Simple Guide to Effective Tradeshow Exhibiting

By: Gloria lafont

Table of Contents

7 steps to a profitable tradeshow… 2

10 costly mistakes to avoid ……. 5

Tips on getting the most of
Your promotional products
investment …… 6

The contents in this guide may not be reprinted, copied, translated, or otherwise distributed, in part or in its entirety, by any means, without explicit written permission of Gloria Lafont. For reprint information contact Gloria Lafont, at glafont@action-promo.com, writing reprint in subject line.

7 STEPS TO A PROFITABLE TRADESHOW

Just the mere fact of participating in a tradeshow requires a great deal of effort. Following these simple steps will help you focus on the important issues making the process much easier.

1 - Establish Your Goal

Your goal needs to be based on whom it is you're targeting and what do you want to get across to them. Be clear on what you want to accomplish: are you looking for visibility, brand awareness, lead generation, new product launching, product sales? You can have a single goal or several of them and you want to be able to measure your return on objectives afterwards. Being clear and planning all aspects of your exhibit in terms of your objectives, not only will save you time and money but also increase your desired results.

2 - Select The Right Event.

You want to make sure the people who attend fit your client's profile so your effort is worthwhile. Before making a decision, find out what the particular trade show's objectives are, the show's audience profile, hours and all the activities planned by the show organizers. You also want to know how it's being promoted and the expected attendance based on previous shows. Another important issue is whom you'll be competing with for the same visitor's attention so you can determine how creative you need to be to attract them to your exhibit.

3- Select Your Exhibit Space

When selecting your space on the show floor, important considerations are size (bigger is not necessarily better), where it is located on the floor, what kind of other exhibits will be around it, whether it's a high traffic or low traffic area, your special requirements such as electrical installation and the physical

conditions such as lighting, temperature and height. If there are activities planned, such as live music, food stands, etc., make sure you are not located next to them if it might interfere with your desired traffic or the strategy you plan to use.

4. Make It Easy For Your Visitors To Identify Your Products and Services.

Your prospect will give your space about 10 seconds before deciding weather to stop or to go on. How do you make them stop? Having the largest booth and a very expensive display system does not guarantee your success if the graphics and message are not directed to your target audience. Your product or service is obvious to you but not necessarily so for the rest of the world, making it very rapidly identifiable will get your qualified prospect's attention and will keep the unqualified moving along. Make relevant information about your products and services highly visible, so visitors can easily find it. Product samples, your frequently asked questions addressed in your signs, video presentations with product demonstrations on a lap top, will help interested people stick around your exhibit while you might be talking to another visitor.

5. Have Qualified Staffers

Your staffers should be able to engage your visitors. Have specific instructions for your staff, including the time they should arrive and leave, brake times, information they need to get from prospects and where to keep it, where are they to remain, what to watch for, etc. You may need to have staffers taking turns if the show hours are long or lasts several days, so they can get proper rest. Your staff should be dressed professionally, identified with uniforms or same color clothing and they should wear a tag with their name and company logo. You need at least 2 people at all times but you may need additional people at peek hours to properly handle traffic. There should be at least one experienced person at all times, although

the more knowledgeable your staff is the better results you'll get at qualifying the leads and converting them to sales later.

6. Select The Right Marketing Materials And Promotional Items

The purpose of the promotional items is to keep your name in front of your prospect after the show; therefore it must connect the dots between your goal, your product or service, and your target audience. The idea is to give out an item that is useful, the recipient is unlikely to buy for him or herself and it's not going to brake or fall apart. It is a good idea not to keep these too visible and also have a stock of inexpensive giveaways, such as good old candy, which you can get with your logo in the wrapper if you want, for those people who come to your booth just for the gift. Also, have a better gift item for prospects with a higher profile which you can give in exchange for their contact information. Have inexpensive flyers with information about your products and a special offer or coupon for the show to give out to your visitors.

7- Have A Follow Up Strategy In Place

This is where most businesses fail. Not having a follow up strategy in place before the show will more that likely lead to leaving some of the leads out of follow up. Preparing for this is just as important as preparing for the event. You're likely to have a number of qualified leads in your hands who requested specific information which will require some time to prepare, but when you go back to your office the day after the show you're also likely to have some accumulated urgent to-dos, also likely to take 100% of your attention. Having a pre-established, simple method to make contact with all the leads in a timely manner will certainly result in higher sales.

10 COSTLY MISTAKES TO AVOID

Addressed previously as the first step to a successful exhibit experience, I believe it is also the major mistake a business can make when participating in a tradeshow: not establishing clear goals. Besides that, here are 10 other important mistakes I see businesses fall into quite often, that will adversely affect the desired results.

1. Measuring the success of the event by the amount of people that came to get giveaways.

2. Using your logo or company name as the most visible graphic element in your display: unless you are a widely known brand that needs no introduction, having your logo and/or company name as the largest element in your banner will not make anyone stop.

3. Distributing expensive literature, promotional items that are too cheap looking or too expensive.

4. Not enough staffers, causing interested visitors to leave your space without leaving their information.

5. Staffers without knowledge of your product so your company looses credibility when not able to give information.

6. Staffers not trained on your prospect's profile, causing to waste time with unqualified visitors.

7. Setting up your display after the show starts or taking it down before the show ends. Even worse: leaving your display unattended.

8. Staff sitting down. If your strategy requires sitting down with a prospect, you should arrange to use an area apart from your stand.

9. Staff behind a physical barrier, such as a table. If your space consists of just a table, your staff should remain in front of it to properly interact with your visitors.

10. Staff eating at the stand or doing anything that does not place 100% of their attention on the visitor.

TIPS ON GETTING THE MOST OF YOUR PROMOTIONAL PRODUCTS INVESTMENT

There is a multitude of items, in all shapes and sizes, to select from. Base your selection on your objectives. An effective choice should accomplish being the one company your prospect remembers when in need of your product or service, even long after the show.

- Give them to encourage people to participate in a contest or drawing in exchange for information you can use to qualify them.

- Use them as a gift offer in a pre-show mailing to entice your hot prospects or preferred clients to come visit you.

- Use an item that needs to be put together so you have extra time to ask questions while you do it.

- Have a higher price item to give away in exchange for an immediate commitment or an appointment from a qualified prospect.

- Have different kinds of giveaways for different kind of recipients, like prospects, clients and giveaway seekers.

- Use only quality items, which doesn't mean necessarily expensive, remember, they will represent your company identity long after the event is over. Often you can find quality items on special or closeouts.

- Have a gift with purchase offer for the show, that can be extended for a specified period of time after.

- Look for items that complement your marketing message.

- Plan your order as far ahead as possible to make sure you take the time to make the best choice and avoid rush fees and overnight shipping.

- If you're planning on participating in several events, order larger quantities can lower your cost.

- Select items with an imprinting area large enough to accommodate your company logo, phone, website and message.

- Avoid laying large amounts of giveaways on your table, besides making it look cluttered, this will tend to attract attention on the gifts rather than of your own products or services.

LASTLY....

Take Action: print this guide and keep it handy, make sure you refer to it before your next event and if you apply these concepts your results will show. An if you are not sure how to go about it to make it work for your particular purposes, consult with a specialist to ensure your efforts bring you all the business it should.

Copyright © by Gloria Lafont - All Rights Reserved. Action Promotional Specialists, www.action-promo.com
The contents in this guide may not be reprinted, copied, translated, or otherwise distributed, in part or in its entirety, by any means, without explicit written permission of Gloria Lafont. For reprint information contact Gloria Lafont, at glafont@action-promo.com, writing reprint in subject line.