

Making The Most of Your Trade Show Booth **By Caryn Amster, Marketing Coach-sultant™**

O.K... you have decided to exhibit at the Chambers trade show. Now what? Remember that over 50% of visitors come to trade shows to see what's new and 75% get price quotes. Sois that a buyer in YOUR booth?

First decide what you want to accomplish. Do you want

- Company exposure?
- To generate sales leads?
- To increase sales?
- To show off a new product or service?
- To teach people how to use your product or service?
- To introduce your new company to the business community?
- To get information on what your target customer wants and needs?

What you don't want to do is just sell, sell, sell. This high traffic, fast paced atmosphere is not the place to spend lots of time with one visitor. Here are three tips to help you get the most out of this exposure.

1. **Before the show** – This is the time to decide how you will follow-up on the show leads. If you will be mailing out coupons, flyers, letters or other items, the time to write and print them is NOW. Statistics show that over 40% of all prospective buyers receive requested materials and only after they have made a buying decision. Most never receive anything! How does that make you look?

Send a show invitation to your current customers and prospects. This builds traffic and shows you are an involved business. **Why not send something “bumpy”** in the envelope with your message (a premium item, available through several advertising specialties companies in the chamber)? This increases the chance that the envelope will be opened. You may want to offer a special bonus, price or giveaway to those customers who show up. Since 80% of your business probably comes from 20% of your customers, this is a way to thank your current customers for their patronage.

2. **At the show** – Do something interesting at the booth! The goal is to be interactive with visitors for a short time. **You only have 3 seconds** as they pass by to get their attention. This only gives you the opportunity to introduce yourself and what you do to leave a lasting impression. Some ideas are
 - Show a video of people using your product or service
 - Show what you sell – demonstrate
 - Have ONLY knowledgeable people staffing the booth.
 - Have a guessing game, contest or photos that go along with what you do. Here are some examples I have seen

Accountant – count how many beans in the jar

Realtor – guess the taxes on this house /w photo

Restaurant – bite sized samples

Kids clothing store – costumed character

Bank – display of and drawing for a money tree

Interior designer – large before and after photos

Furniture refinisher – demonstration/polish sample

- Giveaways – Only one or two pieces is best. Promotional items should be a “keeper” by your target audience and a flyer on why they should use YOU. This can include a DATED introductory “Show Special” offer with the cut off date at least a month after the show.
- Consider placing your table at the BACK of your space. Putting a table between you and the visitor makes a conversation barrier.
- Less is more! Keep your booth clutter free. One professional (not hand drawn) sign showing one theme or idea is best. Highlight ONLY ONE BENEFIT you offer!

- 3. After the show - Analyze the results.** Did you get a lot of leads? Remember that number of visitors is NOT important. What IS important is the number and quality of leads or potential customers. You may not be able to measure this until a month after the show. What worked? What didn't? Notify your contest winners and deliver their prizes. Have fun with this experience and have a great show!

“My goal is to consistently give business owners the best and latest tips, tricks and information on marketing their business,” says Caryn. Custom Marketing Associates, started in 1988, is a business-to-business marketing, advertising and public relations firm located in Elk Grove, Illinois. Amster's second business, The Marketing Coaches, specializing in speaking, training and consulting on marketing, direct mail, customer service and trade show issues, was started in 1990. For information, contact Caryn at (847) 895-6449, e-mail Caryn@MarketingCoaches.com and see the site at www.MarketingCoaches.com.

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