

## Before the Trade Show

1. Set exhibit staffing schedule.
  - a. What attire best supports your brand and image?
2. Create your trade show sales process.
  - a. What Opening Question can you ask to qualify and attract people into a conversation?
    - i. "Who do you use to help with prototypes?"
  - b. Develop a simple, fluid process for capturing information and setting meetings.
    - i. Have your calendar handy.
      1. Give them an appointment card, like a dentist or doctor would.
3. Develop your Trade show FOLLOW-UP PLAN.
  - a. Identify who will be involved in following up on leads.
    - i. Schedule their time over the two weeks following the Trade show.
  - b. Create your follow-up process so it's ready to go immediately after the Trade show. Draft the following before the show so you can stand out from the crowd with immediate follow up afterwards:
    - i. Scripts, Mailings, Offers

## Tips:

1. Design your booth so visitors can navigate easily without feeling crowded. Keep the atmosphere intimate, and remove any barriers between yourself and your audience.
2. Keep the message simple so as not to overload visitors with information. Keep the appearance neat and clean. If you tend to overdo it, try this: put everything out you want, and then remove one item.
3. Practice in advance setting up your booth. Have existing customers (your target market) give you aggressive feedback.
4. Note where people's eyes go during this trial run. In our experience people will look at the lower front of the booth, then the back wall, then the right corner.
5. Ensure that what is most important (your new product, your highest margin item, your most popular item) are in these strategic locations.
6. Use the space out of the initial eye contact line for non-important items (i.e., keeping your supplies under the table, your extra stock near the bottom of the display, etc).
7. Systemize this setup making "blueprints" for the booth. These simple blueprints should be written so that someone unfamiliar with your business can follow this system and set the booth up perfectly every time. Identify tasks for each person going with you to the show to complete during set up.
8. Have lead forms made in advance that will help you collect all contact information and ask qualifying questions.
9. Use product demos to help them remember you. Ensure they tie in with your marketing message.

**Trade show Time!**

1. Have Fun! Use your Trade show sales process. Be energetic and enthusiastic.
2. How can you use the show to gain market research on your competition?
  - a. Pick up information; take pictures of exhibits you like, etc.

**Tips:**

1. During set up, introduce yourself to your neighbours. Make it a point to learn what they are marketing so that you may refer your booth attendees to them (and hopefully vice versa).
2. Find a booth of a complimentary exhibitor (someone who sells to your target market). Introduce yourself and build rapport. Discuss post-Trade show cooperative marketing opportunities such as a lead list exchange, sharing direct mail, or invoice stuffing. Set a goal for how many complimentary exhibitors you will meet.
3. Do not solicit in the aisles (known as “suitcasing”). Exhibitions are designed to encourage a free flow of traffic through the aisles.
4. Do not disrupt other exhibitors or visitors. Disruptions such as loud music or announcements, shining lights at other booths, using laser pointers across aisles and the like are annoying to others. Visitors are there for business purposes, just like you.
5. Don't Sit. You give attendees the impression you don't care or you're lazy. Attendees won't interrupt your private time, as they see it.
6. Don't Read. You aren't able to make eye contact with attendees as they walk by your booth.
7. Don't Eat or Drink. It is just plain rude and messy. Attendees are too polite to bother you when you're eating.
8. Don't Ignore Attendees. If you're busy when someone approaches, either acknowledge him or try to include her in your conversation. If you're talking with a fellow booth staffer, break it off immediately.
9. Don't talk on your cell phone. Time on the phone is time away from potential prospects and tells everyone you have better things to do.
10. Don't Be a Border Guard. Don't stand where you become a barricade or block the attendees' view. Stand near the aisle and off to the side.
11. Don't Hand Out Literature Freely. Your expensive catalogs and brochures end up in a bag with everyone else's literature. Be discriminating in who gets literature. Better yet, mail them to qualified prospects after the show.
12. Don't Underestimate Prospects. Get out of the habit of sizing up somebody simply by the way they look. Qualify them, don't classify them.
13. Don't Cluster with friends and other booth personnel.
14. Don't be a “street gang.” It's intimidating to approach a group of strangers. Be more approachable.

15. Take the business card from the visitor and make special notes on the back of their card for your follow up. It's easy to forget the little details when you are continually meeting so many people.
16. Run through the finish line! One of the biggest complaints trade show organizers receive from visitors is exhibits not being open until the end of the show. Go the extra mile and stay! You may have your best sale or meet your best prospect in the last 5 minutes of the show.

**After the Trade Show**

1. Celebrate a successful Trade show with your team!
2. Execute your Post-Trade show Follow-up Plan:
  - a. Review, prioritize and assign all the leads you received.
    - i. Immediately contact the HOT leads.
    - ii. Hold everyone accountable to making this happen!
1. Use incentives and make it fun.
  - b. Enter all leads into your customer database.
  - c. Write "nice to have met you" notes to your new complimentary business friends.
3. Follow up on any cooperative marketing ideas you agreed upon with your new complimentary business friends.
4. Conduct a Trade show Debrief with your team. Identify:
  - a. Gems – what worked well?
  - b. Opportunities – what could be done better next time?
5. Track the immediate results and long-term opportunities you received from the Trade show. Did you break even? What is your return on this investment?
  - a. Update your Trade show ROI monthly for the next 12 months.
  - b. Include existing client relationships that were improved through the Trade show.
6. Add trade shows at which you exhibit to your "How did you hear about us?" form to track future leads.
7. Begin planning for the next trade show while the results are fresh in your minds.
  - a. Schedule and budget the trade show into your marketing plan for next year.
  - b. Make sure sales and marketing messages are closely aligned.
  - c. As you follow up with the leads and new customers from the show, ask what other events they attend.