

SELECTIVE ATTRACTION

How to Attract the Right Visitors to Your Exhibit

By Jefferson Davis, Competitive Edge

Successful exhibitors know two important things:

1. Competition for attendee's limited time on the exhibit floor is fierce. To get their fair share of booth traffic they do not just rent space, show up and hope people find them. They use targeted pre-show marketing to get "in the mind" and "on the agenda" of the right attendees before the show opens.
2. Not everyone attending is their ideal visitor.

Consider these exhibition industry facts:

1. The average tradeshow attendee will visit 26-31 exhibitors.
2. 76% of attendees arrive with an agenda of exhibitors they plan to visit.
3. As many as 3 out of 4 exhibit visits are preplanned.
4. Less than 20% of exhibitors utilize targeted pre-show marketing campaigns.

So how do you get on the right attendees "must see" list? It's easier than you think.

Below are four steps to help you fill your booth with qualified, interested buyers.

Step 1. Invest 15% or more of your total show budget toward pre-show marketing.
The average exhibitor allocates just 14% of their show budget to pre-show marketing. Do better than the average. Of all the things you will spend money on, pre-show marketing is one of the most important. Don't skimp in this critical area. It's often the difference between a busy exhibit and standing around watching people pass by in the aisles.

Step 2. Identify who you want to visit your exhibit and build target visitor lists.
Start in-house with your sales team and your distribution channels. Build a list of customers and current prospects you would like to visit your exhibit. Include anyone who has inquired about your products or services over the last 12 months. Ask yourself, "*What types of companies and what job functions/titles do we want to visit our exhibit?*"

Be sure to talk to show management to about renting attendee mailing lists for pre-registered attendees, post-show and previous show attendees and association member lists. Check with key trade publications that serve the industry for lists too.

Step 3. Give attendees a compelling reason to visit your exhibit.
Don't just pitch products and services – focus on educating, solving problems, creating opportunities, and delivering meaningful value from a visit to your exhibit. Analyze your company, products and services carefully. *What is your value proposition? What do you want to teach visitors? What problems do you solve? What opportunities do you create? What do you do better than your competition?*

Copyright 2019 . All rights reserved. Competitive Edge.

Use powerful visual images and captivate attendee's interest with provocative benefit and ROI focused headlines like: "Learn how to avoid single biggest problem facing surgeons today." Everyone is interested in learning, solving problems, reducing costs, improving results and getting more value. Tell them specifically how you can help and they will come running to your exhibit.

Step 4. Use a combination of media to execute an integrated pre-show marketing campaign.

An effective pre-show marketing campaign integrates multiple media to touch prospective visitors at least three times before the show opens. Start with mass media like print advertising and publicity in industry journals. Add show specific publications like the official show directory. Then, add one-to-one media like mailing personal letters of invitation, postcards and formal invitations. Be sure to include an exhibit pass, when available. Put the finishing touch on your program with social media, the show's mobile app and more personal media like email and personal phone calls. To increase response, offer a compliant reward for responding like entry into a contest or better yet, invite them to your booth to pick-up a free educational gift.

With a little creative thought, some basic planning, and focused execution you can have a booth full of interested and qualified attendees. All it takes is selectively attracting the right attendees with targeted pre-show marketing.

Jefferson Davis, is a tradeshow productivity expert and president of Competitive Edge. Since 1991, his consulting and training services have helped clients improve their tradeshow performance and generate over $800M in results. Mr. Davis can be reached at 704-814-7355 or Jefferson@tradeshowturnaround.com

Copyright 2019 . All rights reserved. Competitive Edge.