

CHAPTER 19

ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF A TRADE SHOW

“I will make another video work for the exhibition—three to five screens with images of the snowballs melting.”

~ Andy Goldsworthy

Another marketing medium for a product-driven company is a trade show. It is a unique environment all its own. In our experience, it's a place to gather buyers and sellers, assemble them in one place, at one time, and see what they like.

It's a cut-throat situation for the consumer's attention, but that's what makes it so real. This chapter will highlight the essential elements of a trade show because it is a viable forum for certain companies on a number of levels from both your competitor's and consumer's points of view.

A trade show is a raw marketplace in a challenging environment. Usually, in a matter of minutes and during a loud, crowded atmosphere, you've got to attract people to your booth long enough to develop leads upon which you can follow-up later.

Even if you have absolutely, positively no plans to ever do a trade show, many of the marketing suggestions and techniques are relevant to every business owner in how to best communicate with current and prospective clients.

According to the Exhibition and Event Association:

- 83 percent of all visitors to a trade show have the authority to purchase or are a decisive influence in the purchasing decision of their companies.
- 72 percent of trade show visitors intend to make a purchase either at the show or in the near future. For you as an independent business owner, a trade show is a great opportunity to meet the people who matter in your industry and to demonstrate to them everything you have to offer. It also gives you the chance to answer any questions, face to face, challenge your competitors, and to network with key people, other than potential buyers, who may have an interest in your company.

Understand, however, that the primary objective of a trade show is to “prospect” rather than actually “sell.” Few orders are written at trade shows; therefore, your main objective should be the acquisition of hot leads for representatives to follow-up on and the creation of valuable contacts that will lead to building a relationship upon and ultimately increasing your sales.

A successful trade show will be the result of good preparation before the show, optimization of exposure at the show, adequate follow-up on that exposure after the

show, and the conversion of customer contact into sales. First, let's examine why you would or should be an exhibitor.



Why Exhibit?

Although making money is at the heart of every business decision, trade shows aren't all about making a sale; there are many motivations for exhibiting that do not specifically involve selling, but rather, are catalysts for selling. When you identify your motivation, you will then be able to decide on objectives, a budget, and a strategy. For example:

- Gather new leads.
- Make on-the-spot sales.
- Maintain public and customer relations.
- Gain public exposure.
- Introduce or launch a new product or service.
- Show a presence among competitors.
- Penetrate a new market.

Trade Shows