

# BOOTH CAMP

TRADE SHOWS, EXPOS, EVENTS – OH MY!



Expo and trade show  
lead generation tips





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“  
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DROP EVERYTHING.”

**-JERRY SEINFELD**



## WHY TRADE SHOWS?

Ever find yourself at a trade show, looking around wondering - why am I here? Or perhaps - why did my company send me here? Don't worry, you're not alone. Trade shows, expos and community events are part of the marketing tool arsenal, but like all tools, it's about knowing which one is right for the job.

### **So why would you consider a trade show or expo to market your business?**

- » Generates lower cost-per-sale
- » Keeps you in front of your customers, existing clients and industry colleagues
- » Exposes you to new clients and prospects
- » Enables you to reach very targeted audience (geographic, industry, etc.)
- » Connects you with motivated leads! They are there because they want to learn and buy



# CHOOSING THE **RIGHT** TRADE SHOWS

Trade shows and expos can be a big investment. In order to get the most from that investment you need to choose the right shows. Think like your marketing personas—what trade shows would they attend?

## MARKETING PERSONAS: QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. What industries do my marketing personas work within?
2. What are my marketing personas' pain points?
3. How does my product/service address these pain points?
4. Where are my marketing personas located?
5. How do my marketing personas get information?
6. What kind of customer experience are my marketing personas seeking?
7. What are the most common objections to buying my product or using my service?

Quality over quantity wins every time—highly qualified leads close at a much higher rate. Consider shows where the attendees are great potential customers. A few well-targeted shows will return more on your investment than attending many shows that are broader and less specific to your marketing personas.

# GOALS

Set goals for your trade show that align with your marketing goals as outlined in your marketing plan. These goals should be:

- » **Measurable** - something you can quantify (e.g. "30 new leads", "50 new blog subscribers")
- » **Achievable** - your goals should be realistic
- » **Time Sensitive** - your goals need to be timely to the show

Remember, a trade show can work towards more than one company goal. Some maybe very specific such as "50 new leads in the first quarter of the year", others can be more generic and are supported by specific goals like "increasing brand awareness in the Washington D.C. market".

# SETTING A BUDGET

A common misconception is that trade shows are expenses. A trade show is an investment, not an expense. If you view your trade show experience as an expense only, you are doomed from the start and will not realize the potential of your trade show marketing efforts.

When building your trade show annual budget and plan, consider amortizing reusables over the projected number of shows. These items include your display, digital media and other giveaway items. A display has a shelf life of multiple shows, as does your digital content. Giveaways, brochures and other more disposable items can be purchased for multiple shows in order to achieve volume discounts.

## SUCCESS FACTORS

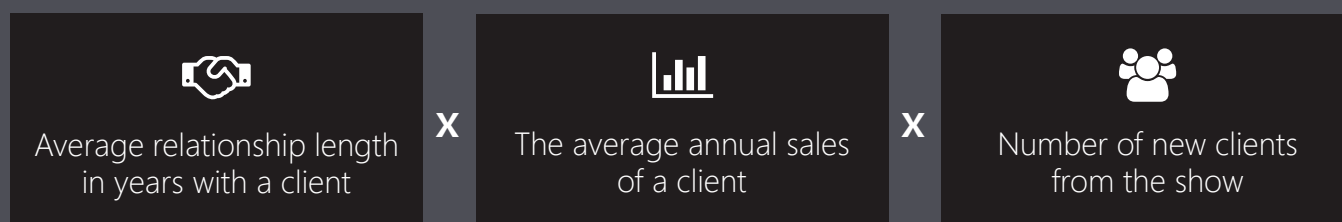
For each show you consider, calculate the show's likelihood for success. This will give you a clear idea of what you can expect from that show.

- 1. Total number of qualified prospects at a show**  
# of attendees X % of attendees in your market
- 2. Total number of prospects you can see over a show**  
# of staff X # of show hours X calls per hour
- 3. Number of sales can you make at the show**  
# of prospects talked with X average close rate
- 4. Estimated sales (in dollars)**  
# of sales X average sales dollar amount

## ROI = RETURN ON INVESTMENT

You need to set a value for what you're willing to invest to achieve your goals. Nothing happens without an investment of time and resources.

### To determine your long term ROI:



### Example:

3 years X 20K X 5 new clients = Long Term ROI is \$300,000.00

## RESEARCHING THE RIGHT SHOW

- » Trade Publications
- » Trade Organizations
- » Competitors
- » Vendors
- » Clients
- » [tradeshowcalendar.com](http://tradeshowcalendar.com)

**Don't forget – go where your marketing personas look for information to solve their problems.**



## PROMOTING THE SHOW

Just planning on showing up with your display? Think again.

### Promotion Plan

Map out a promotions plan to let your customers know you'll be at the trade show. This way they can plan to stop by to see you. If you don't tell them, don't expect them to show up.

- » Send announcements promoting the show to your existing customers. An email is a simple and effective way to get the word out.
- » Send announcements promoting the show to prospect lists. Most shows have a list of exhibiting companies and registered attendees that you can purchase. Not an option? Don't forget social media can be a cost effective tool to reach the same communities. Look for the show and industry related Twitter hashtags, Facebook pages and LinkedIn groups.
- » Give a reason to visit! Stop by for your free guide or to register for a drawing.





## DISPLAYS

Displays don't need to be costly, but they do need to be professional. When a person walks by your display they decide within 30 seconds or less if they're going to stop. If your display looks untidy and unprofessional chances are they will keep on walking.

### **Considerations for booths and tabletop displays:**

- » Is your display sized appropriately for your booth?
- » What features do you most desire?
- » Does it need to travel well?
- » Does the content need to change?
- » What do you want your image to convey?

## SAY HELLO - THE MESSAGE

Once you've chosen a display style, you need to fine-tune your message. A scattered message will not produce the results you seek. The display needs to convey what your company does in 30 seconds or less. It's a visual elevator pitch. Remember – less is more! The display doesn't need to tell prospects everything: it's a marketing tool to grab their attention so that they want to learn more from you. Let the show staff fill in the details – not the display.

## DESIGN TIPS

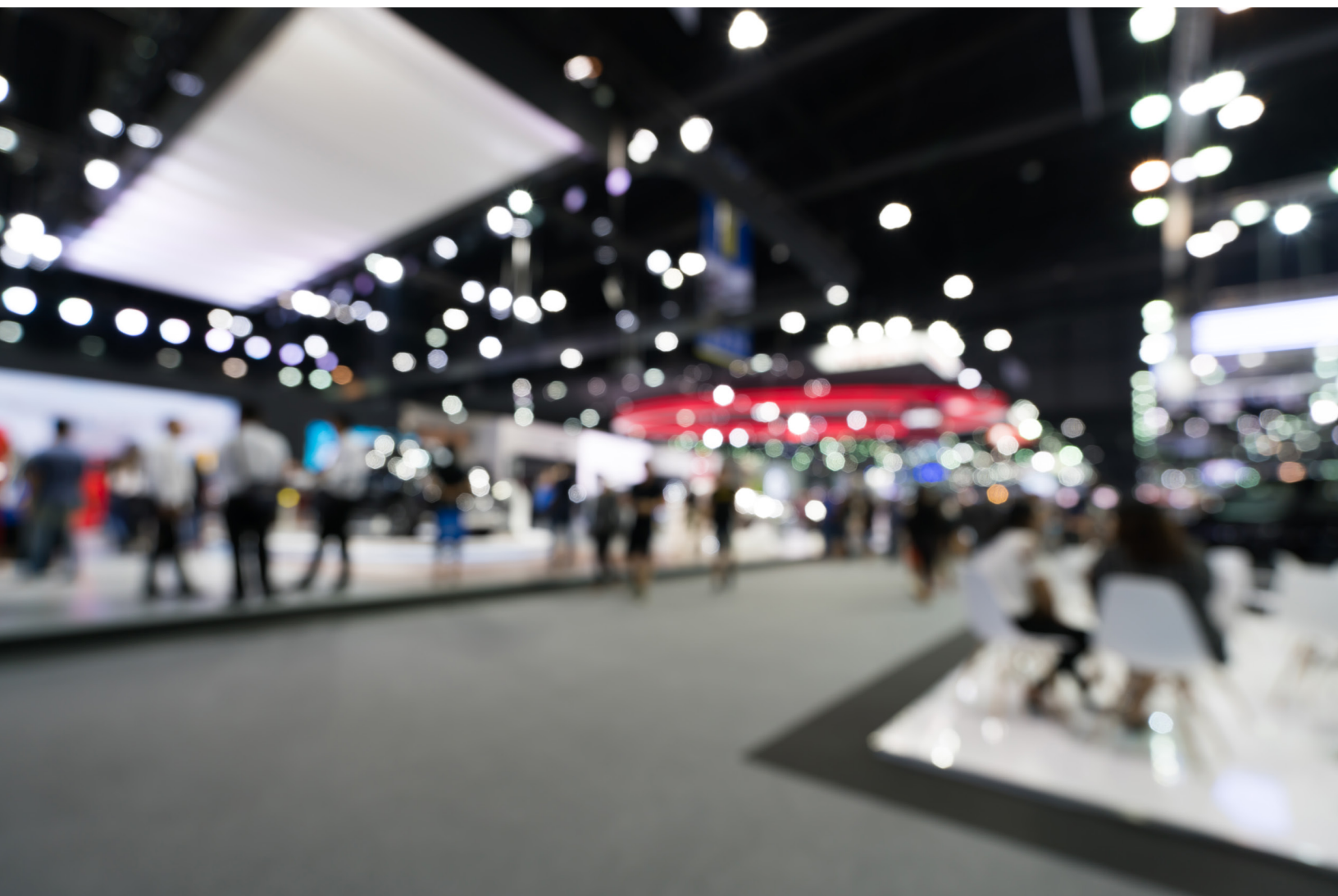
Looking to draw people to your booth? Choose one of these tried and true themes as a starting point:

- » **Company Name** - If your company name is well known, its all you need.
- » **Product Name** - If you have a product everyone knows, use that as headline.
- » **What pain point you solve** - If you're new and people don't know you, go with what you can do for them.



### PRO TIP

Go with a professional to help you with your large format printing needs. It's money well spent.





## STAFFING

Choose staff to man your booth during the entire show. Having more than one person is key so that someone can also visit other booths and network. A combination of two personality types works well in an expo situation:

**Greeter:** Front of line person with a sparkly personality that can greet attendees and invite them into the booth. This person can also qualify leads for you - deflecting those who are not good leads for your sales staff.

**Shower or Closer:** This person has all the technical information to close a lead. These sales staff will spend more time with each prospect and will be the ones following up with the prospect after the show.

## STAFFING TIPS

- » Choose staff that are enthusiastic and that can create an exciting atmosphere.
- » Train staff to ask the right questions to qualify leads.
- » Gather as much information on leads as possible.
- » Staff should be dressed professionally and easily identifiable to your company's booth or tabletop.



## POSTGAME: CONVERTING LEADS TO SALES

You have a handful of business cards from the show - now what? Don't expect anyone to follow-up with you. As the vendor, it's your job to make sure your company follows up with those leads. Based on the data you gathered on each lead, qualify them as "hot," "warm," or "cold." Starting with those that are most likely to convert, reach out to them to continue the conversation. This is where the information you gathered on each prospect is key.



### TIPS FOR MAKING CONTACT

- » Email hot leads and follow-up with a phone call to continue the conversation. If they convert to customers make sure they're added to your communications lists. If they don't, ask them if they would like to be added to your lists for future communications.
- » Email warm leads and follow-up with phone call, but don't expect the same response as a hot lead. If they don't convert, ask to follow-up with them again in the future and send them an offer. Also ask to add them to your leads database for future communications.
- » Email cold leads, invite them to do something: read your blog, sign up for special offers, invite them to an upcoming event, send a coupon.



## ABOUT ILLUMINE8

Illumine8 is an Unbound Marketing business solution that combines the power of business development strategy, marketing creativity and customer focused sales to deliver sustainable and measurable results.

Our clients are growth minded, strategic partners that can benefit from our Unbound Marketing practices. We are your partner of choice for holistic business strategies achieved through the latest digital marketing communications and creative practices.

Web: [www.illumine8.com](http://www.illumine8.com)

Email: [solutions@illumine8.com](mailto:solutions@illumine8.com)

Office: 301-200-8945