, convey message, arouse emotion, educate, compel them to action
- Attract your target audience, repel others
- Brevity of message(s)
 - 7 words or less to catch their eye
 - Key message can be read – and understood – in 3.5 seconds
- Billboard vs. bulletin board effect
- No text font size that can't be read from 10' away and all critical verbiage above 5' (shoulder height)



Graphics = a Magnet for your Target Audience

- Memorability: What's the 1 key message you want attendees to take away and remember after they've left your booth?
- What problem does your product / service solve?
- What differentiates you from your competitors?
- Why do your customers say they buy from you?
- From what distance will your graphics be read?



Do you have multiple target audiences? How should each one's message differ?

- **Suspects:** Show attendees that you don't know and who don't know your company or product/service
- **Prospects:** Show attendees that you are aware of but haven't sold your product to yet
- **Customers/Clients:** Show attendees who know of your product/service but may need updated on your latest offerings
- **Influencers/Recommenders:** Show attendees who aren't actually your target prospects, but have influence over those who are



EmPOWer Your Graphics

Use words that show the ***benefits*** of why your customers buy your products or use your services:

- New
- Safe / Safety
- Easy
- Save / Cost-Saving
- Results
- Proven
- Free



Specialized Exhibit Shipping

Shipping costs are based on:

- The type of carrier
 - Common, van, expedited, small package, and air
- Amount of capacity in the shipping lanes
- Pick-up and delivery logistics
- Miles vs. available time between origin and destination
- Weight, volume, and fragility of the shipment
- Insurance coverage / valuation, and
- Surcharges (fuel) and ancillary charges.

CHEAP ☐

FAST ☐

GOOD ☐

Pick any two! 

The Worst Show is a No-Show!

Cost-Savings Shipping Hints

- Carrier type and documentation can affect both your material handling and shipping costs.
- Shipping costs are estimated to increase this year by ~20% this year due to ELD (Electronic Logging Devices) tracking system.

Contents: 1 trade show manager's career



- When requesting and comparing quotes, make sure they are not just quoting your pickup / line haul / delivery but all ancillary charges, too.
- Make sure your exhibit properties are covered by insurance or valuation; automatic coverage is minimal.

Material Handling (Drayage)

- Lighten up your load!
 - Material handling costs exhibitors an average of \$1.25 per pound with a 200-300# (2-3 CWT) minimum plus overtime, penalties, etc.
- Never leave anything of value in a crate that you will mark EMPTY to send away to storage during the show. There is no liability by the General Services Contractor for these items.
- Put anything of value into Accessible Storage at an additional fee (but it will be returned after the show before EMPTY storage does).



Material Handling (Drayage)

Cost Cutters

- Consider replacing heavy, old exhibit properties with lighter-weight aluminum frame and fabric exhibits to minimize storage, shipping, material handling and set-up costs.
- Make sure to hit any inbound and outbound freight targets to avoid penalties; if you can't, ask for a variance.
- Compare the costs of shipping to the advance warehouse and direct-to-site. Which one is more expensive varies by show.
- Know how your carrier selection affects your material handling; more labor and equipment = higher rate per pound.
- Always audit your onsite show bills – during the show and after.

Electrical Power and Labor

- Work with the show's electrical department's exhibitor services staff to save money on your power. They can suggest ways to reduce your electrical power costs.
- Always request that your electrical floor work be laid on straight time on your order form. And thank them, too, in advance!



- Consider having your exhibit house put in one power distribution box to reduce your power and installation costs.

Installation and Dismantle (I & D) Labor

- Know the unions involved in I & D and what work they have jurisdiction over.
 - What can the exhibitor's FT employees do without union "help"?
- Know how many hours – at straight time and overtime – will be required to set up your exhibit. Then pad your order and budget by 10-20%.
- If you have a "system" (branded) exhibit, request laborers who specialize in that system.

Saving Money on I & D

- Ship your own Velcro, packing and cleaning supplies.
- Have your labor crew bring all necessary ladders and tools with them when they arrive for set-up and dismantle.
- Based on when your freight is to arrive, plan on the earliest straight-time set-up to minimize potential overtime labor hours.
- Consider working with an Exhibitor-Appointed Contractor rather than the official General Service Contractor for additional services.
- Gain straight time dismantle hours by tearing down your exhibit the morning after show break on straight time rather than the evening of show break on overtime.



The Most Critical Link to Success: Your Exhibit Staff!

To attendees, the most *memorable* part of your exhibit is your staff.



- **Show and exhibit orientation**
 - What do they need to know to make them productive and comfortable in this non-traditional role of “speed-dating”?
- **Product and sales training**
 - Boothmanship (at-show verbal and body-language communications and booth etiquette, scripts)
 - Don't skip role playing various visitor interactions

Top Issues with Your Exhibit Staff

- They may be out of their usual work environment and comfort zone.
- They may not feel prepared for engaging with the public.
- They're worried they might not know the answers to all the questions.

Help them feel ready: **Rehearse!**

Why Being Efficient in Engaging with Attendees is Important

**The only competitor
you have
on the show floor is
*TIME!***



Prepare your Exhibit Staff's Scripts

- **Who's your staff talking to? What's their agenda?**
- **What are their problems/challenges?**
- **Greetings:** (a.k.a. Icebreakers)
 - What will you say to stop attendees as they walk by?
- **Elevator speeches**
 - A short (usually 30-second) persuasive speech to spark interest in your company or product / service.
 - Includes an irrefutable fact, a credibility statement, 2-3 benefits, plus an open-ended call-to-action.



Prepare your Exhibit Staff's Scripts

- Answer to “What’s new?” (since $\frac{3}{4}$ of attendees come to shows to find out)
 - If a customer or prospect already knows you, they may just want to know what’s new.
- Qualifying questions
 - Use 3 or 4 questions to probe for the attendees’ needs or problems that can’t be answered with yes/no. “Tell me about... what you do... your next project... your issues with your current vendor...”
- Demos
 - Plan a demo or presentation that lasts 7 minutes or less so you still have something to talk about AFTER the show.
- Frequently-Asked Questions (Top 10 FAQs)
 - Gives consistency to answers and helps new employees and temporary help answer common questions
 - Should NOT be memorized, but in each staff person’s own “voice”.

7 Steps of an Effective Attendee Engagement

1. Engaging & Greeting
2. Questioning, Listening to Understand & Qualifying
3. Presenting / Demonstrating
4. Summarizing
5. Lead Gathering / Recording
6. Cross-Selling
7. Thanking & Disengaging / Dismissing



Courtesy of The Hill Group

Cost-Cutting Tips

- **Choose your shows carefully.**
 - Focus on the shows your target market attends.
- **Set your spending priorities based on the reasons why you are exhibiting.**
 - Only spend discretionary dollars on things that help you reach your goals and objectives.
- **Evaluate value first, cost second.**
 - Based on your show goals and objectives, determine what spending gives you the best return.
- **Determine what it is important to measure to claim success.**
 - Determine what performance you need to track and get buyoff on your measurement criteria.



More Cost-Cutting Tips

- **Is what you're spending – or saving – an expense or investment?** Are you cutting your budget in the wrong place and minimizing your investment dollars, like in exhibit staff training or targeted attendee promotion?
- **Only make invisible cuts.** Never cut your exhibit budget where a customer or prospect can see it.
- **Hit the show services discount deadlines.** Scour the exhibitor services manual for the discount deadlines and work your logistics plan to achieve maximum cost savings. By ordering your services between 15-45 days prior to the show, you can save up to half on many services.



And More Cost-Cutting Tips

- **Work with your vendors to form win-win partnerships.**
 - Let them know what you need and rely on their expertise to help you meet your objectives.
- **Think outside the box.**
 - Get creative and ask yourself about each budget line item: “How could I do this differently at a lower cost but higher value?”
- **Compare the cost and benefit of participating in big, horizontal industry shows and small, vertical or niche shows.**
 - Compare the exhibiting costs at a horizontal industry show with 50,000 people where only 5,000 are your target market, and a vertical show of 5,000 where 2,500 are your target market.



Auditing your Show Invoices = Save Big Buck\$!

- **Require line-item invoices and back-up payment documentation from all vendors, not single line summaries without any back-up.**
 - Ethical vendors/partners will offer to break down costs, not bury them in a single total.
- **Audit ALL show invoices.**
 - There will be errors, generally not in your favor, on over 75% of them!



Post-Show Analysis and Reporting

Why complete a Post-Show Analysis:

- To close the loop on your pre-show exhibiting goals and objectives
- To review and report the show's results: successes, failures and lessons learned
- To improve future show performance based on the lessons learned
- To gather comparative data between completed shows at least annually to determine the value of various exhibiting opportunities.



Post-Show Report: The 6 Ws

- **Who** should receive it?
- **Where** will this information come from?
- **What** are the report's format and length?
- **When** are the optimal times to compile and share it?
- **What** elements of your exhibit should be reviewed?
- **Why** write a post-show analysis report?



Post-show Report Content

Strategic Goals and Objectives

Leads Analysis

Press / Media / Social Media Coverage

Exhibit / Graphics Effectiveness

Recommendations

Exhibit Staffing

Budget

Competition

Promotion



Still confused? More Resources

**THE ONLY *STUPID QUESTION*
IS THE ONE YOU DIDN'T ASK!**

- Exhibitor Services Manuals
- Show Web Site Show Management
- Show Contractors (General Services, I & D, Subcontractors, etc.)
- Exhibit Houses / Sign Shops / Printers
- www.ExhibitorOnline.com Articles
- ExhibitorOnline.com Glossary
<http://www.exhibitoronline.com/topics/article.asp?ID=1302&catID=102>

Have more questions about exhibiting? Just ask the “The Booth Mom®”!

- Ask here and now
- Contact me later by email at:
CandyAdams@BoothMom.com
- Put me under “ICE” on *speed-dial* for later:
760-271-0366
- Check out lots of “Exhibiting 101” articles at:
www.BoothMom.com/resources/articles