



Trade Show Strategies

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***“To communicate, put your thoughts in order:
give them a purpose: use them to persuade,
to instruct, to discover, to seduce.”***

William Safire

Columnist: The New York Times

December 1987

What are the aims of this Seminar?

- ▶ Understand
 - Purpose
 - Time
 - Logistics
 - Costs
 - Processes and governance
 - Personnel

- ▶ Strategy
 - Develop your strategy
 - Establish your objectives
 - Establish budget
 - Kick start the process
 - Implement your strategy

Time

- ▶ Time to the show vanishes fast
- ▶ Time is precious
- ▶ Exhibitors: lead times from suppliers will vary
- ▶ Different people have different time constraints
- ▶ Time for marketing and time for educating yourself
- ▶ Time to enjoy the surrounds – helps educate you as well
- ▶ Prioritise

Measurable Objectives

- ▶ Determine measurable objectives
 - Decide what your company wants to accomplish
 - Develop SMART objectives
 - Involve the team and any local distributors/agents
 - Align with your company's marketing plan

- ▶ Examples of measurable objectives
 - Booth visitors by target audience / booths visited
 - Number of one-on-one meetings with key decision makers
 - Number of qualified leads
 - Value of sales and transactions closed from leads
 - New information gathered

Prepare for Differences

- ▶ Business etiquette
- ▶ Local culture:
 - Research some local facts
- ▶ Currency
- ▶ Voltage:
 - 110 or 220? China is 220; Taiwan is 110
- ▶ Language:
 - Learn a few local words
- ▶ Attire
 - Dress formally – jacket and tie

Trade Show Planning

- ▶ Time and planning
- ▶ On announcement of a show or when details of regular show are made available
- ▶ Time before show: 6 to 12 months
- ▶ Time before show: 5 to 6 months
- ▶ Time before show: 4 to 5 months
- ▶ Time before show: 3 months
- ▶ Time before show: 2 to 3 months
- ▶ Time before show: 1 month
- ▶ Time before show: 2 weeks
- ▶ On arrival
- ▶ After end of show

Time: 6 to 12 months

- ▶ Determine show target audience / target information
- ▶ Research show
 - Who will be there: competitors, potential partners?
 - Update your database
 - Is the time right for your business?
 - Will it be cost-effective?
 - Who should attend: employees, local agents?
 - Identify best stand – space and cost
 - Right time and place to launch new products?
 - Marketing communications strategy
- ▶ Look for funding options
 - Is government / trade council funding available
 - Shared funding within the industry

Time: 4 to 5 months

- ▶ Marketing materials
 - Review and produce marketing materials
 - Press – target media and “messages”
 - Translate as necessary
 - Order promotional materials

- ▶ Start promoting attendance (attendees too!)
 - Put the event on your website
 - Start talking about it
 - Do not overdo the promotion, as people will forget
 - Communicate through existing sales channels

Time: 3 months

- ▶ Review Exhibitor Manual
 - If exhibiting, are you listed correctly?
 - Is your stated location correct on the map?
 - Where are your competitors located?
 - If attending, review who you need to see

- ▶ Prepare to travel / travel
 - Is your passport valid, with at least 6 months validity from time of arrival
 - Visas
 - Travel arrangements – flights, hotels, etc.
 - Vaccinations
 - Local SIM card – buy on arrival at airport

Time: 1 month

▶ Confirm

- Booth is as ordered
- Travel arrangements – flights and hotel
- Location of booth equipment
- Have you paid?
- Staff rota and roles

▶ Prepare to travel

- Travel insurance
- Prepare packing list
- Produce samples and brochures
- Plan to cover your absence, including emergency issues

Time: 2 weeks

- ▶ Check and double check
 - Arrangements at the show
 - Meetings scheduled
 - No changes in stand personnel

- ▶ Some final preparations
 - Clothes to dry cleaners
 - Check dress codes and prepare accordingly
 - Review cultural issues
 - Check weather
 - Pre-show briefing

Financial Implications – Budget

- ▶ Do you have the budget?
- ▶ Government incentives?
- ▶ Shared costs with other companies
- ▶ How much will the show cost?
 - Stand space
 - Show services
 - Electrical/Communications
 - Furnishings
 - Servicing (you must use their security, catering and cleaning)
 - Transportation
 - Freight
 - Handling and customs
 - Expenses – travel, accommodation and entertaining
 - Marketing and promotional materials

Booth planning

- ▶ Order booth and pay deposit
- ▶ Electrical
- ▶ Specialised lighting
- ▶ Carpet, furniture rental, coat racks
- ▶ Telephone line; internet connection
- ▶ Wastebaskets; booth cleaning
- ▶ Water cooler and catering
- ▶ Plants and other decorations
- ▶ Audiovisual equipment
- ▶ Stand security outside exhibition hours
- ▶ Processes (e.g., lead recording)

Take a box of “everything”

- ▶ Cater for the unpredictable
 - Pens and pencils; erasers; highlighters
 - Scotch (sticky) tape and masking tape
 - Post-it notes; rubber bands; paper clips
 - Electric plug cord and extension cords
 - Scissors and tiny stapler (plus staples)
 - Spare batteries
 - “All-in-one” tool kit
 - Generic company business cards
 - First Aid kit
 - Zip lock baggies

At the Trade Show

- ▶ Set up times
- ▶ Check everything the day before
- ▶ Activate local SIM card and confirm number
- ▶ Do not leave materials lying around
- ▶ Pre-arranged meetings
 - Confirm appointments
 - Confirm venue, if you have booked a private meeting room
- ▶ Double check the staff rota for the stand
 - Roles and responsibilities are understood
 - Allow for individual goals
 - Allow for agreed meetings

Participation

- ▶ Arrive at the trade show on time
 - To set up
 - Daily – yes, you are jet lagged!
 - Present a consistent image of your company
- ▶ Read the trade show directory
- ▶ Read industry publications, some circulated daily
- ▶ Attend all relevant seminars – book early
- ▶ Wear your registration badge at all times
- ▶ Do not eat or sleep at your booth

Strategic Marketing

- ▶ Trade shows are more than just shaking hands
 - a measurable return on investment is required
 - Leads = sales opportunities
- ▶ Establish goals
 - Decide on your main and supporting messages – your theme
 - Who do we need to meet and what for?
 - How can we firm up those meetings?
 - What do we need to learn?

Strategic Marketing

▶ Pre-show marketing

- Press releases
- E-mails
 - “*Visit us at Booth 123 at [Name of Show]*” “*See you at [Name of Show]*”
- Review your marketing collateral
- Press interaction
- Web site banners
- Communication briefs for sales channels

▶ Training

- Own staff
- Agents
- Interpreters

Strategic Marketing

- ▶ Show marketing
 - Marketing collateral
 - Hospitality suites
 - Pick those you can and want to attend
 - Remember to invite people in advance to yours or your happy hour party (competition for people's time is fierce)
 - Interactive media presentation

- ▶ Post show marketing
 - Lead follow-up
 - Post show letters to all visitors identifying a Company contact if they want further contact.

Communication

- ▶ Cards or software? Business cards tend to be kept by recipient
- ▶ Identify qualified prospects
- ▶ Identify ‘tire kickers’ – do not approach those just gathering ‘goodies’ but be polite
- ▶ Let them take their toys and move on
- ▶ Low value: “What do you do”
- ▶ High value: starts talking about needs
- ▶ Craft your messages to their specific business needs

Qualifying Opportunities

- ▶ Ask them about their business more than tell them about yours
- ▶ Who does your visitor represent?
- ▶ Are they in a position to make purchasing decisions?
- ▶ Attendees are there to find solutions
- ▶ What are their biggest problems?
- ▶ Why did the lead visit?
- ▶ How can you add value?
- ▶ What is the time frame?
- ▶ Do they have a budget?

Meetings

- ▶ Trade shows are a rare chance to get face-time with
 - Editors of online and print journals
 - Bloggers, especially if you want them to write about you
 - Existing customers
 - Potential customers
 - Vendors and other suppliers
 - Competition
 - Potential business partners
 - Industry experts and influencers

On your stand / Attending

- ▶ Check the common dress code in advance
- ▶ Be cautious and over dress
 - Jacket and tie can be taken off
- ▶ Wear comfortable, but smart, shoes
- ▶ Exhibitors – Stand; do not sit
- ▶ Exhibitors – Get into the aisles
 - Break out of your 10x10 prison!
 - But leave someone within the booth area

Communicate

- ▶ Movies are great!
 - A good, large monitor with an ongoing movie
 - PowerPoint is second best
- ▶ Sales people and agents are not enough
- ▶ Stand raffle
 - Objective – Acquire business cards!
- ▶ Build your own happy hour party
- ▶ Do not rely on trade show network
- ▶ Walk the show and talk to people

Communicate

- ▶ Take names instead of pushing brochures
- ▶ Have solid conversations
 - It is better to have a few solid conversations than just to hand out brochures
- ▶ Take an interest in people
- ▶ Engage serious prospects
- ▶ Disengage from weaker prospects – politely
- ▶ Have a good sales lead process that can record background information on the visitors scenario

End of Trade Shows – Review

- ▶ Staff and agent dinner
- ▶ Identify leanings – resolve for future shows
- ▶ Review with booth personnel what could be improved
- ▶ Did you have sufficient supplies?
- ▶ What products and services did not get sufficient exposure?
- ▶ Did booth location achieve footfall targets?
- ▶ Was the show the right place for the company to represent its products and services?

Lead Management – the Real Work Starts

- ▶ Effective and immediate follow-up
 - Respond to all requests for information first
- ▶ First person going home to take all leads and assign to relevant sales channels
- ▶ What follow up is required?
- ▶ Follow up as promised
- ▶ Allow leads to “recover” from the trip and get back into the swing at work
- ▶ Email and telephone call within two weeks
- ▶ Respond appropriately
- ▶ Track leads on a Company sales management system
- ▶ Do not allow leads to “fall by the wayside”!

After the show

- ▶ Post-Show Press Release
- ▶ Post-Show Review
 - What features did people ask about that you already have?
 - What features did people ask about that you do not have?
 - What part of any demo dragged too long?
 - What terminology made no sense?
 - What did people dislike about your competitors?
 - What did people like about your competitors?
 - What is the market saying?
 - What feedback did existing customers give – positive and negative?

Discussion

- ▶ Any Questions?
 - ▶ Discussion