



TIPS FOR SUCCESSFUL EXHIBITING

Create a welcoming exhibit space – Create a wow factor, ensuring that you stand out from the crowd. Your booth is like a window looking into your business, make it inspiring. What look and feel do you want to portray? Invite attendees into your area with demonstrations, contests (drawings), or relevant and branded samples. Remember, open space is more inviting and puts visitors at ease. Give them a reason to spend time at your booth. Keep your booth tidy. Be creative, making it fun and interesting, while displaying information that showcases your specialties.

Have your name, products and services prominent – Never assume attendees know who you are and what you do. Choose signage and display products to create the image you want. Mark new products as 'NEW', and place in a prominent position to attract interest. Use clear, precise visual graphics. Have before and after photos. Be sure to have your business cards available, along with flyers and information about your business, your products, and your services. Have all your contact information on everything you give away. This is necessary if you want the name recognition for potential call backs.

Recognition and repetition – Keep in mind that the more frequently customers see you and your company, the more likely you will be remembered and called upon for projects. Develop your own brand awareness with your name and logo. Then promote, using it in prominent, highly visible locations. Consider one of the show sponsorship opportunities to increase your presence before, during, and after the show. Come back again each year to further increase your visibility. Recognition and repetition are building blocks in business.

Maximize your presence – Raise your show profile, before the event, by contacting current and prospective customers. Update your website and other media with banners stating that you will be attending the show, an invite to join you, the information that you will display during the show, and other information that will entice the visitor to give you a call back. Use traditional advertising, Facebook posts, and other media, to invite past, current, and potential customers to meet with you at the show. Contact journalists in order to be featured in a story spotlighting your products and services, customer case studies, and what you can offer attendees at the show.

Know your message, be friendly and active – Talk with all attendees, being attentive but not overbearing. Each staff member needs a name tag, should be able to introduce themselves to visitors, and be able to carry on a friendly, informative conversation. The face-to-face contact is invaluable to build relationships. Make sure you, and your staff, know your business thoroughly and are able to show visitors the latest products and services. You need to show potential customers that you want their business. A motivated, well-informed team does more than anything else to distinguish your business. It is all about meeting people. Create a good lasting impression, and don't forget to smile.

Consider using AV technology – Show that you are innovative with information, ideas, products, and services. Think about showing testimonials in your booth. Or even consider arranging for a QR code (similar to a barcode) to be available on a sign in your booth, showing You Tube links when the attendee scans it with their smart phone. You could also place a different QR code on the back of your business card with a message you would like to convey to the potential customer.

Collect contact info – Be sure you have a way to collect the necessary information from the contacts that visit your booth. Create 'customer contact information forms' to gather name, address, phone, email, the manner in which they do/do not like to be contacted (mail, email, text, etc), what project they would like updated, the level of interest, the speed at which they plan to update (now, one month, six months, a year), the staff member they spoke with, and thoughts and ideas that the potential customer discussed.

Plan ahead and bring everything – Proper preparation is essential for success and will help to maximize your opportunities. The more thought and planning you put into the event, the more likely you are to have a successful show. Remember to bring the important things that will be needed. Bring items such as banners, 'customer contact information forms', signage, business cards, Ipad or laptop, pertinent materials and samples, pictures of before and after projects, flyers, giveaway items, material swatches, visual graphics, registration forms and the box, decorations, extension cords, scissors, tape, pins, and of course pens or pencils and paper.

Dress appropriately – Wear nice uniforms or business-casual attire, making sure that your outfit is comfortable yet professional, including your shoes. Bring a jacket if you chill easily. Be sure to have your name tag, and your smile.

Network during the show and after – Meet and build relationships with other exhibitors, and continue to maintain already established ones. These colleagues should be able to refer contacts to you, in the future, when the products and services are your specialty. Introducing your exhibitor contacts to others is also an important part of networking, because people will remember you for helping them out. Keep them aware of what you're up to while building the relationship. Networking is not just about finding new contacts. It's about finding people who can help you grow your business. It's also an opportunity to discuss problems with other small-business owners and see how they overcame them. Get involved in industry events-it is a great way to network, contribute, and get something back. And a nice benefit you will gain is that it's always refreshing to see friendly faces around you.

Effective follow up – The event doesn't end when you pack up from the weekend. You must follow up with all the leads you have generated. Many exhibitors begin follow ups during the show, rather than waiting until the show is over. During the pre-show planning, prepare a standard 'thank you' letter that will cover most inquiries, personalize them, and send to all your contacts within a day or two. Even if you didn't get all the pertinent information you needed, get in contact with them as soon as possible, then stay in contact with them. Keep in mind that there are visitors that require a long lead time between the first meeting and their purchase. And research shows that most leads require several contacts before they commit. Always send personalized messages instead of mass groupings. Phone calls, postal packs, emails, texts, even a sales visit can all be acceptable, depending upon the preference indicated on their initial contact form. As soon as the show starts, add a general 'thank you for speaking with us' letter to your website and email or text a link to the contacts you have made that use this form of media. The visitors you spoke to were, most likely, looking to update an area in their home or garden. So don't put off the follow ups, or a more persistent competitor may prevail. Every visitor to your stand should receive multiple follow-up contacts. Remember to build the relationship. This increases your chance of converting your new lead into not only a sale, but more importantly, a potential partnership, resulting in many future collaborations.