

10 Things Great Booths Do Well

by Linda Musgrove

Hello class! TradeShow Teacher here. In this lesson, we look at a top 10 list of what the most effective exhibitors are doing right.

As a trade-show consultant, I spend a lot of time working with clients and applying the list I will share with you today. Some of you may be surprised to learn that these top 10 items are very basic, but they form the pillars of success for your exhibits. If you apply these principles each time you exhibit, you will immediately notice improved results!

If you are already following this top 10 list, then kudos to you! Pass this lesson on to someone else who can use some pointers.

Top 10 Things All Great Booths Do Well

1. Keep logo and key messages at the very top of the display.
2. Prominently display ONLY 1-3 key “benefit” statements — NOT “features” statements.
3. Display messaging that provokes questions, particularly those that tell attendees and potential prospects WIIFM (What’s In It For Me?).
4. Include simple, bold and easy-to-read messaging. Font should be easy to read even from 20 feet away. In addition, messages KISS: “Keep It Simple Stupid.”
5. Create open, inviting spaces. Attendees are enticed to walk INTO the display to have conversations.
6. Maintain clean and clutter-free spaces. No cups, loose papers and garbage lying around anywhere in these booths!
7. Use bold, attention-grabbing graphics that complement key benefit statement messages as well as the corporate look and feel of these companies.
8. Use lighting to highlight key messages and guide attendees to significant areas of the booth.
9. Incorporate color schemes that either complement the corporate image and branding or are current with color trends that are “HOT” in the industry.
10. Use audio and visual effects to grab the attention and present information about the company’s products. Multimedia are also used in presentations and demonstrations.

As you can see, the elements that make these booths strong and memorable exhibitors are actually very basic “rules” and strategies that can be applied to any booth, across any industry. Now, close your eyes, and picture how easily these strategies can be applied to your exhibit. They are pretty simple to integrate into your current exhibit to enhance it, right?

I am glad you opened your eyes again to continue reading! Now let’s move onto a few other key items these exhibitors are taking into consideration when reaching out to prospects. For starters, they are making sure they clearly understand their target market and how to reach it. This is what sets them apart and why they are getting a high ROI from the shows where they exhibit (and because they apply the top 10 list of course!).

I’ll share a few more secrets of success that these exhibitors apply so I can help you with your exhibiting results. Then it’s time to move onto your homework! As the TradeShow Teacher, you know I always give homework; maybe I’ll have to start asking you to send me your homework so I can check it to see how you’re doing!

Successful exhibitors start with the very basics. They make sure they REALLY understand who the key prospects are for their businesses. They certainly wouldn’t know what shows to exhibit at and be able to get good results even with the most show-stopping booth on the floor if they don’t know who they are looking to reach and weren’t at the right shows, right? So what you need to fully understand is:

1. **Who is your target market?** Right down to the industry, size of company, titles of the prospect and so on. You also need to understand what makes these prospects “tick”, what their personalities and likes/dislikes are. Make a list for each show!
2. **What are the “pain points”?** How does your product help eliminate those “pain points”? Once again, I suggest, write a list!

After understanding target market and needs, successful exhibitors can then research effective shows and make sure their target market will be there. Once all of those steps have been taken, then they can select the most appropriate shows, apply the top 10 list we discussed and create a plan to reach key prospects in a memorable way! Keep in mind that this list only covers what flourishing exhibitors are applying when creating their booth strategy. There is a much wider variety of lessons to be applied to make exhibits successful. Start with planning and strategy meetings, effective lead handling and follow-up processes and reporting on the results of each show attended. The exhibit program can grow and become more successful. These are all topics we will cover in future lessons, but for now, it’s onto your homework!

HOMEWORK

This lesson gave you a peek into what thriving exhibitors are doing to be successful. Your homework is to take a look at your current exhibit and apply at least 3, hopefully more, of the items from the top 10 list to your exhibit and measure the increase in results you experience. Then you can write and thank me!

Linda Musgrove is president of the trade show training firm, **TradeShow Teacher**. She focuses on significantly improving trade-show results through products offered on the TradeShow Teacher website and through strategic, customized trade-show training for individuals, departments or entire teams. Musgrove presents goal-based trade show, marketing and networking seminars at industry conferences and creates customized training programs for trade-show producers to offer exhibitors. She authored *The Complete Idiots Guide to Trade Shows* as well as a trade-show training manual, *Trade Show Training for Increased ROI*, and writes columns for a variety of trade-show industry publications. To learn more, and sign up for the FREE *Trade Show Tactics* newsletter visit <http://www.tsteacher.com>.

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