



Tradeshow Toolkit





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Tradeshows and conferences are great opportunities to promote your business – if a plan is executed properly. They provide invaluable face-to-face time with customers and prospects which is a rarity in today's technology-based business model. The following topics will be covered:

- Choose the Right Shows
- Prepare for the Show
- Design your Display
- Pre-Show Marketing
- Checklist
- At the Show
- Post-Show Activities

The Tradeshow Toolkit is meant to be a general overview of the processes and planning required for a tradeshow. For the purpose of this document we use the terms tradeshow and conference interchangeably.


Choose the Right Shows

Choosing the right shows can mean the difference between reaching hundreds of potential customers or wasting hard-earned money and precious time. Each tradeshow has its own merits, so make sure you do your research before committing to an event.

1. Determine your Objectives
Do you want to promote a new product or service? Who is your target market? How many leads do you want to obtain? These are just a few of the questions you should answer to determine what exactly you want to achieve and what you want to get out of the show.
2. Research and Evaluate
Once you've narrowed down your target market, you can begin researching the types of shows they will likely attend. Contact the conference organizer and ask them to send a list of past attendees with demographics, past and expected attendance numbers as well as confirmed current sponsors/exhibitors. Find out what opportunities they provide to showcase your company. It is a good idea at this point to re-evaluate the shows you have attended in the past to see if they still meet your criteria.
3. Make a Decision
There are several factors to consider before making a decision. Are there similar tradeshows or events occurring simultaneously that may draw your target audience away? Is the location of the show situated in an area within your target market? Keep in mind that a tradeshow draws a large portion of its attendees from within a 200-mile radius.

Prepare for the Show

Planning for a tradeshow or conference can start as early as 12 months prior to the date.




Prudent planning
will ensure
tradeshow
success.

- 1. Set a Budget**
Generally the largest investment is your display which takes up approximately 40-60% of your budget, followed by the cost of exhibiting/attending at 20-30%. Other costs to account for include shipping, show and rental services, travel, accommodation, daily expenses and marketing initiatives.
- 2. Select a Booth Space**
Booth space availability and selection is an important consideration; strategic positioning on the tradeshow floor can increase your exposure and visibility. When selecting a booth, try to obtain a spot near high traffic areas such as food stations.
- 3. Develop a Consistent Message**
A tradeshow is always abuzz with activity as people and displays fight for your attention. Whatever message you want to convey about your company should be one that is consistent with your service and product offerings, yet unique and memorable. Ensure the message will be understood by your target audience and is carried throughout your display(s), marketing collateral and giveaways.
- 4. Plan a Memorable Experience**
When the tradeshow is over, what will visitors remember about your company (if they remember anything at all)? Offering branded promotional is a worthwhile investment to leave a lasting impression on visitors. Aside from giving away free items, it is wise to plan what elements will attract people to your booth. An interactive activity such as a golf putting green, a draw for a prize and presentations playing on large screens are a few ideas to consider.
- 5. Create a Lead-Tracking Method**
It can be very tedious to organize leads after the show if there is not a process or system in place. Plan how you want to capture leads (either manually or electronically), what information you'd like to capture and the method in which you'll follow up with each lead. Some tradeshows offer electronic lead retrieval rentals which allow users to scan cards each attendee carries containing their contact details; at the end of the show, you can export the data into a spreadsheet. Whatever method you choose to capture and organize leads, ensure you follow up in a timely manner.
- 6. Select your Representatives Wisely**
Choosing the right people to be in charge of your booth is very important as they will meet existing and potential customers. As these people will be the faces and voices behind your brand, it is imperative they represent your company in the best possible light. Take the time to review your goals and expectations for each tradeshow with your staff.

Design Your Exhibit

A well thought-out and integrated design helps you make a good impression on potential customers. As your exhibit display is often your largest investment for a tradeshow, explore a few options within your budget before selecting a display.



There are plenty of exhibit options available for all budgets.

1. Evaluate your Options

There are 4 main display options to choose from:

Portable Pop-up Displays

The most economical option, these lightweight displays typically come as pop-up banner stands, tabletop displays or larger 10 ft by 10 ft displays. They are easy to assemble and can make a powerful statement through attractive graphics.

Modular Displays

A bit pricier, these displays require some assembly. Common types include truss/metal systems and panel systems. Modular displays are impressive structures that add a strong presence to any tradeshow. Features such as interactive kiosks and LCD monitors can be included.

Custom Displays

The most expensive option offers almost unlimited possibility. This is great for companies with large budgets who want to have a display tailored to fit their every need.

Rental Displays

Gaining popularity, renting a display may be worth considering if you have several tradeshows booked at the same time, want to try something different for a tradeshow or frequently need to change your graphics.

2. Create an Attractive Display


When designing your display it is vital to keep your target audience in mind. It is wonderful if you can create a "show-stopping" display, but if your target audience does not understand your message, you have missed the mark.

Some tips for designing a successful display:

- Design a display that accurately reflects your company and its values. For example, if you want to project tradition and stability, it probably would not be advisable to use bright orange.
- Create interest in your company by clearly communicating who you are and the benefits you offer.
- Use text sparingly. Most people simply glance at a display for a few seconds and will not stop and read everything on it. Write short, bold statements for maximum impact and avoid using periods in headings as it stops readers from continuing on.
- Position your logo at the top of your display for better visibility.
- Consider adding lighting to your display to highlight key areas.


Pre-Show Marketing

About one to two months prior to the tradeshow, you should be promoting the event to your customers and qualified prospects. This can be done through a variety of methods such as email send-outs, direct mailings, press releases, advertisements, etc. There are many cost-effective methods to boost your company's presence at a tradeshow—Sunriff can help.



Effective pre-show marketing can draw plenty of qualified leads to your booth.

1. **Make a Plan of Action**
Your hard work towards planning and designing your exhibit all lead up to this point: trying to attract the right people to your booth. You need to decide on the date(s) you'd like to send out your marketing material, the medium in which to deliver your message, the message itself and an evaluation strategy.
2. **Select your Target Market**
Consider the objectives you made when first starting to plan the conference and determine the best markets that will help you achieve those objectives. Ensure you send the message to qualified prospects who you think will be interested or likely to respond to your promotion. Many companies choose to send their promotion directly to their client list; if you consider purchasing a list through a third party, make sure you narrow down the criteria and filter it as much as possible to get a segmented list of prospects.
3. **Develop an Irresistible Message**
The goal is to create attention-grabbing, persuasive copy and graphics. Ideally your message will be delivered to the recipient who will read it in its entirety and take the desired action. A simple, straight-forward message works best here. Remember to tailor your message to your audience; it may be worth creating a different message for each market. Some questions to ask yourself when developing your message include, "What will make someone want to visit my booth?" and "What is my target audience interested in?" One of the best ways to draw visitors is to provide an incentive such as a discount or gift, or promote a draw to win prizes.
4. **Keep Track of the Results**
A spreadsheet of costs should be kept to evaluate your Return on Investment and for comparison purposes should you choose to attend the tradeshow again. An easy way to measure your campaign's effectiveness is to incorporate a statement that requests the recipient mention the message they received in order to receive an incentive at the conference.




Don't forget to complete essential steps and bring tradeshow tools!

Pre-Show Checklist

- Select a booth space
- Order materials and show services
- Order giveaways
- Confirm shipping costs and deadlines
- Book travel and accommodations
- Check display to see if it's in good condition
- Create a lead retrieval method
- Prepare marketing collateral to present to qualified prospects
- Implement a pre-marketing campaign

Tradeshow Tools to Bring

- Pens & markers
- Paper
- Business cards
- Scissors
- Tape
- Stapler & paperclips
- Marketing collateral & giveaways
- Contact info of show organizers and fellow staff
- Lead capture forms
- Setup tools (if required)
- Name badges
- Cleaning equipment



Your experience at the tradeshow will be a positive one if you have planned and implemented a strategy.

At the Show

People attend tradeshow for different reasons. Some of the most common reasons why they attend shows are to discover new products, speak to experts in the field, advance their professional development and check out industry trends. One of the top reasons to exhibit at a tradeshow is to get that highly sought-after personal interaction with customers and prospects.

1. **Ask Questions**
A conference is not only a good opportunity for people to ask questions about your company, it's also a great chance for you to find out more about your customers.
2. **Be Selective About Your Giveaways**
Let's face it. Every conference has people who are there just to get free swag. When setting up your booth and display, try to keep your giveaways in an area that is not easily accessible to prying hands. Save your giveaways for people who seem interested in your company and for qualified prospects.
3. **Check out the Competition**
When you have some quiet time, take a few minutes to walk around the floor to look at other displays – especially those of your competitors. Write down ideas you like and what you think works or doesn't work for them.

Post-Show Activities

1. **Follow up**
Your lead registration system will come in handy now. Decide on your method of follow up whether it is email, telephone or direct mail. Aim to follow up within five days of the conference. Remember to keep track of the number of leads that convert to sales.
2. **Evaluate the Show**
Ask the staff members who were in charge of the booth to answer a few questions about the tradeshow or fill out a brief questionnaire. Find out if they encountered any difficulties at the show, what areas needed improvement, if they would like to attend the show again and if they had any suggestions for improvement.
3. **Archive Tradeshow Activities**
It is wise to document and archive pertinent information regarding tradeshow setup and preparation. This helps you prepare for the next tradeshow you attend and ensures it runs smoothly.



Sunriff Tradeshow Services:

- Display and booth design
- Tradeshow handouts
- Presentation design
- Promotional giveaways
- Project management

For more information, please visit www.sunriff.com.