Track 4: The Show

Exhibiting for the first time at a large, national trade show can be scary and a daunting task. The following will help you with what will happen at the show.

Travel

This section is designed to help the first time exhibitor plan for traveling to their first trade show without breaking the budget.

Making the Most of Your Travel Time

Since you have already made the commitment to travel and be away from your business, here are some suggestions to make the most your time:

- Attend educational sessions: some are free, and some money. Most shows will have the educational session options listed on their website.
- Network with other exhibitors: This is your opportunity to network with other new and established businesses to compare notes. You could also attend the industry events held at the show, such as exhibitor receptions, etc.

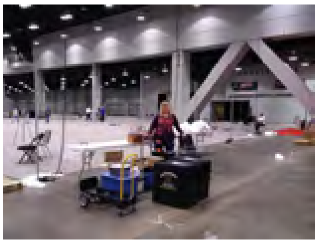
- Walk around the show: View the exhibitor list in the show's directory and determine if there are any competitors, potential suppliers, potential buyers or distributors, industry organizations, etc. in which you might be interested. Map out their location and take a 15-minute break twice a day to visit them at the show.

- Gather competitive intelligence: While you're walking around the show, view competitors' products, booths, and marketing materials to see how yours compare.

- Schedule meetings at the show: Contact your buyers near the show's city and have them meet you at the show to increase the product lines they carry, increase orders, etc.

- Visit your local retailer and distributor accounts: If you have any accounts near the show's city, take the time to go visit them to see how your product is merchandised, maybe even schedule samplings, etc. Increase your sales and retailer/distributor goodwill with one gesture.

- Allow enough time the evening after the show: Make sure your travel plans at the end of the show give you enough time to receive your empties and pack



- Schedule time to stay for a few days after the show: This gives you the chance to follow-up in-person with any potential local accounts you met during the show.

Tips for a Tighter Travel Budget

With a bit of frugality, some inventive alternatives, and a few nifty tactics, you can maximize your travel budget without maxing out your corporate credit card in the process.

Consider Alternative Lodging

The show's official hotel shouldn't always be your go-to option. Investigate alternatives such as boutique hotels, bed and breakfasts, vacation-home rentals, corporate apartments/condos, etc. In doing so, consider dining availability and pricing along with travel expenses to and from such alternatives to make an apples-to-apples comparison against traditional lodging. It's pointless to book a slightly cheaper hotel if you end up paying more in the long run due to taxi fees to and from the venue each day, especially considering that show management often provides complimentary shuttles to and from the venue from official host hotels. Be on the lookout for hotel specials as well, since booking your rooms directly through the hotel, rather than going through the show's room block, can sometimes get you better rates or negotiated discounts. By shopping around a bit, you might even find hotels at which some serious perks are already included in the nightly rate. Complimentary breakfast, airport shuttle service, and free access to the fitness and business centers can eliminate a bevy of budgetary blips and add up to a sizeable savings in the end.

http://www.exhibitoronline.com/topics/article.asp?ID=1278#.UdLyCdhinA0

Beat Back Baggage Fees

If you know in advance that staffers will be carting bulky or heavy items such as printed handouts for a conference session they're presenting, copies of catalogs, etc. an option is to consider packing and shipping those materials with your exhibit, as it's likely going to be far less expensive in the long run.

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Try to Avoid Taxis

The most expensive trips are likely to be the ones to and from the airport, assuming your hotel doesn't offer complimentary shuttle service.

So call the hotel and inquire about how much you can expect to pay per fare, then compare that to alternative options. Also, if your hotel doesn't have its own airport shuttle, it may have a negotiated rate with a local shuttle firm. And keep in mind that while convenient, cabs aren't the only way to get from point A to point B.

In many cities, shared shuttles are available for a fraction of the cost you'd pay in cab fare. In Los Angeles, for example, it costs approximately $50 to get from the airport to the Los Angeles Convention Center, not including tip. But if you book a shared shuttle service, you'll only pay $15 per person.

Another option is, of course, rental cars. Renting a car is a particularly cost-effective solution if you're planning to make several trips outside of the standard travel trifecta of the airport, hotel, and convention center. For instance, if you'll be making trips to purchase supplies, visit a local graphics shop to print signage, and dine at off-site eateries, renting might make a lot of monetary sense.

http://www.exhibitoronline.com/topics/article.asp?ID=1278#.UdLyCdhinA0

Talking to Buyers

For first-timers, the thought of talking to buyers at a trade show can be overwhelming and scary. Below are some tips to help.

Note that at no time in this section do we encourage you to start your product presentation. That's because when talking to buyers at a trade show, we suggest you work your product into a conversation about the buyers' needs. It's better that your product is part of a solution for the buyer, rather than making your buyer listen to a canned presentation.

Greeting Buyers

First impressions, even at trade shows, are critical and lasting. You don't want a visitors' first impression of an exhibit staff to be one of indifference or rudeness.

Pulling Buyers Into Your Booth

So should visitors be greeted in the public aisles around your booth? If so, how should it be done? And how soon should a visitor be greeted when they enter a booth? Every visitor to your booth should have a positive experience and it starts with the greeting.

Remember that the aisles are public domain, so don't chase buyers down in the aisles or holler at them from your booth. If they slow down or stop as they're looking at your booth, make eye contact, offer a welcoming gesture, introduce yourself, shake hands, and be ready with an opening question. Don't look at their badge yet. You're spending a minute with them to make a good first impression, then you can start qualifying them. Ask them: what do they know about your company and products, or ask what about your booth or product made them slow down or stop. Get a conversation going.

http://www.hillgroup.com/podcasts/Greeting.mp3

Reading Body Language

An important aspect of sales and boothmanship is body language.

Yours

Your body language can make the difference whether or not a buyer stops at your booth.

Video: How to Look Unapproachable at a Trade Show:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jK658HBZAi8

Video: Importance of Non-Verbal Communication

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AhCIMx71f-4

Theirs

When someone approaches your trade show booth, can you tell what they are thinking? As a trade show exhibitor, your observation skills are critical to determining high-quality sales prospects. Knowing how to read and interpret body language will help you identify prospective visitors, and avoid the time-wasters.

Body, head and facial gestures all send signals, and are powerful indicators of how you may approach and engage prospective clients. Consider the following telltale gestures:

Body posture:

- Leaning back with closed arms means not interested
- Leaning back with open arms signals contemplation and careful interest
- Leaning forward with closed arms is potentially aggressive
- Leaning forward with open arms displays interest and concurrence

Head position:

- Neutral position is an open attitude
- Tilted down can be disapproving and judgmental
- Tilted back is a sign of a superior attitude
- Tilted to one side signals interest

Facial gestures:

- Rubbing eyes is deceitful and secretive
- Rolling eyes denotes a dismissive and superior attitude
- Peering over glasses suggests scrutiny and a critical manner
- Hands or fingers blocking mouth can signal deceit
- Stroking the chin means contemplation and assessment
- Rubbing the nose suggests a dislike of the subject
- Direct eye contact is a sign of real interest. Visitors who avoid eye contact are disinterested, uncomfortable or distracted. Waylaying these visitors will likely only upset them. Watch for visitors who are fidgeting with their hands or objects – restlessness is a sign of boredom and your booth staff will benefit from pausing to see what the visitor is really thinking. Ask some open-ended questions to help engage these prospects. Palm rubbing, on the other hand, is definitely a positive sign of eagerness and anticipation, and it is incumbent upon your staff to maintain the momentum. Perhaps this visitor was the recipient of your pre-show marketing efforts, and is already keenly interested in your company.

Look for other body language clues, and act accordingly. Shy visitors need time to approach you, and will venture forward on their own terms. Show them patience. A visitor who touches their face or rubs their chin is mentally evaluating your company. Avoid engaging in further conversation, and wait for the prospect to take the next step. It is also important to watch for rapid shifts in body language, and respond accordingly. Sudden gestures are usually an indication of increasing or declining interest levels. You may simply need to slow down, confirm that you are addressing that prospect's needs, and then take the conversation to the next level.

Your booth staff can create harmony by imitating the body language of visitors. This psychological principle of "matching and mirroring" operates under the belief that people wish to conduct business with salespeople they feel are similar to them. Matching and mirroring your prospect's body language is a subconscious way to tell the visitor you like them and agree with them. After you think you've developed trust and rapport with a visitor, try verifying this by crossing/uncrossing your arms and see if your prospect mimics your gesture. If they shift and match your posture, you have likely developed a rapport with that visitor. If there is a mismatch, you need to continue building a relationship.

http://www.smarttradeshows.com/articles/body_language.htm

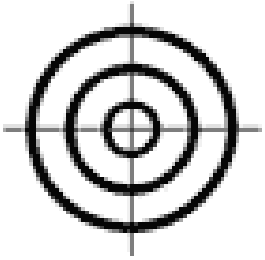
The Show

Qualifying & Organizing

In order to make the most of your time at a trade show, it's important that you know how to qualify your buyers, turn them into leads, and organize those leads for follow-up after the show.

Know your target

Know in advance of the show the type of buyer for which you're looking: e.g. small chain in the Northwest, serviced by XYZ Distributing, etc. This will help you to target the appropriate buyers and turn away those who are not a good fit for your company. Ask yourself, if Giant Superstore buyer wanted to order 10,000 units per month for 6 of their distribution centers, would you be ready? Would that be a good account for you?



Start qualifying

After you've gotten the buyer in your booth and developed a rapport, start qualifying them. Within the first 5 minutes of talking to the buyer, ask questions of them to determine if they are ready and willing to buy from you. Be sure this doesn't come off as an interrogation; weave these questions in the normal course of the conversation.

Do they have a need for your product? This might sound obvious, but there are some people at trade shows who are just nice people looking for conversation.

Do they have some role in the decision-making process in their company? Sometimes spouses or friends of buyers walk the show, grazing, and they're not likely worth spending time on.

Do they have budget or funding to buy from you? If there is no money, they can't buy!

Do they have a reasonable buying time-frame (typically less than 1 year)? Don't spend time with buyers who won't be ready to buy in a short time after the show.

Will they allow you to follow-up with them? If the buyer has a "don't call me; I'll call you" attitude, they're not likely interested.

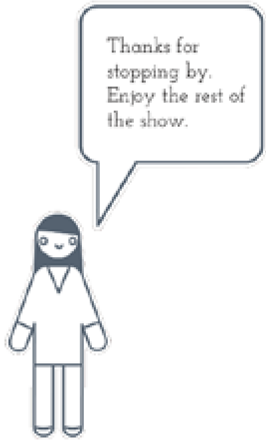
http://www.hillgroup.com/podcasts/Key_Qualifiers.mp3 and http://www.hillgroup.com/podcasts/Qualifying_Questions.mp3

Dismissing

At this point, you should know whether or not to continue the conversation with this buyer, moving towards a buying decision. For those buyers who aren't right for your product, or for those booth visitors who are not buyers and just taking up your time, you must learn how to dismiss them. Dismissing should always be done politely and professionally.

You should be able to dismiss visitors when:

- Your conversation, with even the biggest sales prospect of the entire show, is at an end;
- When you've been talking with an old friend, another exhibitor or some other lower-value visitor and now you need to engage, greet and qualify a potentially higher-value visitor; and
- If the visitor is a pure time-waster – they're keeping you from working with qualified visitors.



It's as simple as shaking their hand and saying, "Thanks for coming by. Enjoy the rest of the show."

http://www.hillgroup.com/podcasts/Dismissing.mp3

Show Specials

A good way to get buyers to close the deal at the show, rather than waiting for follow-up weeks or months later, is to offer show specials with time limits. Here are some examples of show specials:

1. **Free shipping for the first order [1 case minimum] made at or within 30 days of the show.**
2. **10% off your first order [1 case minimum] made at or within 30 days of the show.**
3. **Free display or merchandising case with first order [1 case minimum] made at or within 30 days of the show.**

Buyers Term Sheet

Be sure to give your qualified buyers a "Buyers Term Sheet" which covers all of the terms of your relationship. This helps to alleviate future confusion over expectations. On the next two pages is an example term sheet for your reference.

XYZ CO. WHOLESALE BUYERS TERM SHEET

CONTACT US:

Monday-Friday, 8am to 5pm (MST)
Toll Free XXX-XXX-XXXX
Office XXX-XXX-XXXX
Fax XXX-XXX-XXXX
Email: email@website.com
Website: website.com

MINIMUM ORDER:

$75.00 - When placing wholesale orders, please provide your TAX ID #/Business Resale Number. Orders cannot be filled until we receive this information. Thank you for your cooperation.

PAYMENT:

We accept Checks, Visa, Mastercard, and Discover. Payment must be received in full prior to shipping.

SHIPPING:

Most orders are shipped within two days of receipt. For custom and bulk orders, please allow up to two weeks for production and shipping. We ship via USPS and UPS depending on the order size. Ground service will be used unless specified otherwise with additional charges being the responsibility of the customer.

Shipping is free for Montana customers with a minimum order of a $100.00.

PRICES:

Wholesalers are eligible for pricing from our wholesale pricing rate sheet.

EXCHANGES & RETURNS:

We hope you are satisfied with every XYZ Co. purchase you make. We believe strongly in our products and their quality. If you are not pleased with your purchase, you may seek a return or a replacement.

Return Address: XYZ Co., 1234 Address, City, MT 12345

For your protection and to ensure prompt delivery, we recommend that you send your return via USPS Priority Mail. We're sorry, return shipping fees are not reimbursable.

Please include the following information with your return - indicate whether you want a refund (only if original receipt is included and the product was purchased within the last 60 days) or replacement, the reason for the return, a description of the item you are returning, and its price. No returns for items three months before expiration date.

Your return will be processed promptly upon its arrival and all exchanges will be shipped via USPS Priority Mail or UPS ground shipping. Processing and transit time for exchange packages is usually 7-10 business days from the time your exchange request is received at our location. Business days are Monday-Friday, excluding federal holidays within the United States.

Damaged Items or Our Error - When your order arrives, please inspect the package for any damage that may have occurred during shipment. It is normal for the box to show some wear, however, if damage occurred to the item(s) in your shipment or the order is incorrect, please contact us immediately at our Consumer Care hotline. Our Consumer Care hotline and email is available Monday - Friday 9 AM – 5 pm MST, Toll Free XXX-XXX-XXXX, or email us any time at email@website.com.

Please provide the order number along with your email address and phone number for fastest service. To assure prompt resolution, please retain the shipping box, packing materials and the damaged items for inspection by the carrier. Regardless, we'll promptly schedule return arrangements with you.

We do not give refunds, credits, or exchanges for our website's Featured Specials, Outlet items, discontinued items, or items purchased through unauthorized resellers or online auctions. Prepackaged gifts and kits are assembled individually and may vary slightly. XYZ Co. reserves the right to substitute a product of equal value and nature if the original product becomes unavailable. XYZ Co. reserves the right to refuse returns for an unreasonable quantity of items or items that may not have been purchased within the last year.

Categorize your buyers

In order to know how to follow up with your buyers after the show, you must categorize them as you gather the leads.

Determine your criteria

There are countless criteria you might consider to rank your leads as A, B, and C leads (or whatever names, or number of categories, you choose). However, one successful strategy is to use explicit data that you gather as part of your qualification process along with anecdotal key words. The combo typically provides you with the data you need to prioritize your calls and have something relevant to say during the interaction.

Explicit data includes hard-core facts you can discover via attendees' badges and/or conversations with them. This can include everything from their geographic location and purchasing authority to their budget and timeframe.

You can also note key words used by attendees during their conversations. For example, you could qualify A leads as those that express an immediate or critical need for the current year or quarter, along with those that are in the RFP or procurement process. Your B leads might use terms such as analysis, competitive review, updating, and transitioning to describe their purchasing plans for the next year or the next quarter. And C leads may indicate they're in the information-gathering stage and they're looking to see what's new.

Determine your system

Once you've established criteria to qualify leads, you need a system flexible enough to capture both the anecdotal and explicit data, and one that will assist you in lead follow-up and tracking. There are an infinite variety of systems available to manage this information. Some are low tech and require only a piece of paper, a pen, and people to manage the data.

Sample Lead Card

Show: ________ Date: ________
Prospect name: ________
Title: ________
Company: ________
Address: ________
City: ________ State: ________ Zip: ________
Problems to solve/Needs that exist: ________
Product and/or service presently using: ________
Products and/or services of interest: ☐Product A ☐Product B ☐Product C
Quantity considering: ________
Level of interest: ☐ excellent ☐ good ☐ fair ☐ poor ☐ hard to assess
Decision-making influence/process: ☐sole decision-maker ☐ group decision ☐ committee influencer ☐ none ☐ Other: ________
Purchasing time-frame: ☐ immediate ☐ 1 month ☐ 3 months ☐ 6 months ☐ other: ________
Extra observations/comments: ________
Booth representative: ________

Most show organizers make high-tech lead management systems available to their exhibitors. At registration, attendees receive a card embedded with their data collected during the registration process (including name, company, address, telephone, fax, e-mail and some demographic data). Exhibitors then rent a device that reads the cards and collects the information.

(e.g. CompuLead: http://www.compusystems.com/lead-management.php)

The key is to determine the type of lead-management system that's compatible with your company, both technologically and culturally. For example, if you don't typically work with tablets, don't force yourself to use them for lead gathering. Opt instead for more low-tech methods, such as a paper lead form or a simple badge scanner. However, if your company offers high-tech products with a cutting-edge brand aesthetic, a pad of lead forms and a No. 2 pencil isn't likely the best option.

B and C Nurturing

With sound criteria and a lead-management system in place, you can easily follow up with them immediately following the show. The question then becomes: What do you do with the B and C leads collected in your booth?

Simply put, you don't discard them. You establish ongoing communication and provide information that's relevant to their needs. And at the very least, you invite them back to the booth again the next year so you can requalify them and hopefully move them from the B and C stacks to the A team, assuming their needs, budgets, or purchasing timeframes have changed.

At the Show

You can easily get lost and confused in the hustling and bustling crowd at a large, national trade show. Here are some tips to make your show experience better.

Setup Day

Make sure that you observe the exhibitor setup date and times. If possible, plan to arrive in the show's city the day before setup begins in order to run your errands (e.g. shopping for booth supplies, etc.) or to allow for possible travel delays.

Rookie tip

Bring a pair of scissors or a box cutter with you to the show. Otherwise, you won't be able to get the shrink wrap off to get to the box cutter that you carefully packed without thinking about how you were going to get to it. It's a classic rookie mistake about which your neighbors will secretly laugh while they hand you their scissors from their briefcase or purse.

Check in

Arrive at the show on setup day at the beginning of setup hours. This gives you plenty of time to deal with any potential issues that may arise during setup.

Upon arrival at the show, check in:

1. **At Exhibitor Registration.** You should have pre-registered your booth staff for badges. Bring that paperwork to the Exhibitor Registration area to collect your badge to gain access to the show floor. Make sure to have business identification with you, such as your business card, just in case it is required for picking up your badge. NOTE: Keep this badge with you at all times. You will not be granted access to the show floor without it, and you could get removed from the show floor if you walk around without it (e.g. during a quick trip to the bathroom).

2. **At your booth.** Make sure the items you ordered, such as tables, chairs, signage, carpet, electrical, etc. have arrived. If not, see the "Murphy's Law" section.

3. **With your freight.** If your freight is not already in your booth, check in with the General Service Contractor's show floor manager to make sure it has arrived and is ready for delivery to your booth. The manager may also be able to give you an estimate as to what time your freight may arrive in your booth. See the "Murphy's Law" section for advice if your freight is lost.

Temperatures

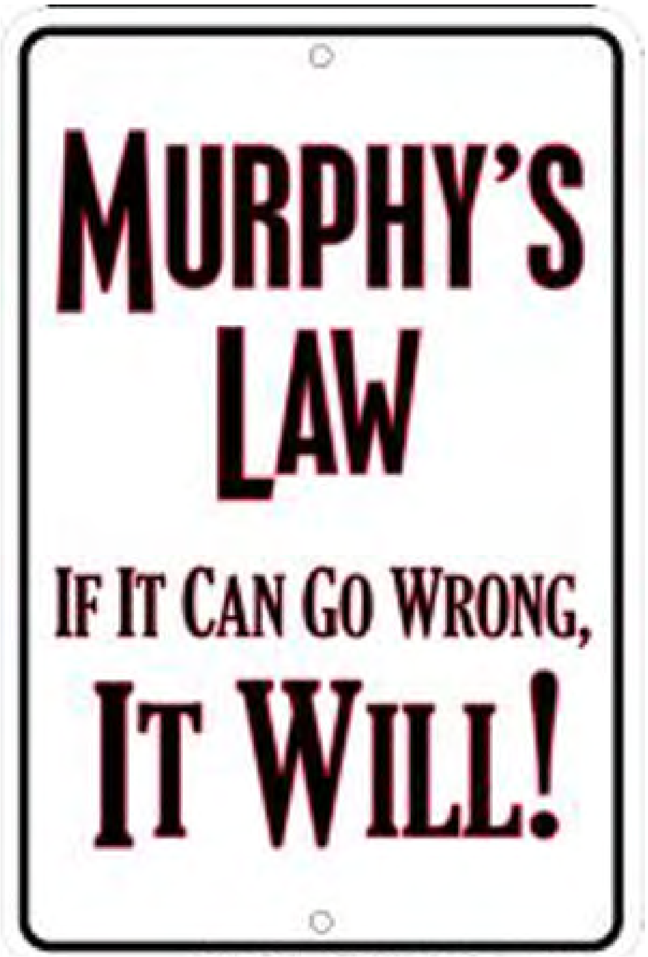
The temperature inside the exhibit hall during move-in could be very cold or hot depending on outside weather conditions. As much as we try to control the temperature, with the freight area open, it becomes a difficult task. Please check the weather conditions prior to your arrival and pack appropriately. During show days and hours, the temperature will be kept at a comfortable level.

On-site floor managers

Floor managers, your primary resource on-site, are assigned portions of the hall to assist exhibitors in their sections with anything.

Murphy's Law

As Murphy's Law suggests, if it can go wrong, it will. This is true for trade shows, too, but a well-organized trade show manager can plan ahead for any type of issue.



Keep a Paper Trail

Keep copies of all contracts, payment confirmations, orders, and change orders and bring them with you to the show. This paperwork can be a lifesaver on show site when things aren't happening according to your order. You can also use it to audit your invoices and catch erroneous charges, which happen more often than you may expect. In addition to paperwork, always have contact numbers or e-mail addresses where you can reach your vendors at all hours with you on site, since it seems like show-related problems arise at the most inopportune time.

http://www.exhibitoronline.com/topics/article.asp?ID=828&catID=31#.UdMpq9hinA0

Lost Freight

Lost freight is one of the most common trade show disasters. Lost freight is a case where Murphy's Law almost always comes into play: Freight seems to disappear after normal working hours, on a weekend, or right before the show. So always get after-hours phone numbers for your shipping agent, your carrier's dispatch, and, if possible, your driver. Also make sure you know the tracking number for your shipment, so you can help your freight carrier find it quickly.

On site, check with the service desk and the freight supervisor for your area of the hall to find out if your freight has been delivered. If it has been delivered and you still don't have it, enlist the help of a floor manager, who can help you locate freight that was accidentally delivered to the wrong booth space.

Plan special procedures for shipping irreplaceable items, even if it means hand carrying them to the show and shipping your clothes.

Review your insurance coverage (including under what circumstances your exhibit materials are covered, the deductibles, co-pays, and limits of coverage for your policy), and insure your property adequately. Also ask your insurance rep what documentation you need in the event of a claim so you know what information you'd need to be compensated in the event you would need to file a claim.

http://www.exhibitoronline.com/topics/article.asp?ID=373&catID=91#.UdM05thinA0

Here are some suggested steps for tracking down freight lost on the trade show floor:

http://www.exhibitoronline.com/topics/article.asp?ID=362&catID=91#.UdNDENhinA0

Damaged Graphics

Skewered, chipped, bent, or even lost graphics have been the source of numerous panic attacks on the show floor. Luckily, technological advances are making it easier to reproduce ruined graphics (or at least create passable replacements) on the fly.

Always have your graphics designer put all show graphics on a CD that you have in your possession at the show in case you need to reproduce or change them on site.

Know who in a show city can produce last-minute graphics, such as the show's general services contractor or a 24-hour printer such as Kinko's. Consider making a list of such places for each city you regularly exhibit in - or ask your graphics supplier to compile a list for you.

Spend the extra money on sturdy shipping cases made of durable plastic or wood, and use lots of bubble wrap or packing peanuts to protect your booth graphics and signage.

http://www.exhibitoronline.com/topics/article.asp?ID=373&catID=91#.UdM05thinA0

No Booth

Let's face it, things happen. Perhaps your booth did not arrive on time or it arrived so severely damaged that you can't use it. If there isn't enough time or funds to rent a whole new set up, there is no need to stress out.

Check out these back-up plans. For small size booths (20×20 or less), have fun with it and just state the obvious!

- Create a sign on your computer and take it to the nearest fast turn-around sign shop. You could say something like… "Please excuse the lack of decoration and display. However, WE ARE HERE FOR YOU!" "Booth didn't make it but WE did! Please come in."
- Of course, you may need to rent a counter or two and some stools. You can easily order from the show's general contractor.
- Be sure to request the standard 77" wide company name sign that comes with each booth if you can't afford larger company logo signage.

No Graphics

Your graphics show up not quite how you envisioned. They arrive damaged or in the wrong size, wrong color, wrong wording or with the wrong images.

First and foremost, ALWAYS carry a soft copy of your graphics. Keep the copy separate from your shipment as well as your computer. Having a portable drive of all your graphics, allows you to work with the show's general contractor or a local fast turn-around sign shop to create all new graphics. While, you may have to adjust sizes and materials, it's better than nothing.

http://www.parallelic.com/murphys-law/

Commercial Liability Insurance

It is common for show management to ask exhibitors to have a commercial liability policy in place to cover bodily injury or property damage when the insured is legally responsible. But some show managers have figured out that mandating the purchase of a stand-alone corporate liability insurance policy (through a broker with whom they have a relationship) is a revenue generator for the show. The booth-space contract's terms and conditions can mandate that an exhibitor purchase insurance in an amount (and from a vendor) designated by show management.

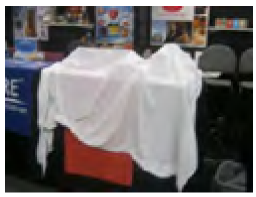
There may be requirements for policies between $1 million and $2.5 million that must name the association or organization running the show, the show manager, the show manager's parent company, the GSC, and the show venue as additional insured parties.

http://www.exhibitoronline.com/topics/article.asp?ID=841&catID=91#.UdNE_9hinA0

Security

Is there security provided for my booth? From the first day of move-in through the last day of move-out, there is 24-hour perimeter badge-checkers for the exhibit floor. This level of security is intended to control the access of people and material to and from the exhibit halls in a safe and organized manner. It is not intended as individual security for your booth and materials. Please remember that the Convention Center is a public building to which hundreds of individuals have access – let alone the number of individuals involved in the shipping of your materials to and from the exhibition, setting up and tearing down displays.

Therefore, it is critical that exhibitors work closely with Exhibition Management in making every effort to safeguard their investment in the exhibition. Be security conscious at all times during your stay. Do not leave items of value in your booth overnight during the installation period or exhibition days without taking security precautions. Exhibitors can order overnight booth security from the security vendor. Remember that the security of your product is your responsibility – don't take chances!



To discourage looting after show hours, consider covering your table with a sheet. This is only a deterrent, so please do not leave items of value in your booth overnight.

Keep your valuables (laptops, briefcases, purses) with you at all times during the show, including tear-down. Do not leave personal items unattended in your booth.

Show Days

The following are tips from trade show veterans for the days of the show.

Clothing

Most trade shows take place in climate-controlled buildings, so weather-appropriate clothing may not be necessary. The clothing you wear for the show should be consistent with your company image while still providing comfort for standing for long periods of time and walking long distances in the exhibit halls. If appropriate to your company's image, consider having clothing made that promotes your company, such as a t-shirt with your logo on the front and back, so that as you walk around the show floor, you're continuing to promote your products.

It may be useful, too, to have extra clothing just in case of spills or other accidents.

Literature & Giveaways

The tendency for first time trade show exhibitors is to err on the side of more is better. Offering buyers expensive catalogs, wordy brochures, and fancy give-aways is the way the big guys do it, right? Maybe so, but their marketing budgets probably are not as tight as yours. Truth be told, genuine, qualified buyers do not need loads of materials to take home, nor do they need fancy tokens by which to remember your company. Here are some tips for literature and giveaways that should help minimize your show marketing budget.

Guidelines for Sales Literature

- Realize that literature doesn't sell — people do!
- Limit literature to qualified prospects.
- Use literature to enhance a conversation.
- Appreciate that just handing out literature is a barrier to conversation with the prospect.
- Avoid handing out expensive literature. Integrate your company's entire message in one low-cost, targeted brochure or a one-page flyer. Then hand deliver or ship out the more expensive, targeted materials/samples, CDs, etc. no later than seven days after the show.
- Know that 64% of literature handed out at shows is thrown away.

Consider the following cost-saving options:

- Eliminate literature. Paper is heavy, and lugging it to the show and your booth is expensive. One exhibitor suggests, "cut your shipping and drayage costs by putting your literature on a branded USB drive."
- Limit literature. If you can't eliminate it altogether, at least decrease the volume you use. The scarcity of your literature increases value so you make sure the literature gets into the right hands. Take the quantity you expect to use and cut it in half! http://www.exhibitoronline.com/topics/article.asp?ID=641&catID=22#.UdM75NhinA0

Guidelines for Give-aways

- Get some qualifying information from the visitor before handing over a gift.
- Have the visitor do something in exchange for a gift.
- Use the gift as a "thank you" token for stopping.
- Avoid leaving gifts out for just any passerby — it lowers the perceived value of the gift.
- Be sure that the give-away complements your business (e.g. don't give away pens from China if one of your products' selling points is that they are made in the USA).

http://www.exhibitoradvantage.com/ft_handbook.asp

Video: How to Use Trade Show Giveaways

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6KmRqMjqZBo .

Press Kits

Use press kits to get hard news about your company and products to the media. Most shows offer a pressroom on-site. Contact your show's marketing department to confirm. Bring enough kits for the pressroom and your booth.

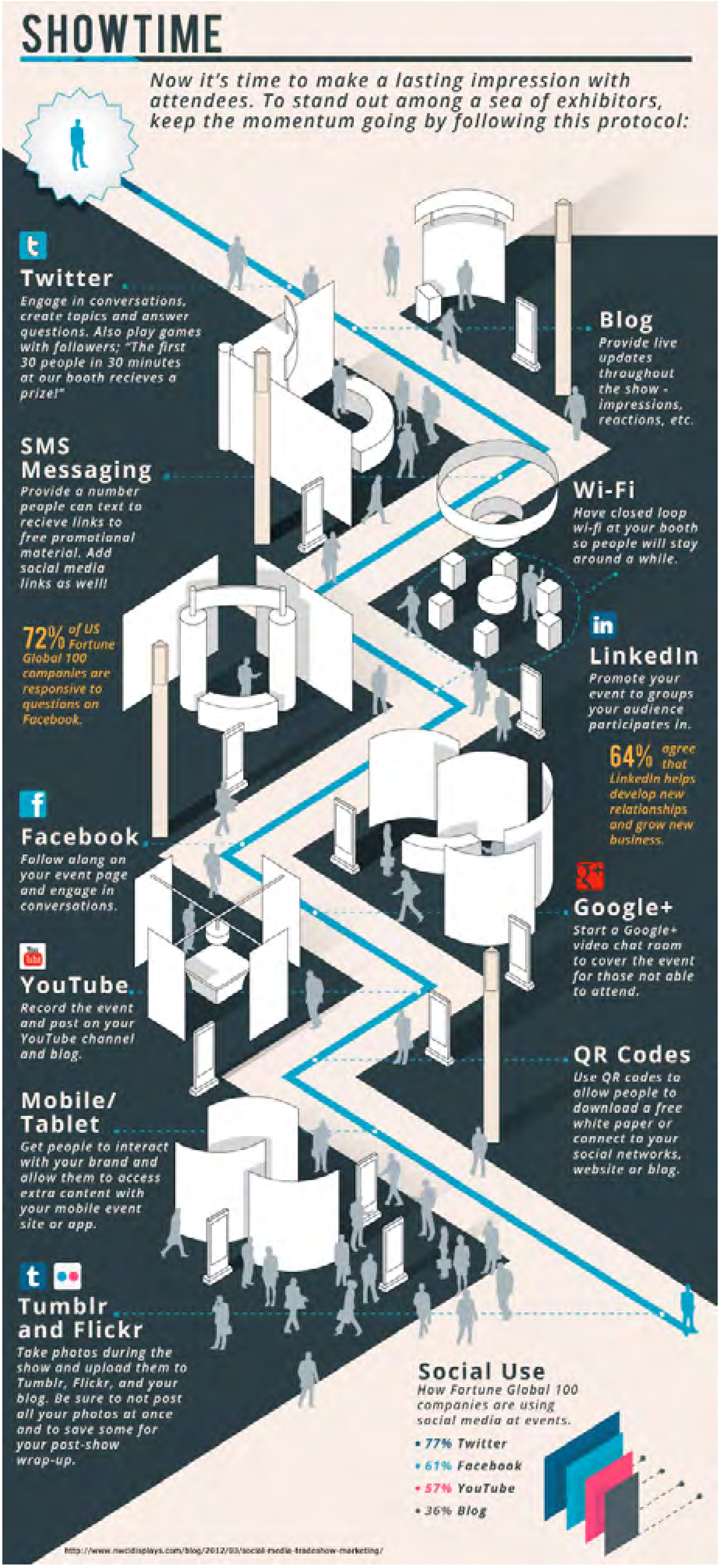
The kits should include:

- Press releases
- Photos with captions
- Your company logo
- Supporting literature
- A technical specifications list
- A business card or contact information

http://www.exhibitoradvantage.com/ft_handbook.asp

Using Social Media at the Show

Review this graphic for ideas using social media at the show.



Sampling

If you are sampling food products at the show, or if you are providing food items as giveaways, here are some common requirements:

Cooking

If you're cooking samples for customers, most trade shows require that your cooking surface be kept out of reach of the public, in order to prevent burns and contamination. This means you might have to make room for a prep table at the back of your booth.

Most shows won't allow open flame, so you must figure out another way to cook your product. Whatever method you choose, it is still a good idea to have a fire extinguisher within reach.

You'll also need a system for holding the food at the safe temperature for consumption. If your product needs to stay hot, rent a warmer system; if your product needs to stay cold, plan to keep it on ice or in a refrigerator, etc. Cold foods must be kept at or below 41° F refrigerated [or on ice]. Hot foods must be maintained above 135° F.

Serving

Food may not be served from a "common bowl" unless tongs are used to distribute the food. We suggest compostable single-serve cups, toothpicks and single napkins.

You must provide protection of open food sampling [i.e. unpackaged crackers, chips, dips, drinks, etc.]. All unpackaged foods on display must be protected with a sneeze guard shield or plastic covering that is rigid, semi-permanent, and provides adequate protection.

All food samples should display a label with its common name and ingredients.

Sanitation

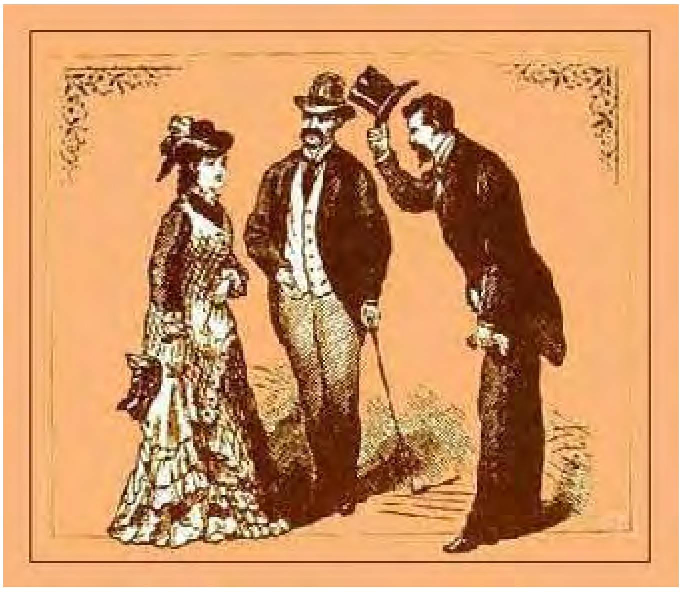
Even if gloves are used, a hand-washing kit is still required. The sole use of a waterless hand sanitizer may not comply with health department regulations.

The Health Department may ask you to cease sampling operation at your booth if you do not meet their requirements.

To clean utensils, use the provided clean-up area, not the bathroom.

Booth Etiquette

Often, in their zeal to entice customers, or out of ignorance, first timers breach booth etiquette. Most of the time, exhibitor rules outlined in the exhibitor services manual will help you follow proper etiquette. Additionally, if you follow the Golden Rule, you should be fine.



However, just in case, here are some tips for you to consider.

- During setup. Make sure that your booth materials are not impeding walking and delivery traffic, your booth items are secure and not falling into adjacent booths, and you are limiting your working space to your own booth. Additionally, make sure you show up on time to setup; if you're still setting up when the show starts, it can make your neighbor's booths less attractive to buyers (not to mention yours!).
- During the show. Show up during show days on time. Do not stand in the aisles trying to attract or pull in customers. Keep your person and exhibit within your booth space. You should wait until a buyer crosses into the plane of your booth and

shows interest in your booth. Do not engage and distract buyers from neighboring exhibitors. Don't go out on the show floor during slow times and "go shopping" for free stuff or lunch. Other exhibitors will not appreciate it when they see on your badge that you're not a buyer while you're standing there eating their samples meant for buyers.

- After the show. Do not begin dismantling your display or packing your product until the show officially ends. This is unfair to your neighbors and the buyers who are still at the show; sales are still made the last hour of a show. Also, as you're leaving the show floor, don't give in to the temptation to loot from other exhibitors who have left product unsecured as they are packing up.

At the end of the show

The end of the show begins a frenzy of thousands of exhausted people who want nothing more than to get out of there as quickly as possible. Throw in a few forklifts zooming around, and you have quite the chaos! Here are some tips for safely navigating the end.

Review invoices

Your service invoice(s) will be delivered to your booth at some point before the show closes. Review all your invoices at the show, checking to make sure your inbound weight was correct and that you weren't charged for any equipment, services, or supplies you didn't order or receive. Questions are always easier to resolve while people are still there and memories are fresh. If there are issues, talk to the General Services Contractor representatives.

Packing & Shipping

1. **Cull.** First, decide what is worth getting packed up and shipped home. Are your 100 copies of show-specific sales materials worth their weight in shipping? If it's not worth shipping home, then leave it on your table top as fodder for the looters or as garbage or recycling. If you can carry it out of the show in your arms in one trip, then you could consider bringing it home in your luggage or shipping it home via UPS or FedEx from your hotel. Don't forget to empty the product out of your additional exhibit space (e.g. New Products Showcase, etc.).

2. **Pack.** Whatever is worth shipping home should be boxed up and placed on your pallet. (Let's hope that you were able to store your pallet and empties in your booth, or else you'll have to sit and wait for those to be delivered to your booth. Let's hope you brought some comfortable shoes and snacks, because it could be a while.) Make sure the boxes are sturdy and don't protrude from the edges of the pallet. Be sure, as you're packing up, that you keep your body and items within your booth space, in order to stay out of harm's way as other exhibitors and forklifts zoom by.

3. **Label.** Keep aside the pre-printed shipping labels that you brought from home or received from your freight carrier or that you procured from exhibitor services to use their freight carrier (sometimes referred to as "pre-printed outbound material handling"). NOTE: For first-timers, it may be worth paying a little bit more to hire the show's freight carrier to get your shipment home, saving you the time and confusion of working out the logistics on your own.

4. **Wrap.** Shrink wrap the entire shipment, being sure also to secure the shrink wrap to the pallet. Watch this video to see how it's done: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mRZtdzPDnF8. The demonstrator makes it look easier than it is, but you'll get better with practice. Affix your shipping labels, one on each side. If you're worried about the labels falling off, wrap one more layer of shrink wrap around to secure them in place, making sure that the shipping information is still viewable through the shrink wrap.

Turning In

Once you're all packed up and ready to go, you are ready to hurry up and wait at the exhibitor services area. This could take 15 minutes to an hour, depending upon your timing and the length of the line ahead of you.

1. **First, return your lead retrieval machine (e.g.** CompuLead), if you got one for the show. Don't forget to retrieve the memory stick or electronic leads before you surrender the machine! Also, be sure to get a receipt indicating your return of the equipment, just in case.
2. **Next, get in line at the exhibitor services desk in order to turn in your outbound material handling form.** (See the example on the next page.) This form let's the show contractors know what and how you're shipping items home. DO NOT neglect to turn this form in; if you do, they can "force" your freight home at a very expensive rate.

Transportation

Plan ahead for how you will return to your hotel after the show ends. Typically, everyone exits the show at the same time, creating traffic jams if you're driving your own vehicle, overloads on public transportation, even lines to cross the street! Consider parking a few blocks away from the trade show on your last day, or maybe walking a few blocks and having dinner before you try to get your car out or catch the bus. Some hotels do offer free shuttles from the show, and those lines might be a bit long, but they might be worth the wait. In any case, plan ahead, and prepare for waiting.

After the Show

What you do after the show is just as important as all of the careful planning and execution you did before and at the show.

FREEMAN
13101 Almeda Rd.
Houston, Texas 77045
Ph: 713-433-2400 • Fax: 713-433-9441
FreemanHoustonES@freemanco.com

OUTBOUND MATERIAL HANDLING AND SHIPPING LABELS

Offshore Technology Conference
Reliant Park • Houston, Texas, USA
4–7 May 2009

NAME OF SHOW: ______________________________

COMPANY NAME ______________________________ BOOTH #: ______________

CONTACT NAME: ______________________________ PHONE #: ______________

E-MAIL ADDRESS ______________________________

For Assistance, please call 713-433-2400 to speak with one of our experts.

For fast, easy ordering, go to www.myfreemanonline.com

EVERY OUTBOUND SHIPMENT WILL REQUIRE A MATERIAL HANDLING AGREEMENT AND LABELS. WE WOULD BE HAPPY TO PREPARE THESE FOR YOU IN ADVANCE AND WILL DELIVER THEM TO YOUR BOOTH AT SHOW SITE TO REVIEW AND SIGN. TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THIS SERVICE, PLEASE COMPLETE AND RETURN THIS FORM.

SHIPPING INFORMATION

FROM: SHIPPER/EXHIBITOR NAME: ______________________________

BILLING ADDRESS: ______________________________

CITY: ______________________ STATE: ________ ZIP: ____________

SHIP TO: COMPANY NAME: ______________________________

DELIVERY ADDRESS: ______________________________

____

CITY: ______________________ STATE: ________ ZIP: ____________

PHONE#: ______________________ ATTN: ______________

SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS: ______________________

METHOD OF SHIPMENT

PLEASE CHECK DESIRED METHOD OF SHIPMENT BELOW

FREEMAN EXHIBIT TRANSPORTATION

- ☐ 1 Day: Delivery next business day
- ☐ 2 Day: Delivery by 5:00 P.M. second business day
- ☐ Expedited
- ☐ Deferred: Delivery within 3-4 business days
- ☐ Standard Ground
- ☐ Specialized: Pad wrapped, uncrated, or truckload

☐ OTHER COMMON CARRIER ______________

☐ OTHER VAN LINE ______________

☐ OTHER AIR FREIGHT ______________
☐ Next Day ☐ Second Day ☐ Deferred

CARRIER PHONE # ______________

Once your shipment is packed and ready to be picked up, please return the Material Handling Agreement to the Exhibitor Services Center.

Verify the piece count, weight and that a signature is on the Material Handling Agreement prior to shipping out.

SHIPMENTS WITHOUT PAPERWORK TURNED IN WILL BE RETURNED TO OUR WAREHOUSE AT EXHIBITOR'S EXPENSE.

Freeman will make arrangements for all Freeman Exhibit Transportation shipments. Arrangements for pick-up by other carriers is the responsibility of the exhibitor. During exhibitor move-out, when time permits, Freeman will attempt a courtesy phone call to your carrier to confirm the scheduled pick-up.

DESIRED NUMBER OF LABELS: ______________

152459

Video: The Importance of a Trade Show Lead Follow-up Plan

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kblbwf8w9qk

Follow-Up — Turning Leads Into Sales!

Plan for your post-show follow-up and put all the pieces of your plan in place before you leave for the show. Studies reveal that 80% of exhibitors do not follow up, so take your competitors' customers and increase your show's ROI!

Sort your leads according to their business potential (A, B, or C leads) or type of information requested. Hold your staff accountable by requiring a written record of each lead's status. Contact your show's registration contractor or ARI for time- and cost-effective ways to sort and follow up on your show leads.

Research also shows that 50% of attendees who passed your booth without stopping nonetheless took away an impression of your exhibit. Keep show information on your Internet site for three months after the event.

http://www.exhibitoradvantage.com/ft_handbook.asp

Methods

Here are the methods for following up with trade show leads.

- Phone calls – One of the first steps to ensuring successful follow-up is re-qualifying leads over the phone. Studies have shown that Thursdays and 8-9 a.m. are the best timeslot and day of the week for qualifying leads. In second place time-wise is 4-5 p.m., while Fridays and 1-2 p.m. show the worst results.

- Lead-nurturing email campaigns – Depending on their qualifications, some of your leads might be good candidates for an email campaign. Cooler leads who might not be immediately ready to make a purchase usually fit in this category.
- Social suggestions – Include a request to like your business on Facebook or follow you on Twitter as part of your follow-up message. It is a simple way to engage and keep up with prospects who prefer this medium to traditional channels.

The Show

Follow-up Suggestions

The following are some suggestions to help your lead follow up be as effective as possible.

- Do Personalize the Follow Up – With the growth of marketing automation, it's easy to fall back on just creating workflow and automatic responses for prospects who click an email link or download a document. Email has become so pervasive that generic responses are almost worse than no response at all, as they provide no value, incentive, or compelling reason to respond. Here, for example is what to avoid: "I hope you received my previous email. Let me know if you have any questions or require any further information. If you feel I should talk to someone else in your organization in regards to this, I would appreciate it if you forward this email to the right person."
- Do Connect with Your Lead – Social media is a great way to connect with a lead. See if the person is on Twitter, Google+, or LinkedIn. If they are on LinkedIn, look to see what groups they belong to and see if they've commented on any specific issues or blogs.
- Do Research Your Lead – In addition to social media sites, do a Web search on your lead. Then tie the information you find back to the follow up. This extra step shows you're taking the time to connect, and that you're no auto-responder.
- Do a Multi-Channel Follow-up Communication Plan – If you can, use various spoken and written approaches. I suggest email, phone, and voicemail for sure, but it's also worth mixing in connecting or linking on social media sites, as previously mentioned. One word of warning: make your online presence known; don't be a stalker.
- Do Test, Test, Test and Track – Each target market and potential buyer is different, and they will respond differently in a given market or territory. Test different ways to respond for each segment. Just make sure you track the effectiveness of the responses to see which ones work best in which circumstance.
- Don't Over Follow Up – This point bucks the conventional wisdom. "They" say it can take up to seven to 12 contacts to close out a lead. In my humble opinion, if someone hasn't replied after four or five touches, move on. Just do the math. Let's say a C-level executive has 20 people calling on her/him, and each follows up 10 times, on average. That is 200 pieces of communication. Even if you're personalizing the communication down to the name of her dog, and providing great insight and data along the way, if she's not ready to buy what you're selling, you're spinning your wheels – and potentially wearing out your welcome. I had someone call five times and send five emails over just eight business days; that is a lot of time spent on a non-qualified lead. Ideally, according to your multi-channel communication plan, you would send a follow-up email, call and leave a message, and connect on LinkedIn. Then try one or more follow-up emails and, if you must, one more call. If there's no response, it's time to move on. But even when you stop contacting them, there should be a longer-term nurturing plan in place, so send a goodbye message before walking away. In many cases, I was able to get a response from my goodbye.
- Don't Pounce on Responses – Try not to pounce on leads immediately (key word: immediately). Give them some time to breathe. Think about how many times you have gone into a retail store and within 30 seconds someone asks if they can help you, before you have had any time to look around. But don't wait too long to respond. According to the Harvard Business Review, companies that contact potential customers within an hour of receiving queries are nearly seven times as likely to have meaningful conversations with key decision makers as firms that contact prospects even an hour later. You definitely want to be speedy in your response; just don't pounce.
- Don't Deviate from Your Lead Criteria – It's easy to stretch your lead criteria occasionally, especially when a lead looks OK at first glance, the pipeline is a little low, or the quarter is light. However, try to maintain discipline regarding lead criteria. Good follow up takes a lot of time, and you want to try to alleviate wild-goose chases.
- Don't Product Pitch – This relates to the "Do" suggestion on personalizing the follow up. Too often I get emails that don't acknowledge or relate to my interests; they just jump right into a company or product overview. Follow-up communications have to have some sort of hook in them that reference why you are following up.
- Don't Send Out the Same Follow-up Email as the Initial Campaign – You would be surprised how many follow-up emails are exactly the same as the initial campaign, with just a few changed words. That's plain lazy.

- Don't Just Leave a Phone Message to Call You Back – Two things sales people do consistently is leave me messages without explaining who they are or why it's important for me to call them back.
- Don't Mess up your Email Response Code – This may seem a no-brainer, but 20% to 25% of the follow-up email responses I get have incorrect codes for a merge.
- Don't Send out Duplicate Responses – Many marketing automation tools have de-duping capabilities to knock out duplicate responses. Make sure your marketing automation tool has de-duping capability.

http://blogs.richardson.com/2013/07/19/some-dos-and-donts-for-better-lead-nurturing-and-follow-up/

Timing of Lead Follow-up

It seems like more exhibitors today place a high value on immediacy. They're sending follow-up emails and product-related communications immediately after the trade show closes or even the minute the attendee leaves the booth. While some attendees appreciate the instant attention and are eager to get their hands on the product information you're sending, others will completely ignore all noncritical emails while they're away from the office attending a show. And once they return to the office, they may simply disregard your communication altogether, now that it has likely made its way to the bottom of their inbox queue.

The point is, immediacy isn't always the best fit for your audience. In fact, a double whammy of at-show and post-show communication is probably best to ensure that you're reaching both types of attendees, i.e., those that demand immediate attention, and those that prefer more delayed gratification.

So send customers and prospects an email during or immediately following the show. But then wait until the week after the show, when attendees have sufficiently settled back into their offices and cleaned out their email inboxes, to send (or resend) your communication. While the double-whammy system will likely take a bit more time and effort on your part than a single follow-up missive, you'll likely get double the results.

http://www.exhibitoronline.com/topics/article.asp?ID=1347&catID=31#.UdMn6dhinA0

Lead Persistence

For too many exhibitors, tradeshow lead follow-up means sending out literature, making a phone calls and an email, then, if the prospect doesn't respond quickly, giving up. This is in sharp contrast to what the highly successful exhibitor does. The real purpose of a good lead management process is to be there when they buyer is ready to buy, not just when you are ready to sell. This means having time perspective when it comes to lead follow-up. Just because a buyer isn't ready today, does not mean that they won't be ready next month, next quarter or even next year. Companies who design their lead follow-up programs with a longer time perspective, not only build the best sales relationships, but also end converting a lot more leads to sales.

Here are 4 tips to help your company be there when the buyer is ready to buy.

1. **Continue qualifying throughout the lead follow-up process.** Don't assume the person you are contacting is the right person. Often a booth visitor may exaggerate their buying influence. As you continue your follow up be sure to continually attempt to identify the entire decision team.
2. **Clarify what stage of the buying process the project or opportunity is in.** Buying processes goes through several stages from recognition of a need, to identification of various methods to address the need, to identification of the best method to address the need, to identifying vendors with solutions, to identifying the vendor with the best solution. By determining what stage of the buying process the opportunity is your follow-up efforts can focus on providing the right information for the stage of the buying process they buyer is in.
3. **Don't just sell, inform, educate and lead.** Sometimes we need to help buyers recognize the need. They may know that they have a problem, but the ramifications of the problem aren't compelling enough to cause them to take action. By education buyers about the implications of a problem we can increase the desire to address the problem.
4. **Never give up!** If you have determined that this customer has a problem you can solve, decide to keep in touch until they either tell they are going to do business with you or they tell they will never do business with you. Whether it takes a month, a quarter, a year or even longer, the rewards will be well worth the effort.

http://goo.gl/L7CnE1

Post-Show Social Media

Many exhibitors neglect post-show social media because of the exhausting amount of work they did before and during the show. But it's not break time, yet! Here are some tips on post-show social media.

POST-SHOW

The show may be over... BUT the engagement must go on! Turn event followers into clients with these final tactics.

Facebook

Create a post-show Event page sharing a recap of the event and allowing others to post thoughts on the topic.

Repurpose

Evaluate conversations, comments and questions from Twitter, Facebook, Google+ to get topics for upcoming blog posts. This is your chance to show the audience they've been heard!

Twitter

Measure your results of influence and the number of followers obtained. Be sure to continue to engage in conversations.

White Paper

Releasing a white paper for attendees to download that recaps the event. This is a good way for people to become familiar with your brand and voice. Be sure to include sharing options for the white paper so your voice will be able to reach a wider audience.

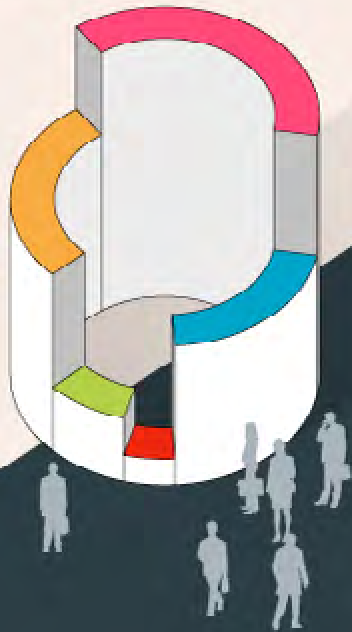
Blog

Recap the event through the use of unused photos, white paper, YouTube videos, recorded video chats, etc.

Follow up or else!

337 respondents from a trade show were asked their reaction for when an exhibitor fails to follow up:

- *127 negative to exhibitor*
- *87 very negative to exhibitor*
- *75 neutral*
- *31 negative to event and exhibitor*
- *17 very negative to the event and the exhibitor*



IN 2011, 60% OF SMARTPHONE OWNERS DOWN-LOADED A SOCIAL NETWORKING APP.

Increase your client base and fan base by making social media an extension of your company's next trade show exhibit.

http://www.nwcidisplays.com/blog/2012/03/social-media-tradeshow-marketing/

The Show

Post-Show Evaluation

Within a week after the show, make notes on what happened and the show and on ways to improve your company's ROI at the next trade show. Think about:

- Prospects' buying needs and plans
- New leads captured
- Sales made
- Effectiveness of advertising
- Effectiveness of special promotions
- Impact of your booth size, layout and staffing

http://www.exhibitoradvantage.com/ft_handbook.asp

Don't judge a show from one attempt. Most shows have thousands of attendees. It is virtually impossible to meet all of your prospective clients at one event. If the attendees at a show match your customer profile, you should commit to at least three consecutive exhibits before making any judgment on the show's value to your company. You should commit to at least three consecutive exhibits before making any judgment on the show's value to your company. If you have brought a good-quality product or service to the right show and are doing all the right things, there is no way you can fail.

http://www.exhibitoradvantage.com/ft_handbook.asp