

BETTER BOOTH STAFFING FOR GREATER TRADE SHOW RESULTS



Skyline®

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Introduction

The goal of this book is to provide booth staffers -- and the people who manage them -- better insights, tools, and ideas to increase their trade show results. It's a valuable and a much-needed goal, because there is a surprising disconnect between what exhibitors think about their booth staffing skills and the reality of what happens in their booths.

When we have surveyed exhibitors about what topics they want to learn most about trade shows, they usually put booth staffing way down the list, feeling that they've already mastered staffing. At the same time, they offer lots of quick tips about how to staff a trade show booth. Too bad most of their staffers don't follow their advice.

It's possible to walk down the aisle of any trade show and see booth staffers that are desperate to be doing anything other than engage with prospects. Too many exhibitors waste the lion share of their trade show investment by bringing staffers who don't want to be there, bringing the wrong staffers, or by not providing adequate training and tools to help them succeed.

This book contains 34 articles that have been published on the Skyline Trade Show Tips blog (you can see more at www.skylinetradeshowtips.com). Half are geared to increasing the valuable skills and expanding the perspectives of individual booth staffers. The other half are for the trade show manager and the trainer who must prepare the booth staff for their company. Some are broad views of what is involved in booth staffing, while others are deeper dives into key skills, such as engaging attendees, listening better, how staffers can better manage leads, how to measure booth staffers, and more.

We also have included two excellent worksheets useful for managing booth staffers, provided by Marc Goldberg of Marketech360.

This is a lot of info to digest about booth staffing. But there is so much riding on your booth staffers, as 85% of what attendees remember is based on them, and trade shows are still the top marketing spend for business-to-business marketers.

So make a commitment to excellence. Read and implement the ideas in this book, and really improve the performance of your trade show program.

Your Local Skyline Exhibiting Consultant



Articles For Trade Show Booth Staffers

Hey Booth Staffers, Want My Lead? Treat Me Right

Mike Thimmesch

Brian Sommer tells what booth staffers will need to do to get him to want to visit their booth.

Brian Sommer writes on his ZDNet blog what trade show booth staffers will have to do to earn his business at the various trade shows he will visit this fall. It's an excellent primer on booth staffing, and even selling in general.

Here are the 5 main suggestions he offers booth staffers:

1. Have empathy for your prospects, and be fully prepared by understanding what key urgent issues your prospects are facing, and how your product solves those issues. That sounds obvious, but too many sales people Brian has encountered instead launch into a big feature dump.
2. Don't try to scan a prospects badge when you first meet them, it shows disrespect. Instead, first talk with them and see if there is a viable

match for the next step in a dialog, and only then ask to scan their badge.

3. Don't give a generic giveaway, make some effort to give something tied to your own brand.
4. Greet attendees warmly, then follow a short presentation outline that covers what 3 top business problems your product solves, how big those problems are for other companies, and (very concisely) three differentiators for your product/solution.
5. Finally, close the interaction with grace, and allow your booth visitors some control over the next step of the sales process.

Trade shows are unique in that it's marketing where you can talk directly with another person. Brian's post does a great job of highlighting how to be the kind of person attendees would want to do business with.



Trade Show Booth Etiquette: How To Be A Good Host

Bryna Kelly

In Minnesota, we are raised to be “nice.” But how far does that really get you? For many, nice means passive-aggressive, nice means bite your tongue, or nice means smile and nod. When you’re staffing a trade show booth you are acting as a host, and sometimes “nice”, in any of its definitions, doesn’t always cut it.

Go Beyond Nice

When you are exhibiting, you must put yourself in the mindset that all the prospects in the hall are your guests. If you were hosting a party in your home, no matter the occasion, you would go out of your way to accommodate every single guest. You wouldn’t tell them to let themselves in the door, throw their coat over the back of a chair, and help themselves to whatever was in the fridge. Guests in your trade show booth are no different. They need to be warmly welcomed and engaged from the moment you see them.

The Pre-Party Planning

Part of being a good host is proper planning to ensure the event will run smoothly. To have a spectacular trade show, have all your extras prepared. Did you make all the appropriate phone calls and contacts to ensure your trade show exhibit will arrive on time and be set up properly? Does your booth staff know when and where to be and what you expect of them? Do you have an emergency kit with supplies for yourself and your booth?

Whether it’s a big theme to the party or the smallest details, having a plan and a back-up plan for everything will set yourself and your guests at ease. Sure, you can get by without it

but it will add a little zest and make everything more memorable if you do. Failing to make your plan would be like having 20 people show up for a Super Bowl party and all you have to offer them is a bowl of stale Doritos — the game is still on but it’s just not the same.

In The Booth

Now that you’re at the show and in your booth, it’s your job to make everyone passing by feel welcomed and important. Easier said than done. Part of making people feel comfortable is being genuine. After all, you are exhibiting because you want to use your product or service to help people, right? Attendees don’t need a sales pitch from every booth staffer they walk by. Talk to them, get to know them, uncover their needs, or show them what you have to offer. Sales can come after the show but the time to make a good impression and develop trust is now. When the show is over, clearly relay those needs to a great salesperson and let them close the deal.

Heading Home

When all is said and done, any host would be remiss if they did not thank their guests for coming. In Minnesota, the cycle of “Thank you” “No, thank you!” might go on for several minutes until all parties are equally thanked and made aware of their counterpart’s gratitude. The same goes for your trade show booth. Let the attendees know that you appreciate their time and offer a closing statement to commit to follow-up.

They will want to hear more about your company after that star treatment, don’tcha know!

10 Booth Staffing Secrets To Double Your Trade Show Lead Count ... Guaranteed!

John Hamari

When you ask the average booth staffer about trade shows, their first thing that comes to mind is long hours, sore feet, some fun, and work piling up back in the office. This may be true, but needless to say we do shows for the benefits that we receive by way of lead counts and exposure in the market place. Below are some of the “secrets” that can help unlock the potential of shows for you.

1. **Exhibiting without Borders:** Staff in the aisle where the attendees are walking by. It seems like where the booth carpet meets the aisle carpet, often becomes an impenetrable “line in the sand” that staffers rarely venture past. We all want to be “out of the box” in the way we think, so consider the exhibit space as “in the box,” and the aisle as “out of the box.” This is where it gets a little uncomfortable, but if we can get out there and engage people as they come by, this will result in remarkably higher lead counts. I staffed an exhibit yesterday where an attendee was going to walk by the exhibit without stopping and I engaged him, only to find out that he has operations on 3 continents and represents about a 5 million dollar sales opportunity for our client. This guy was going to walk right by the tradeshow booth! The only reason I pulled him in was because I was in the aisle. The business is there and we need to be in the aisle to get it. Sometimes the show may ask you don’t staff in the aisle, but go ahead and do it until they tell you otherwise.

2. **Watching gets you a Goose Egg:** Engage attendees... period. Recently I attended the nation’s largest trade show and did some stat

counting on the trade show floor. With one exhibit, I watched 74 attendees walk by a 60’ section of exhibit in 10 minutes, with only 2 of them being approached by the booth staffers. The results speak for themselves: 2.7% of attendees were being reached by the staff during the time I kept track. Why would the results be so low? Simply put, it is because they did not engage attendees. The opening line that works for anyone, in any show, is “What brings you to the show today?” That question can’t be answered with one word (yes, no, or fine) and will require the attendee to stop and think about their response. Now the door is open to qualify them and move onto the next step.

3. **Divide and Conquer:** Surround staffers around in-booth attractions to get the maximum benefit from your investment. Having a game or some type of entertainment is a tremendous method for generating high traffic in your exhibit booth space and at your hospitality suite. The key to any attraction is to engage and qualify the attendees while they are waiting for the attraction or when the attraction is completed. Many organizations pay a tremendous amount of dollars for a great in-booth attraction, only to have attendees escape with no interaction with the booth staff. We need to surround the attendees and make sure that we get an opportunity with them. Another method to insure interaction is to tie the in-booth activity to the qualifying process. We should work with the magician, trick shot pool guy, robot, or game organizer to make sure they can work into their script a qualifying question that we can see. Not that this is any of us, but when it comes to in-

booth activities, it seems that the norm in the trade show industry is to attract attendees, only to have the staff not participate in their role of interacting with the attendees.

4. Play Zone, Not Man to Man: Create zones in your exhibit space that each staffer is responsible for. Depending on the size of your space, you may have 5'x5' (or 10'x10') zones in an exhibit space that each staffer is responsible for. Often, staffers will congregate at the main approach the exhibit and then leave a portion of the exhibit unstaffed. Assign zone 1 to staffer "A" and let them know that this is their space and they are responsible for it during their time slot. You are much less likely to have a staffer slip off with some prospect to chat and abandon their post. This creates personal accountability as well, and does not allow leads to slip by the "back door," never to be engaged by a staffer. In addition, this technique naturally solves some of the problem of staffers congregating and talking to each other, rather than to attendees. Creating zones can work in the largest and smallest of exhibit spaces. It does, however, require a sufficient number of staffers in the space.

5. Pre-Set Appointments at the Show: The primary reason we attend shows is to talk to

people that can influence the sale of our products and services. What better way to insure that we get the chance to talk to the right people than to set a specific time to talk to them at the show. One of the keys to making this work is to do confirmation calls the morning of show to confirm the appointment and give landmarks that make it easy for them to find you. You will need to get their cell phone number so you can catch them at the show.

6. Make Your Giveaway Part of What You Do:

Try to find a way to tie your giveaway into what you do. This might be a direct tie-in; for instance if you are Apple, you would likely give away an iPad or a similar giveaway that is directly tied to what you do. Many organizations are service-oriented, and in that case you might offer a percentage off their first purchase or a free on-site assessment. If you want to give away something that is unrelated, that could work too, if the only people eligible are those who are qualified to make decisions about your products or services. This means that attendees that are just "trick or treating" for all your free giveaways only get a Jolly Rancher and in order to register for the premium drawing, you have to be qualified.

7. Trade Shows, Nightclubs and Mixers: Trade shows are strange. What I mean by that is there are very few places where you stand around trying to talk to strangers and garner enough interest from them so you can tell them what you have to offer. This process is uncomfortable and the only other places you may find yourself doing this is at a nightclub or an after-hours mixer put on by some association. It is uncomfortable and one way to ease this angst is to find a couple of hand-picked people from your staff to be designated crowd gatherers. They clearly need to be more out-going and gregarious than the rest of the staff to qualify. Make it their job to be in the aisle staffing and to hand off the attendees to other people staffing the exhibit space (this does



not exempt others from engaging or staffing in the aisle). They are not responsible to do anything, but catch the attendee, qualify them, and hand them off to the staffer who can get into the details of the possible project. After the hand off, they go back into the aisle to get some more attendees.

8. **Practice Catch and Release:** Once we engage attendees, we find out that many are not qualified. At this point we need to employ the practice used by many fishermen called “Catch and Release.” We caught them, now we have to gracefully let them go. The easiest way to do that is say “Thanks for stopping by, and I hope you have a great rest of the show.” We are now able to gracefully let them move on and you are now free to engage other attendees. In this process it is good to bear in mind that we don’t want to hand out our giveaways until we know they are qualified.

9. **Bring Only the Staffers that Want To Be There:** The best person to staff exhibit displays is

the person who wants to be there. Picking staffers has to start with a basic criteria being met. The staffer should want to be there. If the staffer does not want to be there, they will not represent the organization well. This becomes especially important, knowing that 85% the results that your organization receives is directly tied to the experience that the attendees have with your booth staffers. Regardless of position, from CEO to the Janitor, we need to have someone who will represent the organization well – and that starts with the person who wants to be at the show.

10. **Have a Huddle Every Morning:** Every morning, of each day of the show, have a booth staff meeting. Before the chaos of the show begins, gather your staff and have a pre-show meeting (roughly 1 hour prior to the start of each day). At this meeting you can give an update on the quality of leads coming in, kudos to the best performers, announce any mid-stream adjustments, timing of activities, and update everyone on how well you are doing against the goals that have been set. On an individual level, set specific target goals for each staffer so they have something to shoot for and compete against. This can be given prior to the event or can be handed out at the event. Also, this is a great opportunity to discuss the “best practices” in exhibit staffing, along with the 10 deadly sins of staffing (this may have some variation by company depending on your goals).

There is no better teacher than our experiences and observation. These top 10 secrets are derived from both sources and if we are able to learn and use these top 10 behaviors and attitudes, we will surely double our lead count at our next event.



27 Rules of Engagement For Booth Staffers

Mike Thimmesch

The Rules of Engagement tell the military the limitations they must follow in using force. The Rules of Engagement for Booth Staffers are there to help prevent staffers from limiting their lead counts.

You can't generate a big pile of trade show leads if you're not adept at sparking and fanning the flames for many conversations. So let's do a deep dive on the start of the interaction that takes place in only a few seconds.

1. Booth staffers can only engage with attendees when they have their eyes on the aisle.
2. Booth staffers that talk to each other can't engage with attendees.
3. For hyperactive booth staffers (such as most sales people), it is difficult, yet essential that they maintain their focus on aisle traffic through the entire show.
4. Attendees will walk around a clump of people talking in front of your booth, instead of going into it. The bravest thing you can do is to ask your company senior management that is blocking your booth with their conversation to move away from the aisle.
5. While some staffers can attempt to qualify leads by reading attendees' badges as they walk down the aisle, that's only for experts, because it can backfire. People don't like to be treated as a number. If you are qualifying by the color of their badge, then go ahead, because you can see that from a distance. But if you try to read their company name to prequalify them, they will catch you and be offended. And if you read their name and call them by name, they will perceive you as very cheesy.
6. Open-ended questions are the best way to start a conversation, such as "What are you looking for at the show?"
7. If you see an attendee really looking at your booth, ask them, "What do you like that you see?"
8. Good engagers build relationships quickly. A great question to ask is, "Where are you from?"
9. This is a trade show, not a client's office, so don't take too long to get the conversation going towards the next step.
10. Think of working the aisle like cold calling. Be brave, be quick, and be persistent.
11. Engage with people only when they are less than 6 feet away. If too much farther, it will feel forced, and they will recoil.
12. Wait for the moment when they look you in the eye to say your engaging statement / question. Unless they are really close, and they will look at you when they hear your voice.
13. You need to be at least on the edge of the aisle. If you go into the aisle, you will get more leads, but may also get the show mad at you.
14. When the show is slow, and a prospect is walking down the aisle, if they are not looking at you as they pass by, take a step or two with them, and then talk to them when they do look at you.
15. When it is slow, and you have an island booth, walk to a different side of the booth to engage with an attendee if they are the only one coming by the booth at that time.
16. During the course of the show, try standing in different sides of your booth, to see which one has the most traffic flow, and then stay there.
17. If you are reluctant to engage with people as they walk by, remember that they paid money to travel to the show to find solutions to their problems, and you may have that solution.

18. If you are reluctant to engage with people as they walk by, forget your mom's advice of "don't talk to strangers," and remember Will Rodger's advice that "Strangers are friends I haven't met yet."
19. Engaging with attendees can be hard work, so take a short break after an hour or two. Grab a water bottle and a snack and take ten steps out of the booth, turn around, and watch the booth while you snack. You'll gain perspective of what attendees see.
20. Engaging with attendees is very valuable to your company, so take a short lunch so you can get back fast.
21. Starting a conversation with an attendee is much, much easier if you have a good demonstration, giveaway, or in-booth activity to get attendees to walk into your booth themselves.
22. If an attendee is attracted to your booth by a giveaway, don't let them just grab it and leave; use the moment to start a good conversation that leads to a lead.
23. If you stand with a relaxed and open posture, you will be more welcoming than if you have your back to the aisle or your arms crossed and your head down.
24. Keep the most valuable tools of your trade in your hands — like a lead card on a clip board, and a pen, or an iPad, or your awesome giveaway.
25. Encourage your booth staffers to engage with more people by having a contest for the most leads.
26. If all staffers are busy, then train your already-engaged staffers to quickly say to impatient attendees waiting for a booth staffer, "I will be with you in a moment when I finish this conversation."
27. Just as Indira Gandhi said, "You can't shake hands with a clenched fist," I say, you can't engage an attendee when you're already on the phone.

Engaging with attendees well is a rare skill. Some take to it naturally, some can be taught. Those who can't or won't engage, even after training, should be kept away from the booth, unless their other knowledge makes them worth feeding leads started by others. Those who succeed at engaging attendees are valuable, so keep them on your booth staff short list.

And remember, you're not finished with your booth visitor simply by engaging with them. You still need to find out if they are a viable prospect and what interests them, present the part of your story that is relevant, and then finish your conversation by committing to the next step.



The Power of Eye Contact: For Booth Staffers And Beyond

Jordan Hanlon

Everyone has heard the saying, “The eyes are the windows to the soul.” So how can your eyes help you communicate with others in a sales or business setting, public speaking situations or in your trade show exhibit?

Michael Ellsberg, the author of *The Power of Eye Contact*, shows us the eyes play an important role in all face-to-face communication. Though meeting women was his motivating force for learning more about eye contact, no he can’t beam women to him with one glance across the bar. Ellsberg wanted a better way to connect with women other than exchanging resume talk:

- “Where do you work?”
- “Where are you from?”
- “What do you like to do in your free time?”

It turns out that eye contact is one the most intimate components of communication. This led to his idea of Eye Gazing Parties, in which you stare into the eyes of a complete stranger for three minutes without saying a word — sounds intense! But enough on how to find your soul mate, how can eye contact help me in my professional life or on the trade show floor?

Enter former President Bill Clinton (and no, we are still not talking about how to pick up women). Mr. Clinton is one of the greatest examples of how to effectively communicate to others. He does this by establishing great eye contact, personal space, and presence in order to make the person he is talking to feel as though they are the only two people in the room. Regardless of your personal or political thoughts about Mr. Clinton, I want you to take a look at this video

clip from a presidential debate between the first George Bush and Clinton in 1992. I recommend watching it without sound and try and notice how he is using eye contact, personal space, and presence:



Notice the difference? So what can you get out of all of this? I have pulled out some key takeaways from the book for professional development; I’ll let you read the other chapters on how to pick up women or attract a guy.

Key Takeaways:

Sales and Business

The eyes are the windows to the soul because you cannot hide your emotions from the outside world; this is why we often avoid eye contact. Eye contact and the correct body language have always been important in sales and business, but it is often over looked. For example if a friend of yours just took a lifesaving drug, and their aunt had the same condition they could convince her to buy that drug even if they botched every sales rule in the book, because they would sell it with conviction and enthusiasm.

Takeaway: If you believe in what you are selling or promoting it will show through in your body language and eye contact. Even if you don’t have all of the facts and mess some of the words up, people believe eye contact and body language over words.

Public Speaking and Presentations:

Eye contact is often very overlooked in visual presentations. Diane Diresta, author of *Knockout Presentations* and a communications coach says “The biggest mistake people make when giving PowerPoint presentations is that they read the slides. It transforms you from an expert in your subject that is offering your expertise into a mere reader of notes.” Diane recommends the “Touch, Turn, and Talk” method. “Touch” the first bullet point, then “Turn” to your audience, and “Talk” to them about the content. There is NO reason to look at your slides while you are speaking about them. She recommends to always end your last words on a pair of eyes before you turn back to the slides. This will keep your audience connected as you turn away from them.

Speaking directly with the audience and making proper eye contact allows you to focus nearly all of your energy on connecting with your audience personally, which is why they came to see you live in the first place.

Takeaway: Connecting with audiences through eye contact and speaking to them directly will allow you to have a much more personal and effective presentation.

Networking or Booth Staffing:

Ellsberg talks about how he attended a networking event with the goal of talking with at least three big-time executives. When the event started he patrolled the room with one thing on his mind: How can I get myself in front of one of the big shots? He found himself alone, until he took on a different approach. He decided to try and use his eye contact to convey the message, “How can I help you?” After the change he found himself a lot more approachable, in several conversations with people and ended up exchanging information with several high-level executives.

Takeaway: Eye contact and body language can drastically change the outward perception that people have of you. Next time you’re in your trade show booth or at a networking event, relax your jaw, get into the right mentality and make solid eye contact.

Now that we know how eye contact can play a role in our communication, here is how Ellsberg recommends we become more “eye bold.” These steps are to be done in order; don’t move on to the next one until you are comfortable with the first step.

5 Steps to Becoming More Eye Bold:

1. Making progressively lengthier eye contact with a friend or family member in an intentional exercise.
2. Making infinitesimally brief eye contact with strangers.
3. Making longer eye contact with strangers, such as wait staff, sales clerks and customer service reps.
4. Making substantial eye contact during conversations with friends, family, co-workers or people you know during.
5. Making substantial eye contact during conversations with people you just met.

The important lesson that the author conveys is that your eyes communicate a lot about a person and truly are the windows to a person’s emotional state. Whether you are booth staffing or bar hopping, eye contact can help you connect better with people.

Trade Show Booth Staffers: Listen To Your Attendees With Your Eyes

Mike Thimmesch

One of the key attributes of a great trade show booth staffer is that they listen more than they talk. They listen to what booth visitors share about their hopes, dreams, and needs, and then tell their visitors only the part of their company's story that is relevant.

And as the saying goes, you should listen twice as much as you talk, because you've got only one mouth and two ears. What's more, you've also got two eyes. **So your booth staffers can "listen" with their eyes even while they are speaking.**

Say what?

Most communication about feelings and attitudes are communicated via body language such as facial expressions, according to a study by Professor Albert Mehrabian. So you can "listen" to your booth visitors even while you are talking, by listening to the non-verbal "replies" they give to your words. That way, you can tell if they are receptive to your presentation, or if you need to stop and ask more questions.

Let's look at a several examples of facial expressions. Consider if it would be good or bad if your booth visitors had these looks on their faces while you were talking to them in your trade show exhibit:



This woman looks fairly unemotional – whatever you are saying to her she appears to not be buying it, and that's bad. But perhaps she is just in information gathering mode, and has no emotions about it yet. It



would be a good time to ask her what is the biggest pain she has with her current solution, or what she really wants in her future solution.

Her expression is happier here – it's good when a booth visitor is this receptive to what you are telling her about how your company can solve her problems. When would this be bad to see? If she gets this happy describing how well her current supplier is serving her needs!



Here she is looking skeptical about what you're saying. This is not good, unless you catch this look and successfully change direction. At this point you need to go back a step and give her more proof about whatever claims you are making, like have her do a hands-on demo.



You may never have an attendee stick her tongue out at you, but you certainly will get attendees who have a similarly playful manner while they are talking to you. This means they are relaxed and happy to be in your company. People want to do business with people they like, which is a big reason they attend trade shows. So take your time building a stronger relationship, knowing the sale will come later.



Here she looks like a mix between scared and surprised. What did you just tell her? Did you tell her your prices? How long delivery will take? That the version of your product she just bought has been made obsolete by the new

product you've just launched at the show? Whatever you said, she's told you what she thinks about it without saying a word. So you'd better reply to what her face said before you go any further.



Here she looks exasperated. If you've been talking non-stop for the last 10 minutes and she shows you this look, then this is very, very bad for you. But if she gives you this look while she describes her problems she came to the show to fix, AND you've got the perfect product to help her, then this is good.



If your booth visitor closes her eyes for longer than just a blink, she is not going to sleep standing up; she is visualizing how well the solution you proposed will work for her. This is good. Don't break the spell; wait for her to open her eyes and respond to you.



And if you've listened to her needs, and shown you can solve them, and see your booth visitor looks like this, it's not only good, it's great! Don't be so excited to get your message across and sell your product that you prevent your booth visitor from telling you important info about their needs. Take advantage of everything that a face-to-face interaction has to offer, including a good, two-way conversation in which you listen – with your ears and your eyes — more than you talk.

An Open Letter To The Sales Guys Staffing Our Trade Show Booth

Mike Thimmesch

Do you have sales people who are “volunteered” to staff your trade show booth? While you welcome the good help, there are some things that could make sales people great help. So here's an open letter to your sales people who will be staffing your trade show displays. Share it with whomever you wish!

Dear Sales Guy (or Gal),

You have been hand-chosen to staff our booth at our next trade show. We picked you because you have so many of the skills and knowledge we need:

- You know our products inside and out, our competitors, and most importantly, our customers.
- You're friendly, have good people skills, and aren't afraid to strike up a conversation.

These are essential skills for a booth staffer. However, there are some...issues...that I'd like to address, and hope that these 9 points will enlighten you and help you be an even greater staffer in our booth:

1. **Rise Up To The Challenge:** You can help us reach more prospects face-to-face over the next 2-3 days than you'd be able to see in more than a month of field selling. We've invested substantial marketing dollars to drink from this sales fire hose. So be focused and engaged, and help us grow the company.
2. **Your New Quota:** While staffing our booth, you have a new quota: 2 qualified leads an hour. So leave the office behind and concentrate on helping us achieve a successful show.

3. **Shift Gears:** The trade show isn't the same as field selling. You don't have 20 minutes to chat about the local football team or what you did last weekend. In that short time you've lost too many potential leads who walked by the booth. You've got to build that relationship quickly so you can then qualify them. Present only the part of our story they care about, and then close on an agreed-upon next step.

4. **Talk To Attendees:** Throughout the show, keep focused on engaging potential prospects, not the other company employees. When you chat up our company big wigs in the booth, you're actually taking two booth staffers out of action. Better to impress them by hustling to get the most qualified leads. Even better, wait until you get your very best lead of the day, then introduce them to our company CMO, VP of Sales or other high-titled booth staffer. You'll impress the booth visitor, and our top execs, at the same time.

5. **Quality Leads:** Don't complain about the trade show lead quality; improve it. Just as every cold call you make doesn't ring the cash register, not every visitor to our booth is an immediate sale. So rate the leads, A, B, and C quality, and help prioritize lead follow up by your teammates, and ensure the best leads don't get lost in the pile.

6. **Set Appointments:** Call your best clients and prospects to schedule meetings at the show. Use the trade show to your advantage. For prospects you haven't been able to get an appointment in their office, you may get face time with them in our booth. Once there, you've got all its visual proof, our top execs, and our new products to advance the buying cycle. Or invite your clients, to up-sell or cross-sell them on our proven products they haven't bought yet. Tell me who and what times and I'll set aside meeting space and corral whoever you need on our end to meet with them.

7. **Ignore Territories:** Work hard to turn visitors into leads, no matter if they are from outside your territory. We've invested too much to have you not give your all because you won't benefit 100% directly from the lead. Remember that we've invested a lot in training, salary, and benefits to help you succeed as a company sales person. And that somewhere soon, at another show we exhibit at, there's another company sales person who is hustling to get a lead for you.

8. **All The Leads, Please:** While this may not apply to you, please, please, please don't pocket your very best leads from the show. The sales you get will not get credited to the show, and so we may not be able to justify exhibiting the following year. Which would mean fewer high quality leads for you in the future. And if I can't prove sufficient ROI from the show, I could even lose my job.

9. **Follow Up:** Follow up on our trade show leads immediately after the show. You've been away from your own accounts for a few days, and can't wait to get back into your usual groove. But remember that we've invested about \$200-\$300 per lead, and that many of these leads will buy from somebody. That might as well be you – so if some get assigned to you, keep following up with them. Better yet, when they do buy from you, let me know, so I can better track our trade show ROI, and keep improving our programs.

I'm grateful to have you on our booth staffing team. Your skills, knowledge, and positive attitude will help us leave the show with a much fuller pipeline of future sales. I hope you don't think me too forward for writing you this letter. Please keep an open mind and take these suggestions to heart. Do that, help us succeed, and I'll go to the wall for you.

Sincerely,

Your Trade Show Manager

16 Trade Show Booth Staffer Affirmations

Mike Thimmesch

How do you get your staffers excited to staff? Especially if they've never staffed before, or if they've staffed so many times they've already lost count?

Sure, you start by choosing staffers that already have a positive attitude and want to be at the show. But even with that going for you, you may need to give them a boost.

So here are 16 affirmations they can repeat every day before the show, to get them excited and ready to greet attendees to your trade show display with a positive attitude:

1. This trade show's attendees have actually paid their own way to come here and find solutions to their problems...the same problems my products solve. So they will be happy to meet me!
2. My participation in our booth will allow our company to reach many prospects face-to-face in a much shorter time than if I was out on the road selling.
3. I will be able to see many of our existing clients in one place, to verify the continuing value of our offerings, and show them other products we can provide them.
4. I know my products well and can point out the advantages they offer.
5. I already have several good stories about clients who have benefited from our products that I can share.
6. I don't have to tell our entire story to everyone, just the part that matters to them.
7. I don't have to talk the whole time; instead I will listen more and talk less.



8. If an angry client visits our booth, I can help keep them as a customer by calmly helping them get their issue resolved.
9. I will gain important new insights into what my prospects want by talking with many of them over the next several hours today.
10. I will find out first-hand what benefits we offer matter most to clients and prospects.
11. I will better understand industry trends by what my clients tell me interest them.
12. I will get insights into the state of my industry from the buzz and interactions on the show floor.
13. I will build my personal network with the visitors to our booth.
14. I will network with key people from areas of our company that I don't usually get to see.
15. I will better know my strongest competitors by which ones my booth visitors ask me to compare ourselves to.
16. I will find out what new products are being introduced by walking the show during my breaks.

These affirmations help remind booth staffers about the value they get from staffing the booth, and also help ease their fears that everything rests on them. Which helps booth staffers go into the show with enthusiasm instead of trepidation, or worse, apathy.

Every Second Counts At Trade Shows

Mike Thimmesch

At almost every show there comes a time when your watch seems to be moving in slow motion. If you had three wishes from a genie, you'd use one to have the show end.

But trade show time should never be wished away. Your company has made a big investment to get in front of hundreds, if not thousands of potential clients during a finite number of show hours.

That's why booth staffers must retain a sense of urgency as long as there are attendees walking the show floor. You've paid for the access, get your money's worth.

Make It Real

To make your investment more tangible for your tradeshow booth staffers, show them how much you are spending every second of the show. For example, if you have a total show budget of 36 thousand dollars, and there are 10 hours of show floor time, then your trade show presence is costing you a dollar every second.

Tell your staffers, "Every second, this show will cost us a dollar - a dollar, a dollar, a dollar, a dollar, a dollar ..."

You can make that even more explicit to your staffers in a pre-show meeting by laying dollars out on the table, one after another every second, saying, "Every second, this show will cost us a dollar – a dollar, a dollar, a dollar, a dollar, a dollar." That way, your staffers understand the cost of easing up.



Even if you have a small booth space and are only spending, let's say \$9,000 for a single show with 10 hours of show floor time, then your company is spending about a quarter every second, or a dollar every 4 seconds.

While that cost to exhibit seems like a lot of money,

remember that there will be thousands of dollars of potential business walking by your exhibit every minute. You just have to maintain your focus throughout the show to get your best ROI.

Two Times Booth Staffers Relax

Two common slow times at shows are near the end of the show, and during lunch time. If you slack off at the end of the show because it's slower, remember that some of the most serious buyers come by



then, because they've shopped the floor and now know who they want to get even more info from. And think about during lunch: People who skip lunch to walk the show are very motivated!

Two Other Traps

A common trap booth staffers fall into during slower times is what I call the 30-second rule. The people picked to do booth staffing are friendly, outgoing, even gregarious. So if they haven't talked to an attendee in a while, about 30 seconds, they turn and start talking to their co-worker instead. Bam, now you have two booth staffers out of action.

Another challenge is that some staffers get a great lead and get cocky. They want to take the next ten minutes telling everyone about it, rather than getting another lead. Instead, booth staffers need to keep their focus on getting that next lead...and the lead after that...and the lead after that. And if they can't keep that focus going all day long, then you need to choose booth staffers who can, or have enough booth staffers to schedule shifts to keep them fresh.

So, when your booth staffers truly understand your company's trade show investment, and keep focused on getting leads every second of the show, then you'll get even more from your investment. Because while time at the show may seem sometimes to be passing slowly, it's actually quite precious.

When The Trade Show Is Slow

Mike Thimmesch



Every once in a while you find yourself stuck at a slow show. Perhaps the show is in a declining market, or it's a new show yet to get established. Maybe it's the show city rotation, or it's just the last day at an otherwise popular show. Whatever the reason, you still want to make the most of it.

However, when the show is slow, it's human nature for the staff to do one of two counter-productive things:

1. **Start talking to each other.**

The people you bring to staff the booth are usually the most outgoing people you have. So after 30 seconds of staring down the aisle, they get bored and want to talk to someone. Hey look, there's someone to talk to, your fellow booth staffer! Chief conversation topics: Where are we going for dinner tonight, and boy does this show stink (which can become a self-fulfilling prophecy). The problem is, now you've got two staffers out of commission. It takes discipline and patience to instead resist the temptation to "chat amongst ourselves."

2. **Pounce on every passerby.**

It's slow, so go for the gusto and grab every attendee! We need to get a return from our investment at the show! Well, that may get a

conversation started, but you won't start a good relationship through intimidation.

Instead, wait for the solitary attendee to make eye contact with you (as you've been patiently waiting for them, instead of talking with your fellow booth staffer). Once (and if) they look at you, have your best smile ready, and ask a good engaging question, such as "Are you familiar with (Your Company Name)?" That way you can start a conversation that will lead somewhere. If they didn't look at you, well, they may come back on their return trip.

When the traffic is slow, avoid chatting with your own staffers and pouncing on the rare attendee. Then you get the most out of the traffic you do have. And anyway, whether it's slow or busy, you can only talk to one person at a time.

Zen and the Art of Booth Staffing

Mike Thimmesch

Have you ever seen – or been – a Zen Master Booth Staffer?

Booth staffing can be scary: You talk a parade of strangers. You have to know everything about your company's products, services, employees, competitors, and industry. You are essentially making small presentations (which people fear more than death), one after the other, for days on end. Your performance can directly affect your company's future.

All that pressure can easily make a booth staffer self-conscious and uptight. Not the right frame of mind for warmly meeting attendees and persuading them that your company is the best

thing since sliced bread.

What Makes A Zen Master Trade Show Booth Staffer?

A Zen Master Booth Staffer thrives in such tense circumstances, because they know this is also the mindset of many attendees. They greet attendees with genuine warmth, help attendees to relax, and become their true friend as they help them find a solution.

Zen Master Booth Staffers are not overburdened trying to remember and share every detail about your company, its products, and how yours are better than your competition. They listen with a clear mind to what attendees truly need, and intuitively share only the part of your story that will persuade that individual visitor.

Just as a Zen Master is at peace with the mysteries of life, a Zen Master Booth Staffer is at peace with the chaos of the show floor. They have solved the contradiction of truly helping attendees find what they need, and selling for your company in your trade show display.

I have seen a Zen Master Booth Staffer, who had a sore throat from talking with so many attendees, that she sat in the middle of the booth to minimize more talking. But because she exuded so much calmness and good will, attendees actually sought her out, walking past other booth staffers on the aisle to talk with her.

Can you become a Zen Master Booth Staffer? Perhaps, if you can forget most of what you have been taught, and see again with the eyes of a child. You know you are there when you take many more leads, truly quality leads, and are not drained, but are at peace after a booth staffing shift.

Can you recognize when others have attained the level of a Zen Master Booth Staffer? Yes, when they are near the top of the list for both lead counts – and enjoyment – at every show. Keep track of these wise people, and ask them to

Trade Show Exhibit Dress Code: Dressing For Success

Scott Price

Your company's trade show exhibit is the focal point for any conference or event you're attending, but it won't be the only thing representing your business. You and the rest of the staff will also get plenty of attention. By understanding the dress code for any event, you can ensure you'll be putting your best foot forward and impressing attendees.

Dress For The Trade Show Exhibit Event

Although most venues don't have a formal dress code, they usually have fairly clear guidelines that attendees and exhibitors are expected to follow. In most cases, casual clothes are frowned on; exceptions include sports themed events and recreational events such as boat shows. For professional conferences (medical, legal, etc.) you should always dress as though it were an important day at the office. If you'd wear a suit to meet your CEO, then a suit is best for a trade show booth.

Dress For The Venue

Make sure you check with the venue where your trade show exhibit will be displayed. There's a huge difference between padded, carpeted flooring and a concrete convention hall. The harder the floor, the more comfortable your shoes will need to be. Women should avoid wearing sandals; they look too informal and toe and foot injuries are common in areas where there is a lot of wiring for dozens of trade show booths.

Wardrobe Details Are Important

Don't forget that you'll be working long hours on your feet at your trade show exhibit and dress accordingly. You can dress professionally and still be comfortable if you keep a few things in mind:

1. Your shoes will make or break your comfort when you're on your feet for hours. Women

should avoid high heels; today there are gorgeous flats that will work with any business suit or dress you may wear. Whatever you do, don't wear new shoes or you'll have aching, blistered feet before the end of the first day.

2. Be aware of the norms in your industry and scale down or cover body art or piercings in order to avoid standing out as "inappropriate." In most cases, earrings are fine, but pierced noses and eyebrows can be viewed with disfavor in more conservative industries. Remember, when working the booths it's about representing the company, not expressing your personal taste.

3. You can wear jewelry in moderation. The pieces should be classic and understated rather than loud and intrusive. An armful of bangles is distracting and there's already plenty of noise on the convention floor; you don't want to have to compete with jangling jewelry to be heard.

4. Polish your shoes! This sounds simple, but there are executives who have admitted they check out the shoes of company reps. Scuffed or neglected shoes say you aren't interested in the details, which is a bad message no matter how awesome your trade show exhibit is.

5. Working trade show booths means shaking a lot of hands, so be sure your hands look their best. If possible, get a manicure a day or two before the event so your hands are well groomed. Women should choose either a pale, neutral nail color or stick with a clear coat of polish.

6. Take a small sewing kit with a needle, thread and a lint brush for quick clean-ups or repairs.

With all of these tips in mind, you'll be sure to dress for success and have a great show!

Will Your Trade Show Booth Staffers Make This Elephant-Sized Mistake?

Scott Price

When visiting the Fancy Foods Trade Show in New York City, I took some time to visit the various trade show booths representing various states. I was sampling the impressive array of food and drinks offered as treats at each booth.

I noticed that the trade show display for a certain southern state had a young woman giving away samples of gourmet seasoned cashews and anticipated enjoying a cup of them. I wasn't disappointed – the gourmet nuts were so warm and delicious, I circled around in order to get another sample.

Staffer Skimps On Treats

The staffer at this trade show booth recognized me and she obviously didn't appreciate my extreme fondness for the treat she was handing out. When I got to the head of the line, she carefully counted out six small cashews that amounted to less than a third of my previous serving. Her entire demeanor said that she didn't appreciate my attempt to get more of their great tasting snack.

Weighing Goodwill Against Cashews

While it may be understandable that the young staffer wanted to make sure she had enough cashews for every visitor to her trade show booth, she failed to weigh the potential goodwill of a visitor against the value of a few cashews. I walked away from the booth disappointed in that state's brand of southern hospitality. The young woman had not represented them in a positive light.

Perception Is Everything

The staffer giving out the gourmet cashews looked at me as simply an interloper trying to get



an extra treat. But what if she had looked at me in a different light? If she had stopped to consider that I was a potential client, she could have created an opening to praise her state and cement a new business relationship.

If she had smiled and welcomed me with enthusiasm, she could have created some goodwill and ensured that I praised her state to others. She might have said, "Welcome back! I guess you just couldn't resist our yummy gourmet cashews! Here, have an extra serving, and be sure to tell everyone you got them from our trade show booth, where gourmet treats are just the beginning of our big welcome!"

Lessons Learned For Your Staffers

Reviewing the actions of this trade show display staffer, you'll realize that there were several



moments when she had the opportunity to make a wonderful impression

for her state, but chose the wrong action:

1. When the staffer inadvertently turned me off and no doubt some other visitors as well. Don't let your facial expressions damage your brand identity. You may be frowning at someone in particular, but plenty of others will see you and turn away. No one likes to approach someone who looks unhappy or upset. Remember body language is fast and powerful and is 55% of our communication.
2. The trade show booth staffer chose to save a handful of nuts and in the process lost my interest. Your trade show booth display may be the only opportunity your company has to make a great impression. Does it really make sense to skimp on the little things instead of focusing on the big picture? Relax a bit and don't be afraid to be generous.
3. The staffer missed a golden opportunity to build a stronger relationship with a visitor to her trade show display. If she'd taken the "Welcome Back" approach, her entire state might have benefited from it. Look at every interaction as an opportunity to strengthen a relationship, maximizing your business' positive image.
4. Staffers represent your brand. Remember 90% of what visitors remember about your company at a show will be based on your booth staff.

Your staff can make an elephant-sized impression on your booth visitors. Make sure they understand how their use of giveaways — even gourmet cashews — can have a big impact on how your brand is perceived.

My Top Tips For Staying Healthy While Exhibiting

Sofia Troutman

I will never forget the time I was exhibiting in Germany and came down with a very bad cold. At home this would have not been a big deal. However, being in another country, without my family, the comforts of home, and having to work long days in our trade show exhibit made a simple cold unbearable.

I don't get sick often, I think in part because I lead a healthy lifestyle. However, it is so easy to stay away from healthy habits when traveling, right? Since that trip to Germany I have learned some things that I try to stick by to prevent sickness or at least to stay prepared if I do get sick.

1. **Sleep.**

We all know we need sleep right? But it is so hard to do when we are traveling! Particularly when you are traveling internationally. It is easy to do as I did and decide there is simply too much to see and do and "maybe it is just better if I stay up so I can get used to the new time zone sooner." My hard-earned lesson on sleep is: Take a quick nap if you really need it. Staying up for 24 hours straight will not help you be more productive, trust me. Bring a face mask to cover your eyes from light and ear plugs to block out hotel noise and some sort of alarm so you are not afraid to oversleep.

2. **Drink.**

I don't mean alcohol. Water, tea, juice are all good choices to keep you hydrated and healthy during your trip. I have a friend who swears that most ailments can be cured with water. You have a headache... you must need more water. You have an upset stomach... drink water. You feel tired... drink water. While I don't quite subscribe

to her belief that water cures all, I have found that often drinking water helps — if not completely alleviates — all of these symptoms.

3. **Breaks.**

It is so easy to go, go, go when you are traveling for work. There is so much to do and often deadlines do not allow for breaks. Still, if you don't take time for breaks it is more likely you will make a mistake or run yourself ragged. My grandpa had a saying: "Slow down because I need to get there fast." I now know what he meant. Something as simple as taking time for a cup of coffee, a walk around the building or even a few deep breaths during a stressful time can be invaluable.

4. **Medicine.**

Of course we all bring any prescription medication we may take on a regular basis when we travel. However, bringing a few common over-the-counter meds for common ailments can mean the difference between a successful and comfortable trade show booth staffing experience or not. My common staples are: Ibuprofen, moleskin (for blisters), icy hot or pain patch for strained or tired muscles.



5. **Clean.**

Even the cleanest venues and hotels have germs that may overwhelm your system when you are tired. Washing hands often can make such a difference. We all know it, but it is easy to forget when you are rushing from the trade show, after shaking so many hands, to stop in the bathroom and wash your hands before rushing off to your next destination. While I am not a big fan of antibacterial lotions this is the one time that I do use them if I don't have time to find and then run across the trade show hall to the bathroom.

6. **Shoes.**

Comfort is a must when it comes to shoes. Make sure they are broken in and try to bring at least one extra pair. One of the best tricks I've learned to prevent blisters is to have a different pair of shoes to change into after the show and, ideally, another pair of shoes for the next day. This way it gives your shoes a chance to dry out and if you happened to get a blister the second pair is less likely to rub directly onto it.

7. **Good bugs.**

You've heard the jokes about people getting violently sick when they travel abroad. The only problem is that it is not funny at all when it happens to you. While, thanks to my Teflon-coated stomach, this has not happen to me yet I will now share my top strategy for keeping my travel companions healthy enough to work or play: Yogurt. According to Rodale.com in their article, The Truth about Probiotics, "Studies have found that some individual strains of probiotic bacteria can help digestion and boost immunity, even warding off allergies and colds." Basically keeping some good bacteria in your gut will help you fend off some of the ill effects of running at breakneck speeds to make your trade show presence profitable.

How Trade Show Booth Staffing Is Like Speed Dating

Jordan Hanlon

Sorry, we're not going to be talking about how to fix your love life in this post. However, there are a lot of similarities in getting the attention of a potential mate and getting the attention of a trade show attendee. You only have a few seconds to convey your message and attract those passing by. And, unlike Craig's List, there is no "Missed Connection" section on a trade show's website.

Compared to many international trade shows, U.S. shows have relatively short show hours and fewer show days. This means that most attendees don't have a lot of time to spend with any one particular trade show booth. They will try to hit as many booths as they can. Oftentimes, there are other events associated with a show that attendees are also visiting. In short, there is a lot of competition for attendee's attention and you don't have a lot of time to impress them.

Most U.S. shows have badges or name tags, often color-coded to quickly identify who is who, containing all of our information that can be scanned and exchanged quickly. Attendees spend about 1-3 minutes at each station and move to the next one. If you feel there is a connection or potential to do business you may exchange contact information. Sound familiar? It's sort of like speed dating!

So how do you effectively grab the attention of a passing attendee?

1. Use Eye Contact to Initiate a Conversation:

Check out my article on page 10 on the Power of Eye Contact. Making solid eye contact and simply initiating contact with an attendee is the first step. Use engaging phrases, or "pick-up lines." My favorite one? "Hi." Just as simple as that!

In case that's not your style, here are a few more:

"So what brings you to the show?"

"Are you looking for anything specific here at the show?"

If they are noticing something specific about your trade show exhibit, ask "What do you think about product X or product Y?"

2. Engage and Qualify Them:

Now that you have their attention you need to pique their interest and qualify them as a potential lead. This means asking a few questions and getting them to provide as much information as possible. You might not be able to spend a lot of time with this person so you want to make sure that if you or someone else follows up with them after the show, they will have all of the information that they need. Ask them if they have tried your product or know your company. Ask them what they thought of the current product or service they are using — what do they like or dislike about it? Take a lot of clear notes, as this is valuable information that will help you reestablish the connection that you've created during the follow up.

3. Exchange Information & Determine a Next Step:

Now that you have engaged and qualified them, determine what the next step is and make sure you both know what that is going to be. Get their contact information so you don't leave it up to them to follow up. Think of it this way: they are the bombshell that is getting approached by every guy in the bar. Chances are, they just might not remember you. Don't take it personally though — they will be talking to a lot of people over the course of the show. If you will personally be following up with them after the show, give them your contact information. If someone else will be doing the follow up, let the attendee know you will be passing along all of the information you have and they will be contacted by someone else soon.

Remember, your company has spent a lot of time and money for you to be at the show and each attendee that walks by your booth could be an opportunity to make a connection.

Is Your Booth Staff On Paid Vacation?

Danielle White

You budgeted time, money, blood, sweat, and tears to a trade show. But in the eyes of some co-workers, you are a 'glorified party planner.' How many times have you heard that one? Well, now that you have planned your party, cleaned house, set out decorations, don't forget the most important thing – be the hostess with the mostest!

Yes, staffing your trade show booth is a critical piece of ensuring trade show success. Some people relish the idea of being out of the office on a 'company-paid vacation.' Trade show venues are in vacation cities for a reason – to attract attendees to bring the family and stay longer. But this shouldn't be the mindset of the booth staff!

There are 4 key steps for booth staffer success:
Engage, Qualify, Present, Close

1. **Engage** – There is a lot of noise at a trade show. It's like walking through the TV section at an electronics warehouse where every display is set on a different channel at 2 minutes before the hour – commercial after commercial. Your booth staffer has a tiny window of opportunity to engage that passerby. Think of a question or statement that sounds comfortable in the words of the staffer and not like a used car ad. This may take some time, but it is very important.

2. **Qualify** – Sometimes those who stop to talk have none of the critical elements you're looking for in a client – Money, Authority, Need. They are simply passersby who are looking for someone to talk to. After that attendee stops, it's important to have 2 -3 qualifying items to be sure that the



person you are talking to – while 10 more walk by – is worth that precious time.

3. **Present** – Highlight the key benefits of the product. Save the other advantages for the handout that they can read in the hotel room. It's usually helpful to have a repertoire of 3-4 real world stories to share with the prospect.

4. **Close** – How we all wish this meant close the sale! Sadly, usually it doesn't. This close refers to a mutually agreed-upon next step. Agree to talk next week, set up a face-to-face meeting or online demonstration. Be sure to agree upon (and document for future reference) the what's, where's, and when's.

If you take time to fully prepare your booth staff, as you spent time preparing the booth & giveaways, you'll realize greater success with shows – more qualified leads and higher results. And by then you – and your staff – will have earned a real vacation!

Articles for Trade Show Managers Who Select & Train Their Booth Staffers, And Staff Their Shows

Top 10 Tips For Trade Show Booth Staffing

Mike Thimmesch

The difference between a good booth staffer and a bad one can make the difference between a trade show that profitably boosts your brand and sales, and a tragic waste of your company's time and money. What can you do to ensure that you assemble a team of booth staffers that will get the job done right?

To help you find and prepare a winning booth staffer team, here are the 10 best ideas on booth staffing that I've collected over the years, and now share with you:

1. Choose staffers who actually want to staff your trade show booth and have the right attitude. Then, train chosen staffers for product, company, and customer knowledge as needed.
2. Your booth staffers will be more motivated when they understand clearly just how much you are investing at each show, what are the company's goals and your goals for them at the show.
3. A staffer that is able to stay focused on aisle traffic, watch attendees walking down the aisle for the right moment, and engage with them can get double, triple, or more leads than a booth staffer who is distracted or too shy.
4. Your booth staffers don't have time to tell your entire company history. So train staffers to ask what matters most to your booth visitors,

and then share only the relevant part of your story.

5. Tell your booth staffers it's essential they take a minute after each visitor conversation to write down a few sentences about what that lead said and wants, before going on to the next lead.
6. Spend enough time training your booth staffers to give them the chance to succeed. A half hour just before the show starts is not nearly enough. For example, can staffers all smoothly demonstrate your newest products?
7. New booth staffers benefit enormously by doing practice booth staff role playing before the trade show. It gets them over their fears and engrains the training much more memorably.



8. Invest in bringing enough staffers so they can maximize the investment you've already spent in booth space, trade show exhibits, show expenses and services, and promotions.
9. Surprisingly, introverted booth staffers can outperform extroverted booth staffers, because they can be more focused on engaging attendees and may listen more to your booth visitors' needs.
10. Offer prizes and/or recognition for the staffers who gather the highest quantity of qualified leads.

Your booth staffers are the ambassadors of your brand. What they say and do matters. A lot. Use these 10 tips to ensure that your staff performs at a higher level and gets more from your trade show

Going Beyond The Tip of The Iceberg of Booth Staff Training

Mike Thimmesch

In the rush to prepare for trade shows, exhibitors often schedule only one measly hour to training their booth staff. That's woefully inadequate for what the staff really needs – and what the opportunity demands.

Your company invests thousands upon thousands of dollars to gain the rare opportunity of getting face-to-face with hundreds, if not thousands of buyers. Yet without thorough training, your staff lacks the deep understanding to fully take advantage of your valuable at-show time.

10 Things To Fully Train Your Trade Show Booth Staff

Separate yourself from the pack, and give your staff the training they need to excel. Here are the 10 areas to fully train your booth staffers:

1. **Goals:**

Share your overall objectives the company has for exhibiting at the show, and what show-specific goals have you set for achieving those objectives. And then, tell them what are the individual goals of each booth staffer, such as take 2 qualified leads per hour staffing, or 5 new product demos per shift. If they don't know why you're exhibiting, they won't be able to help you achieve it.

2. **Customers:**

Drill your booth staffers until they can answer key questions about your customers. What are the needs and pain points of your main customer market segments? What size companies do they come from, and what matters most depending on their varying job titles? What industries tend to buy from you, and do different industries have varying priorities? It's essential that booth staffers understand what clients care about, so they can better connect with them. Also, if your show provides different badge colors to categorize attendees, let your booth staff know what color badges are most likely to be potential customers — and competitors.

3. **Products:**

People come to trade shows to see what's new and to get their hands on products, so make sure your staff is prepared to answer visitors' questions: What are the features and benefits of your main products? Your most popular products? And especially for a trade show, your newest products? How do your products compare to your main competitors? What do they cost? What is the next step in buying them?

Your booth staffers should be fluent in these discussions, to better serve and give confidence to visitors.

4. Booth Staffing Process:

Go beyond just talking about no sitting, eating, or phone calls in the booth. Train your staffers how to engage attendees in the aisle with good opening lines, how to qualify them to discover what matters to them and if they matter to you, how to present just the part of your story that is relevant to what they said about themselves, and how to close the conversation with an agreement on the next steps. Include role playing to let staffers practice before the show so they feel more comfortable and capable when the heat is on.

5. Lead Management:

Tell your staffers how you handle leads, be it dumping business cards in a fishbowl, writing notes on lead cards, scanning badges with rented lead retrievers, or entering leads into a database right on the show floor. Emphasize how to properly record a lead to include lead quality, comments about what their main problems are and how your products solve them, and what the staffer promised the booth visitor they'd do next. And on the show floor, demonstrate how your lead systems work, and where to store your leads.

6. Demonstrations:

Great trade show demos attract a crowd and help attendees remember you, so train your staffers to make engaging, smooth, and convincing demonstrations. It can take a lot of work to make a demo look easy, but it pays off in greater credibility on the show floor.

7. Promotions:

Show your staff all the promotions you plan to do before the show and at the show. Did you invite

key prospects for meetings with your top brass? Did you send an email promising visitors a prize? Did you tweet a message on Twitter that the first 25 visitors who mentioned the tweet would get a free t-shirt? Are you having a contest? Offering show-special discounts? Whatever the promotion, alert your staff so they don't create a disconnect with potential clients.

8. Your Booth Layout:

If your trade show exhibit is larger than a 10 x 20 backwall, it's not so obvious where everything is. Show your booth staffers where your storage is (for promotional items, staplers, brochures, and their personal effects), where product demo areas are, and which computers have live internet access. Most of all, if you have your booth segmented by product or division, give your booth staff the tour so they know which areas they can use depending on who they are talking to.

9. Schedule:

Not only tell your booth staff what hours on what days you expect them in the booth and when their breaks are, but give them the full show schedule outside the booth. Let them know when and where there are good networking events held by the show or major sponsors. Give them access to the show's educational session schedule, especially keynotes about industry trends. And alert them if your company is planning any group meals.

10. Convention Center and City:

Share the best way to get from the airport to your hotel and from the hotel to the show floor. If you're in a really big convention center, tell them which hall and provide a map to your booth. Let staffers know where are the nearest good restaurants, coffee shops, and convenience store, and especially where the closest bathrooms are from the booth.

Think that's too much to train at once? You're right. So break it down into chunks, and spread it out over two or three sessions. Consider first training about your customers, products and demonstrations first, and then at a later session build on that core knowledge with areas such as the booth staffing process, booth layout, and lead management, and more.

Sure it's hard work. But the prize is more leads, more sales, and a higher return on investment. That's better than the alternative, which is confused and unprepared booth staffers, dissatisfied visitors, and fewer sales and profits.

21 Things You Never Want To Hear In Your Trade Show Booth

Mike Thimmesch

It's great to hear visitors to your trade show booth say things like, "You've got just what I need!" or "We love working with your company!" or "Your booth really caught my eye!"

But because trade shows are so complicated, it's possible that, no matter how much you prepare, something could go wrong. And as the trade show manager, you're probably the first one who's going to hear about it.

How bad could it be? Well, hearing any of these 21 things in your trade show exhibit will sound as bad as fingernails on a chalkboard:

During set up:

1. "Your shipper's truck driver never arrived at the loading dock."
2. "We can't find your shipping containers."
3. "Sorry, that early-bird discount has expired. Now it costs 30% more."

4. "I don't know how to set up your booth – and I can't find the instructions."
5. "You're not allowed to set that up by yourself."
6. "Our other booth staffer missed his flight last night."
7. "Our other booth staffer got violently sick last night."
8. "Our other booth staffer shaved his head and joined a cult last night."
9. "Your trade show booth breaks 3 trade show booth size regulations."

During the show:

10. "Is that a typo on your booth graphics?"
11. "Our internet connection went down."
12. "Actually, we just signed a deal with your competitor two aisles over."
13. "According to our lawyers, your new product infringes on our patent."
14. "Hi, my boss asked me to sub for him booth staffing. It's my first day of work for the company."
15. "Wow, you're still offering that technology?"
16. "I want to talk to your boss, right now!"
17. "That's not what your local office said."
18. "That's not what your headquarters said."
19. "That's an interesting product feature, but it really doesn't solve my needs."
20. "So, what is it that your company does?"

After the show:

21. "I thought you packed the leads!"

What can you do if you hear words like these in your booth? Forewarned is forearmed. Have a thick hide, but a soft touch. Keep your calm, and be flexible to find unconventional solutions.

Handle the situation well, and then you might hear your boss say, "I'm sure glad you were there to save the day!"

44 Things A Booth Staffer Does

Mike Thimmesch

One summer during college I had a job as a busboy at The Old Ebbitt Grill, just around the corner from The White House. The best piece of advice given was that a busboy had to be like a shark, and never stop moving. That same advice works wonders for a trade show booth staffer.

Your best booth staffers have a strong work ethic, a wide variety of skills, and Gumby-like flexibility. Booth staffers are more than eye candy at the edge of the booth; they are the epitome of multi-taskers.

Here are 44 things booth staffers can do in your booth, and throughout the show:

1. Set up your trade show displays
2. Take leads
3. Be a brand ambassador
4. Advance the buying cycle
5. Engage attendees in the aisle
6. Establish relationships with prospects
7. Qualify leads to establish needs
8. Present how their company can solve a prospect's specific needs
9. Overcome objections
10. Record each prospect interaction
11. Give presentations
12. Demonstrate products
13. Introduce your new products
14. Answer technical questions
15. Recruit potential employees
16. Gather competitive intelligence
17. Gather market research
18. Give interviews to industry press
19. Meet with potential suppliers
20. Forge new business alliances
21. Network with industry peers
22. Attend keynote and seminar sessions
23. Dine with clients, prospects, and business partners at breakfast, lunch, and dinner
24. Attend hospitality events
25. Host hospitality events
26. De-clutter the trade show display of accumulated cups, empty water bottles, scatter literature, and other trash
27. Spot-clean the booth surfaces and flooring
28. Enter leads into the database
29. Fix or find fixers for technical glitches with computers or internet connections
30. Sort leads by quality and pass on hot leads right away
31. Restock promotional items, literature shelves, business cards and candy bowls
32. Unwrap giveaways (or wrap with company branded paper)
33. Serve food and drink to prospects
34. Meet with existing clients
35. Refill lead form print pads and staplers
36. Take a break to recharge
37. Walk the show floor and take the pulse of the industry
38. Help rookie staffers learn faster
39. Ask veteran staffers how to succeed
40. Share with management their insights on what's on the mind of the attendee
41. Share with management what went well and how to further improve the company's trade show performance
42. Dismantle the trade show exhibit
43. Ensure the crates come back
44. Ensure the exhibit ships with the right shipper to the right place

That's a lot for booth staffers to do, and rare is the person who can do it all. The first sign of civilization was the division of labor, so do the civilized thing and give your booth staffers the jobs they do best. For example, it's almost certain that your top management prefers to meet with business partners rather than refill lead pads.

Choose your booth staffers who will both take full advantage of the many valuable business activities possible at a trade show, and will roll up their sleeves and smilingly complete even the most unglamorous tasks.

And never stop moving.

“Put That Coffee Down!” — 5 Ways To Fire Up Your Booth Staff

Reggie Lyons

“Coffee’s for closers only.” If you’ve seen the movie *Glengarry Glenn Ross*, you certainly remember a foul-mouthed Alec Baldwin who plays Blake in the film, barking at Shelley, portrayed by Jack Lemmon. Blake is a tough talking sales leader brought in to motivate the group to close sales, who goes on to announce that for this month’s sales contest 1st prize is a Cadillac Eldorado, 2nd prize is a set of steak knives, and 3rd prize is you’re fired!

Blake’s technique probably a bit extreme and definitely inflammatory for the trade show floor but how do you convey your expectations and motivate your booth staff?

1. **Set Expectations.** Meet with your staff prior to your trade show and clearly define their roles. Make sure they understand the investment your company has made in participating in the show including the expense of travel & lodging involved. Discuss your expectations in terms of gaining new leads and closing sales. Get everyone on the same page for a rating system for your leads to help everyone understand where the leads are in the pipeline. Set goals with your staff and get their commitment to reach these goals. Cover housekeeping rules such as being on time, on your feet, not eating in the booth, and the use of personal mobile phones in the booth. If mobile marketing is part of your show promotions this may be acceptable but obviously this is not the time for personal business. It is an exciting and fun time but it’s definitely not a vacation!

2. **Role Play.** Role play with your team techniques for engaging prospects on the show floor. Use role play to not only discuss how you will handle your qualified leads, but also how you will move those along who are not a good fit. Make the role play fun and lighthearted to relax anyone’s inhibitions about being on the spot in front of their peers. It’s always better to get those fumbles out in front of your peers and discuss how to answer those objections than to be in an odd situation in front of a prospect. This is great for teambuilding and getting everyone on the same page.

3. **Prizes.** Create a sales contest for closed sales or leads gained. Ok, maybe not a Cadillac or set of steak knives but something that will get your reps attention and keep them focused on your goals for the show. It could be a gift card to a nice restaurant or retailer, a paid day off, or maybe a round of golf! You can have a winner for each day and/or an overall winner for the entire show. Creating competition amongst your staff to drive results is an excellent way to motivate the team.

4. **Tell Who Gets The Leads.** Address the distribution of leads after the show. Make sure you are up front with your crew about how leads will be allocated. Whether it’s based on their performance at the show or some other metrics make sure everyone is clear so there is no dissension amongst the ranks.

5. **Demonstrate Accountability.** Check with your team on how your new prospects are moving through the pipeline. Don’t micromanage but let them know that you’re there to lend your expertise to help move them from prospect to client!

Your Trade Show Booth Staffers Are Animals

Mike Thimmesch

Ever hear someone say that trade shows are a zoo? Or perhaps a jungle? Then there should be lots of animals at trade shows, especially staffing the booths.

In that vein, here are 12 animals that your booth staffers might act like. Some are good, some not so much. See if you can recognize anyone from your team in this marketing menagerie:

Ostrich



This tall flightless bird is known for burying its head in the sand when scared. Do you have staffers that similarly get so scared of engaging attendees that they'd put their head under the carpet if they could? Ah, you've got an ostrich.

Lion



They've got a mane of great hair, and they're known as the king of the jungle. But the male

lion actually spends most of the day lounging around, letting the lioness do nearly all the hunting. Does that sound like any of your heavy-hitter sales people that merely pose in your booth, acting like they are above the hard work of taking leads?

Kangaroo



Female kangaroos have a pouch in front to hold their cherished babies. So what kind of booth staffer would be a kangaroo? Well, have you ever seen salespeople try to pocket a lead from outside their territory rather than put it into the lead slot? That's marsupial madness on the show floor.

Squirrel



In autumn, the threat of oncoming winter inspires squirrels to ceaselessly gather and store food. They know they have only so much time left, and they use it wisely. Booth staffers would do well to

emulate the same work ethic to persistently gather leads during the few show hours they have before the show closes for the year.

Dog



Man's best friend can be an asset when the man (or woman) you're trying to befriend is the buyer in the aisle. We're not thinking guard dog here, we're thinking always happy and smiley Labrador retriever pups. Friendly, approachable booth staffers are a must-have if you want to project a welcome environment in your booth.

Mule



As in "stubborn as a mule." A booth staffer acts like a mule when they bray to another staffer or into the phone, "Trade shows don't work!" while they sit off to the side. They are too stubborn to

risk learning how to truly engage attendees, or alter their presentation for different attendee types.

Raccoon



Like a raccoon, do you have nocturnal booth staffers that want to party all night, and then sleep all day? These raccoons miss their booth staffing hours, or if they do show up, they waddle around the booth with dark sleep rings around their eyes.

Fish



It is impressive to behold a glittering school of fish that travel together and turn left and right as one. However, if your staffers stay bunched together like a school of fish, they put up a barrier to entering your trade show display, and also can fall into the trap of talking with each other instead of engaging attendees one-on-one.

Frog



Frogs are amphibians that can adapt and thrive on both land and in water. Prized is the booth staffer who is an excellent sales person in the field, but can also adapt their selling method to the unique environment of the trade show.

Goat



Can you picture a goat chewing away all day at a tin can, or an old shoe, regardless of its nutritional value? Unfortunately, your booth staffers don't have time to waste jawing with a worthless lead. They've got to learn to recognize and disengage from poor quality leads, so they can spend their valuable time speaking with more qualified attendees.

Wolf



Having a wolf in the booth could be a good thing – it's valuable to have someone sharply focused on hunting for new business. But at a trade show, you should be afraid of a really big bad wolf on your booth staff, because overly aggressive behavior scares away attendees and will starve your business.

Bear



A bear is a big, powerful animal that should add considerable strength to any team. But just as a bear hibernates through the winter season, you don't want a booth staffer that gets so tired they sleepwalk through a quarter of the show.

Did you recognize any of your booth staffers in this trade show animal kingdom? I hope you have lots of squirrels, frogs, and dogs in your booth, and not so many lions, ostriches, and bears.

Your Rookie Trade Show Booth Staffers Are Scared Silent

Mike Thimmesch

You've probably heard of "scared straight." But what you should be scared of is when your new booth staffers are scared silent. When staffers are too scared to engage attendees, you miss out on the full potential of your trade show investment.

What makes rookie booth staffers scared silent? Because they are scared of some big unknowns:

- **They don't know how to take a trade show lead**
- **They don't know what is expected of them in the booth**
- **They don't have enough product knowledge**

That could be because they are not already in sales or marketing, or because they are new employees picked to go to the show "as a training exercise."

So for these reasons, some rookie staffers are scared to start a conversation with show attendees. And to make matters worse, not only are they often too scared to start a conversation with a person in the aisle, but they are also too scared to tell you how scared they are. So they don't ask for the help they need.

Consequently, it's hard for booth staffers to take their very first lead at a trade show, and hard for them to keep taking leads. So you will get fewer leads than you could unless you help them get beyond their fears.

To help your booth staffers achieve their potential, you have to push those fears into the open, but in a safer way than under the bright lights and big crowds of the trade show floor.

Help your rookie staffers by reminding them that booth visitors actually paid to visit the show, and many are shopping for solutions to their problems that your products can solve.



Your Mother said,
"Don't talk to
strangers."

Tell them: We are programmed to avoid engaging visitors, because Mom said to us growing up, "Don't talk to strangers." To reprogram yourself, think of what Will Rogers said, "Strangers are friends I haven't met yet." As a staffer, you'll find that attendees regularly will tell you they are happy to have talked with you, because you have what they came to the show to find. They'll tell you they are happy, even if you stopped them.



Will Rogers said,
"Strangers are friends
I haven't met yet."

Most of all help them break through their wall of fear with a role playing exercise, safer because it's long before the trade show starts. Have them pretend to be staffing a booth, while an experienced booth staffer pretends to be a show attendee. Go through various likely scenarios, with different kinds of attendees they will encounter at a show, and coach them on their performance. To do this well, your new booth staffers will also have to be trained on your products, and how your products meet the needs of your main market segments.

Now, while role playing in itself is uncomfortable, it's better to go through that discomfort before the show and get it over with. Give booth staffers a chance to practice the process of engaging attendees in the aisle, qualifying to find out needs, presenting just the part of your company story that addresses those needs, and closing the conversation with a commitment for follow up.

So when you help booth staffers get over their fears before the show, they will be more comfortable at the show, and then take more leads.

3 Steps To Assembling A Balanced Trade Show Booth Staff

Mike Thimmesch

There is no greater asset to your trade show program than a platoon of capable booth staffers. Staffers who can turn booth visitors into qualified leads, forge strong relationships, and consistently represent your brand.

But you can create a booth staff even greater than the sum of its parts, by taking a balanced approach in assembling your team:

Male and Female Booth Staffers

Some attendees will feel more comfortable entering your booth when you have both genders on your booth staffer team. And while I don't have any scientific research to back this up, I've heard a lot of chatter about this from fellow booth staffers. Plus, my own intuition accepts this idea: Some people want to talk to someone of the same gender as themselves, while others prefer the opposite. And by having both genders in your booth, they can. The booth just feels more

welcoming. This still works even if your entire buying audience is almost all the same gender.

Experienced and Rookie Staffers

I don't mean young and old, or new employees and veteran employees. I mean mostly having proven staffers who know how to fill the lead box, with a portion who have never staffed before. That's because you have to keep refreshing your bench of expert booth staffers, as they will get new jobs, move away, or get too busy. (Excellent booth staffers tend to also be excellent employees, and are therefore in demand for other projects.) Now, that doesn't mean picking total greenhorns to try out. Instead, pick new staffers with promise, that want to be there, have (or are willing to learn) product knowledge, and will work hard the entire show. To find those promising rookies, just ask your best staffers who they would pick.

Sales, Marketing, Technical, and Top Management Staffers

Attendees who visit your booth will be in all phases of the buying cycle. Some will want to hear about the latest new products, some are just learning about your product category, some want product details, some want to meet the management behind the company, some want to do a deal, and some just want to visit their existing vendor. Having a blend of staffers from various functional areas of your company means you can speak to your prospects' needs, no matter what they want. Plus, you'll find that if a staffer gets stumped by a visitor's question, they can turn to a teammate and get the answer right on the spot. Which makes for a better attendee experience and better business for you.

All your individual staffers still need to have the right attitude, product, customer and industry knowledge, and strong work ethic. Yet, by considering the gender, experience, and job position of your various booth staffers, you'll get a stronger team that produces even better results.

Make Your Trade Show Booth More Memorable With Great Demos

Mike Thimmesch

Want to be remembered by visitors to your trade show exhibit? Then do a great product demo in your booth.

This really hit home for me when I recently read new research about memorable exhibits shown by Joyce McKee on the CEIR blog. While Joyce's article focused on the changes in impact the various reasons make in exhibit memorability over the last ten years, I was struck by this important insight:

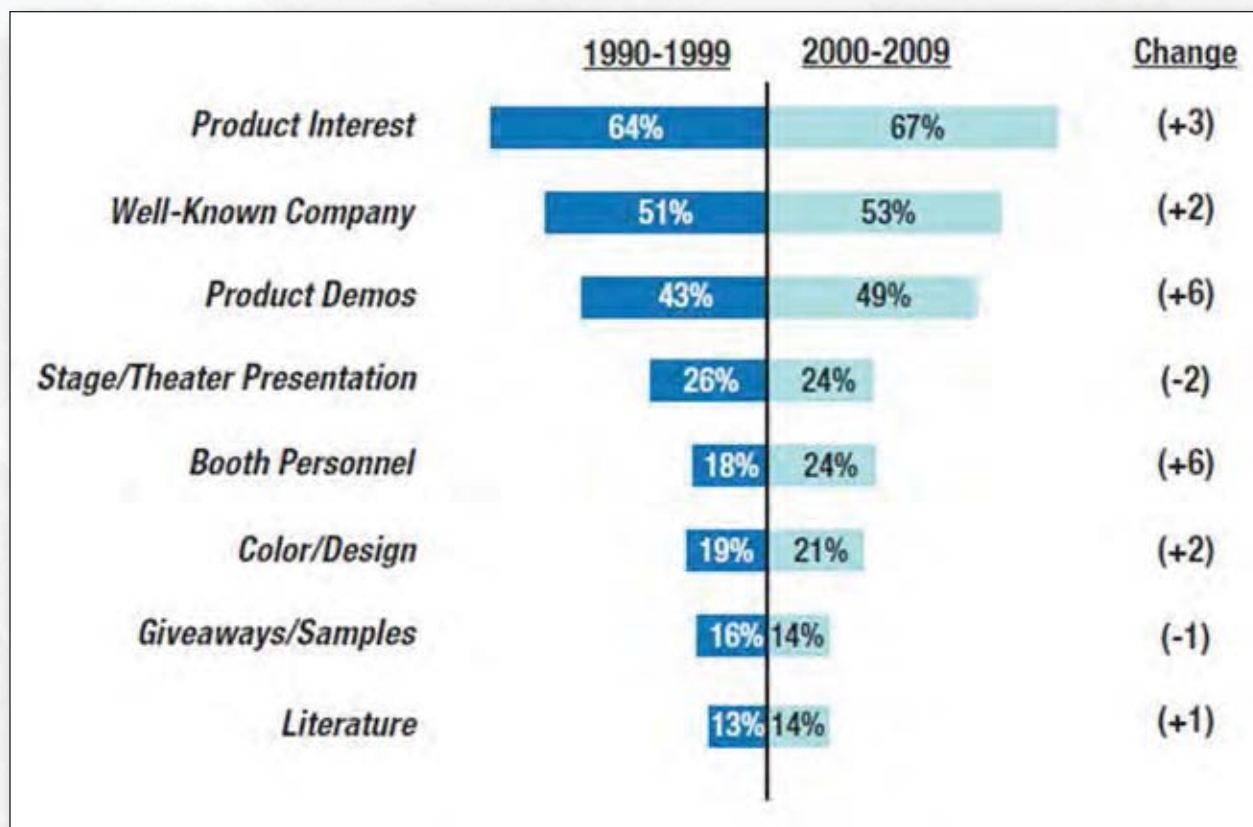
Product demos are the most important element you can control in your exhibit to create more memorable exhibits.

Here's why. The top two reasons for remembering exhibits, "Product Interest" and "Well-Known Company" are factors mostly dependent on what your company has done **before** the show and **outside** the exhibit hall. (See the chart below.) So, as the exhibit manager you can have less immediate effect on these two (although you can affect it long-term).

But product demonstrations take full advantage of the face-to-face, interactive trade show environment. A good product demo can set you apart from other exhibitors who just sit there, even if they have a popular product and a well-known company.

This is jump-up-and-down, shout-it-from-the-show-hall-rooftops news. This is where you can make your trade show marketing more powerful, more memorable, and more effective than your competitors.

So if you are not doing a demo in your booth, create one. And if you are, congrats – now make it even better.



To help you, here are **7 elements that make a great trade show demonstration:**

1. Motion:

The eye is drawn to movement, so use motion to catch those eyes as they walk down the aisle. You can even start a demo before there's anyone in your booth, to help draw people in and gather a crowd.

2. Makes your benefits obvious:

Do you know what are the most popular and unique benefits of your product? That's good. Now create a demo that makes those main benefits obvious to your prospects, too.

3. Proves your product works:

Your prospects are skeptical about the marketing claims they read on your website and in your brochures. At a trade show you have the perfect opportunity to overcome their skepticism by demonstrating how your product really does what you say it does.

4. Interactivity:

If you can get your booth visitor involved in the demo, by either a discussion or actually getting hands-on with your product, they will engage more of their brain (and thus memory), and also be more likely to believe your claims as they are experiencing them for themselves.

5. Practice:

Train your exhibit staff how to do the demo, so that it flows smoothly and without a hitch. And train more than just one person, so that person can take breaks, or if your booth is large enough, you can do demonstrations in multiple places.

6. Technology:

Especially for services, there are products your booth visitors can't actually hold in their hands. For those products you can use presentation technologies to demonstrate your benefits and to get people engaged.

7. Space:

Rather than consider a demo after your trade show booth is built, design your exhibit from the start with the demo in mind, giving it space, lighting, supporting graphics, and any architectural elements needed, such as a stage, table, or kiosk.

Do a great demo and you'll entice more people into your booth, overcome their natural skepticism, and be remembered after the show.



The Surprising Value of Introverted Trade Show Booth Staffers

Mike Thimmesch

During a recent post-show meeting we asked our four top booth staffers to share what they did to succeed, and that's when something unexpected happened: They all described themselves as introverts.

Introverts? How is that possible? When you think of the best booth staffer, you probably picture a gregarious extrovert who fearlessly engages and charms attendees into entering their trade show booths. And conversely, you expect the quiet booth staffers barely make a ripple in the waves of attendees who stream by.

That's what I used to think, too. But that changed when those top four staffers all called themselves introverts.

Why Introverts Can Make Great Booth Staffers

There are six reasons we discovered why introverts can make the best booth staffers:

1. Introverts are more process-driven than people-driven, so they are more willing to learn and adhere to the proven process of engage, relate, qualify, and close.
2. Introverts are not as scary to introverted attendees walking down the aisle, who may spook at the over-the-top overtures of extroverted booth staffers.
3. Because introverts don't need to talk all the time, they are more likely to listen to what attendees say they really need.
4. Introverts don't need constant talking too — so they can go for more than 30 seconds without needing to ask their neighbor about what's for dinner, or about the party they went to last night. Introverts can stay focused on

taking the next lead. And once they take a lead, they don't brag about each lead they took.

5. Introverts are like the turtle to the extrovert's hare, quietly gathering more leads than an extrovert will.
6. Introverts are more likely to actually write down what the attendee said on a lead card, providing more ammunition and motivation for effective lead follow-up



They also shared that even though they called themselves introverts, they loved booth staffing because they could see the substantial results their participation generated, how well received our products were, and how they gained marketing insights from talking to customers. These are confident, competent team players, not hermits.

Of course, I have seen extroverted booth staffers who succeed at trade shows, and fit the stereotype of the charming staffer. It's just a revelation that self-described introverts can succeed so well, too.

So perhaps it's worth considering that if introverts at your company really want to staff the booth, know your customers and your products, then it's more than possible that those wallflowers could blossom at trade shows.

13 Types Of Bad Booth Staffers

Mike Thimmesch



He did what? She said what? And in our trade show booth!

You may be surprised at the Booth Staffers Behaving Badly that goes on at trade shows. Or, maybe not, since you've had to endure it yourself; staffers so bad they were actually dragging down your corporate image, losing more business than they brought in.

Unfortunately, there always have been, and always will be bad booth staffers. Here's a rogue's gallery of unprofessional perpetrators:

1. **The Networker:** The Networker spends most of his booth staff shift talking, but instead of having concise conversations with clients and prospects, he whiles away the expensive show hours talking with other sales people, corporate management, and anyone else who will listen -- as long as he doesn't have to actually take a lead.
2. **The Fire Hose:** Instead of asking attendees good questions, listening for specific pains, needs, and goals, and responding with an appropriate presentation, the Fire Hose lets loose

the same unending stream of corporate speak, drowning the attendee with irrelevant messages. They offend your booth visitors and wash away your return on investment at the same time.

3. **The Wall Flower:** While being an introvert is no barrier to great booth staffing, a Wall Flower lacks the courage and initiative to start a conversation with passing attendees. Booth staffers that wait on the sidelines for attendees to walk in the booth will get a small fraction of the leads of a staffer willing to engage visitors in the aisle.

4. **The Debbie Downer:** While constructive criticism is essential for growth, Debbie Downers are permanently parked in a dark place. These perpetually pessimistic people are a danger to your company's brand, as they drag down their fellow booth staffers by their continuous complaining about each and everything possible. They don't exactly light up the world with prospects, either!

5. **The Invisible Man:** While not actively destroying your brand equity through poor performance, The Invisible Man (or Woman) doesn't show up for their booth shift, leaving your remaining staff to pick up the load, and lowering your lead count potential. Even worse is if your Invisible Man has essential, unique expertise, such as demonstrating a new product.

6. **The Ghost:** Unlike the Invisible Man, the Ghost is physically there, but ... not really. They are actually on their phone, or on their computer, busy taking care of other business instead of staffing the booth. So attendees can see the Ghosts, but not really touch them. Wasting the rest of your trade show investment.

7. **The Scanner:** The Scanner is focused on only getting lots of leads for leads sake, so they relentlessly pursue attendees just to scan their badge -- and then fail to engage the attendee any further. They just want to scan the next person, and the next, and the next -- so you have plenty of leads, but none that are qualified.

8. **The Robot:** The Robot is unable to make an emotional connection with booth visitors, to find out what they care about, or strengthen the company's relationship with the prospect. The Robot may only feel comfortable speaking about specifications, technical details, facts and figures. While technical details are very important, it also takes a human touch to make visitors feel welcome.

9. **The Thief:** The Thief steals leads, pocketing them without reporting them as from the trade show, rather than respecting the company's need to track valuable leads to measure their true trade show ROI. Worse yet, they steal leads from outside their sales territory.

Swiper, no swiping!

10. **The Lump:** The Lump is an inert blob of flesh and bones, sitting in the booth with a glazed look over their eyes, doing nothing. The Lump does not engage with attendees, does not talk to people who just grabbed a free pen, but only answers questions with one-syllable words, or maybe even just a grunt.

11. **The Attacker:** Hey! The Attacker Is Very Intense! They Grab People Out Of The Aisle! They Don't Take No For An Answer! These Booth Staffers Will Scare And Annoy Your Potential Customers! Because They Don't Know The Difference Between Assertive And Aggressive!

12. **The Liar:** The Liar thinks that they should get every trade show lead they can, even if that means stretching the truth beyond the breaking point. The Liar misrepresents your products' capabilities, your company's capabilities, and what your competitors can and can't do. Which will harm your company reputation when the truth is inevitably found out.

13. **The Supervisor:** When The Supervisor is on your roster as a booth staffer, they unfortunately think that actual booth staffing is below them, so they sit on the side and "supervise." They don't know that at the best exhibiting companies,

everyone from the CEO on down wants to staff the booth, to drive more sales, get more direct customer feedback, and improve your company image.

Sure, no one is perfect, and you can find similarly flawed people in just about any business. It's just that behaviors by Bad Booth Staffers like these are amplified in the high-pressure, high-value trade show environment.

Go Beyond The Back Of A Business Card: Creating A More Complete Trade Show Lead Management System

Mike Thimmesch

Does your trade show lead management system begin and end with jotting notes on the back of your booth visitors' business cards?

While it ensures that your notes are "attached" to each contact, relying on business cards alone severely limits the space you can write down the valuable info told shared by attendees visiting your trade show displays.

And that's a **big** problem. Because without meaningful notes about what your booth visitors said and your booth staffers promised, your sales people are much less likely to value the lead enough to follow up. And even if they do follow up, they will more often make a hash of it since they lack a good record of what the attendee already said they wanted. Making your trade show results suffer.

A Complete Trade Show Lead Management System

But this is a problem that's easily solved. Instead of relying on writing on a business card, graduate to a complete trade show lead management system that makes it easier to record what your booth staffers say, transfer that knowledge to your sales force, and better follow up (and measure the results of) your trade show leads.

Here are the three elements of a trade show lead management system that go beyond jotting notes on the back of a business card:

1. **A lead card**, which is a pad of pre-printed paper with room to record contact info, answers to common qualifying questions, and notes about the attendees' needs and your promises for next steps they agreed upon. They are usually printed on half a sheet to a full sheet of 8 ½" x 11" paper. The pad of paper has a cardboard backing to make it easier to write on the lead cards.
2. **An electronic lead retrieval system**, which is almost always rented from the show, that lets you scan the badges of visitors to your booth. You can also buy your own lead retrieval system to bring to each show, which makes training easier for your booth staffers, as they only have to learn one system. The lead retrieval system records all the leads you've taken, so you can then get a digital record of all their contact info in a format you can import into your computer contact management system. It also gives you a print out when you take each lead, that you can use as the lead itself, or staple it to your lead card so you don't have to write out the visitor's contact info. These systems are evolving, as there are more and more systems available for iPads, tablet PCs, and smart phones.

3. **A CRM (Customer Relationship Management) database** for entering in those leads, rather than stacking up the business cards on the side of your desk. With a database, you can more easily assign the leads to sales people, do post-show marketing, continue follow up over time, and track sales results by comparing leads to your client database. And no cheating with an Excel file: while that is better than a stack of business cards, it's still not a true CRM database.

Using either lead cards and a database, or an electronic lead retrieval system and a database, or all three together will help you record more info about each visitor to your booth, help ensure a more complete follow up by the sales force, and make it easier to continue marketing to your trade show leads after the show.

So while it may not be as easy as setting up a banner stand, take the time to set up your lead management system. It's that important to your trade show success. And it will earn you a lot more business than just writing on the back of business cards.



Don't Blame Your Booth Staff

Sandra Kennedy



YOU the Exhibitor have invested hours and hours in meetings, discussing booth structure, how you want the booth to look, what main message you want your attendees to know, and more. So when the booth looks great but doesn't get the results you want, your first reflex may be to blame your booth staff.

Don't blame them just yet. There may be other things that were overlooked while your team focused on the exhibit design.

Did you also invest time before your show:

1. **Planning Promotions** – 3 months prior to your trade show, did you gather your team to discuss how you are going to promote your upcoming show and to who? And then execute on your plan? Suggestions for this are: send out mailers, an email campaign, add to your email signature, call current clients and prospects for a personal invite – if and where possible book appointments right at the show.

2. **Booth Staff Training** – Did you set the right expectations with your staff? Tell them you want them to dress for success and bring their smile. In the first 6 seconds as the attendee walks by your booth they will decide if they are entering it

and if you are interested in them. A big NO NO in today's world of technology is to be disconnected with your attendees by having your interest focused more on your smartphone or eating lunch, rather than being 100% focused on the attendees who have come specifically to YOUR booth.

3. **Planning A Staff Schedule** – Did you run them into the ground? Instead, be sure each booth staff knows when they are "on" and when their breaks are. Schedule breaks and lunches so the booth is always staffed properly – you do not want to miss out on the opportunity that came along when nobody was there. Decide before the show how many staff you will need and what their specific roles are.

Finally, when you are at the show, lead by example. The most important training you can give your staff is to lead by example. Managers, Executives, more experienced staff should be mixed with new or less experienced staff. The best training is on-site training – first hand.

5 Quick Measurements To Improve Your Trade Show Results

Mike Thimmesch

Your boss, and especially your boss's boss, want you to measure your trade show ROI. But with your longer B2B sales cycle, you won't know the sales generated from each show for months, maybe years. And that's assuming you can get access to the sales data in the first place.

So here are 5 things you can measure during and right after your show. Things that matter. Things that will help you not only justify your program, but drastically improve it. So if and when you finally do get actual sales numbers, they'll be worth measuring.

1. Qualified Leads Per Show

Chances are you are already counting the number of leads you get at each show. For example, at the XYZ show you got 100 leads, at the ZYX show you got 200 leads, and so on. Raw lead counts are a starting point, but you can go one step beyond. Train your trade show booth staff to consistently rate each lead for **quality**.

While there are varying methods to qualified leads, here's one you can use, or adapt to your own needs:

- **"A"** Quality Leads: Have budget, authority, need, and a short time frame to purchase.
- **"B"** Quality Leads: Have authority and a future need, but no approved budget. Or, have a need, but no authority or budget.
- **"C"** Quality Leads: Have authority, but no need or budget.

You can choose to compare only "A" quality lead counts from show to show, or "A" and "B" quality lead counts from show to show. This one step

alone will enable you to better judge the value of each show on your schedule. And you'll have a better metric to judge a show right immediately after it's over. You can even go the next step and compare the number of qualified leads per dollar spent per show.

With this metric in hand, you can decide which shows to expand in and which to cut back on. And of course, this only matters if your main goal is lead generation.

2. Number of Leads Per Staffer

You may think you know who your best booth staffers are just by looking at them. They're your friendliest people, who can chat with anybody, right? But during the show you'll be too busy running around your trade show display to notice they're actually just chatting up their fellow booth staffers, or ingratiating themselves to the top company brass. Or worse, they are not able to convert visitors into leads, because they simply don't know enough about your clients' needs or your products. So what do you do?

To determine which staffers are your real stars, count how many leads they took each day. That means you have to include a spot on your lead cards for staffers to put their name or initials. (And be careful about two staffers with the same initials!) If you don't use a lead card, you still need to find a method to identify who took each lead. Want to measure even closer? Calculate how many leads each staffer takes per hour they staffed.

I've seen staffers who looked like wallflowers, yet took 400% more leads than other, more sociable staffers. If you count every staffer's total leads, you will then know which highly productive staffers to bring back for future shows. And make a huge difference in your results.

It's good to check written leads very early in the show to ensure each staffer is at least writing their name or initials on them. Otherwise, after the show you have to become a handwriting expert!

3. Completeness of Leads

You want more than just quantity, you want quality. So check your leads during the show to see if each booth staffer is writing complete leads. Find a booth staffer who is just writing their name on the lead card? Take them aside and show them what's missing: Lead quality level, comments about what the visitor's main problems are and how your products solve them, and what the staffer promised the booth visitor they'd do next.

Help your staffer see that if they invest an extra couple of minutes recording what the client said and what they promised the attendee, your field sales person will know which leads are truly worth following up right away, and which to nurture over time.

You can measure the completeness of your leads starting an hour or two into the show. And it will boost your results so they are worth measuring.



4. Qualified Leads Per Booth Staffer Per Hour Worked

If you have done #1, #2 and #3, now you can also readily calculate this. It's the number of "A" or "A" and "B" leads a staffer takes on average per hour they staff your booth. This is like the slugging percentage in baseball that combines batting average and number of extra base hits into one statistic. When you find staffers that take an above-average number of qualified leads per hour, show after show, make sure they're on your varsity traveling booth staff team!

5. Ratio of Leads Generated By A Promotion Compared To That Promotion's Percent of Your Show Budget

Trade show attendees only visit about 5% of the exhibits at a show. Promotions are your secret weapon in the battle against limited time and other exhibitors. You need promotions that incent attendees to leave the aisle, enter your booth, and engage with you. But there are nearly infinite choices, some good and some bad.

At one show we gave away a free trip to Hawaii – quite an investment – but while the mailer and trip cost 10% of our show budget, 60% of our leads either brought the pre-show mailer about the trip into the booth, or were stopped by the offer in the aisle. Spend 10% more to get 60% more leads? Any day. Calculate this ratio with all your promotions, and you'll figure out which promos to repeat, and which to leave in your desk drawer. All you need to do is identify which leads were initiated by the promotion.

Your efforts to measure your trade show results don't have to be held hostage to your long sales cycle or an inaccessible sales database. These 5 measurements will help you make immediate improvements in your trade show performance.

Be Ready When The Trade Show Opens: 6 Pitfalls To Avoid

Mike Thimmesch

Ever have the trade show open before you were ready for it? "Just give me one more hour!" you begged the Trade Show Gods, as the first tantalizing rush of attendees swept past your unprepared booth. It makes me break out in a cold sweat just thinking about it.

No one should have to endure that, especially if it can be prevented. Here are the 6 perennial speedbumps I've seen over the years, and what is the best way to overcome these obstacles and be ready at the opening bell.

1. You get pulled in multiple directions

You cannot simultaneously set up the lead machines, unwrap the giveaways, check in the booth staffers, put staples in the staplers, get the computers hooked up, and make sure the booth is set up and clean. So don't even try. Delegate. Ask the staffers who arrived before the show to unwrap the giveaway pens for you. When a small crisis comes up before the show, you don't have to rush off to solve it. You can call upon your booth staff teammates to fix a minor problem, so that you can still be there to orchestrate the rest of the preparations. Designate a lieutenant to be responsible for the minor stuff (staples, etc.) – let them delegate the menial tasks – freeing you up to handle larger crises.

2. The booth is not set up yet

This is the biggie. Without your trade show exhibit finished, it's like you've shown up at a party with no clothes on. Often the cause of not having your booth set up is that something was missing or broken, or else you misjudged the time it would take to complete. The best way to avoid this is to have your booth installation

started on the first day of set-up, so if there are issues that arise, you have time to solve them.

And to have a better chance of getting your exhibit crates or cases delivered to your booth on the first day of set up, ship them to the show's advance warehouse. If you're bringing a portable trade show display that you're setting up yourself, be sure to practice before the show. And just in



case, have a list of emergency contacts for when things do go missing or get broken – know who to call and when.

3. Booth staffers are late

Most trade shows are held in cities with alluring distractions to pull in more attendees.

Unfortunately those distractions can also work on your booth staff, keeping them out until late at night, or even early in the morning (that never EVER happens at a show...well...except the shows in Las Vegas, maybe...).

How do you keep them focused on the job at hand? Give them an earlier deadline to show up than the opening of the show. Tell them you need them there an hour before the show opens for a pre-show meeting — and on the first day, better make it two hours before the show. Then, really have that meeting to go over objectives, promotions, lead machines, lead slot locations, and more. You can even have a breakfast meeting before the pre-show meeting. Then you can call the no-shows on their cell phone two or three hours before it's critical. Even better is to ensure their boss is also on

the booth staffing team, so they feel more responsible for getting there on time.

4. Booth staffers not yet trained

What if your staffers arrive on time, but don't know what to do? You can spend the next hour trying to coach them, but then another one arrives and you have to start over again. This is a time to rely on your veteran booth staffers who can step in and coach for you, covering booth staffing basics, as well as what is specific to that show. You can also minimize that disruption by doing a teleconference or webinar with all staffers a week before the show. That way you have many trained before the crucial hour before the show, and you also have more people ready to train their buddies who arrive later.

5. Audio/visual/computers not ready

If you've got multiple computers being used around your exhibit, you have exponentially more chances that all will not be ready by show opening. Minimize your risk by testing all computers in their at-show set up (wireless



mouse and keyboards? Longer cables between computers and monitors?) before you leave home (unless you are renting from the show). Have any presentations pre-loaded onto the computers, and bring (or have someone else bring – in case your bag gets lost) presentations on a thumb drive as backup. Also, if you are depending on 4 laptops from booth staffers (see point #3), ask 5 or 6 people to bring theirs.

For day two and three at the show when staffers may show up even later, be sure to have their computer login and password so you can get things going without them (if you locked their computers in the booth). And if you can't bring an excellent booth staffer who also is an IT whiz (thank you, Barb!), then get trained by your I.S. department on how to connect computers to the internet, and what Control Key/Function 8 does.

If using wireless internet, get your access codes from show management early on day one, and make sure that whoever is responsible for those codes a) gets there early enough every day to get the wireless up and running, and b) doesn't leave the show a day early – with the codes in their pocket!

6. Something is broken or missing

It could be that you don't have staples or waters for the booth staff, or light bulbs or pens or clipboards or whatever. When that last frantic hour is ticking away, these things can happen. There are two ways to overcome this final obstacle. The first is to have a well-stocked plastic tub shipped to the show that has all the things you need, and to restock it back at your office before it ships.

The second is to know the lay of the land before your crisis hits. Find out where the closest Home Depot, BestBuy and Walmart/Target stores are the day before the show starts, and have a rental car at your disposal to get you or someone else there in a hurry if needed. There may also be a store in or very near the convention center that specializes in all this kind of stuff — even Velcro!

Trade shows are complex. Even with great planning there's no way to avoid all the potential problems that can come up. Hopefully you're now better prepared for these 6 potential pitfalls, and will start your future shows ready to greet the opening-bell throng. When you do run into problems, most of all keep calm and stay flexible.

Booth Staffing Haiku: 17 Poems For Better Trade Show Booth Staffers

Mike Thimmesch

The haiku, a short form poem of Japanese origin, was in the news recently when Sun Microsystems' CEO Jonathan Schwartz quit (via Twitter) by posting this haiku:

Financial crisis
Stalled too many customers
CEO no more



That news reminded me of some near-haiku I had read recently in an unexpected place. While reviewing responses to a survey question about booth staffing, I was struck by several exhibitors' concise, almost poetic language, to the point that they reminded me of haiku poetry.

(In case you don't remember from school, Haiku are very short, three line poems of only 17 syllables. The first line has 5 syllables, the second 7, and the final line has 5 more.)

Inspired by former Sun CEO Schwartz, I went looking for more within the survey answers. While a few could almost stand verbatim, I still made some nips and tucks to "find" 17 haiku about booth staffing, one for each of the haiku's 17 syllables.

Because so much of trade show success hinges on the quality of your booth staffers, many of these haiku extoll the virtue and nuances of choosing the right staff:

1.
being excited
to be at the trade show makes
a huge difference

2.
once used tech people
we cut that back and now send
sales & marketing

3.
one man one woman
in the booth at every show
when it's possible

4.
staff who can perform
are able to work the crowd
not the booth work them

5.
staff with the people
that know specific products
for specific shows

6.
to pick our staffers
how they engage customers
handle travel well

7.
technical product
must answer detailed questions
staff with salespeople

Other haiku promote the value of pre-show meetings, and what should be covered at them:

8.
hold pre-show meeting
every morning of the show
outline objectives

9.
offer much info
to each booth staffer pre-show
even for veterans

10.
pre-show meeting share
last show ROI results
salespeople respond

11.
have a trade show guide
that outlines expectations
and where to find things

12.
those working the show
must have a clear idea
what is expected

Two haiku go to the heart of what a good booth staffer needs to do to succeed:

13.
remain attentive
listen to the customer
no email or phones

14.
keep the contact brief
this is not the place to sell
generate interest

Often one finds wisdom shrouded in classic haiku. These haiku proclaim the wisdom of training for your booth staffers:

15.
with booth staff training
get better quality leads
plus we get more leads

16.
more and more training
product, industry knowledge
assess client need

17.
hired an outside firm
train and monitor booth staff
improvement result

Don't Hack the Booth Staff!

Mike Thimmesch

You've been told to cut your trade show expenses. Right Now. So what do you do?

One of the most visible places to trim costs is your booth staffers. Your management, especially financial management, may ask you to trim 25% off the staff, because it's easier to do than cut 25% off a booth space you've already paid for in advance.

But while trimming booth staff may save a few thousand dollars, it could also ruin your R.O.I.

For example, if you have a show that costs you \$50,000 to exhibit at, and you trim 2 of your 8 staffers to save \$2,000, you will cut your costs by only 4%, (\$2,000 divided by \$50,000) but potentially trim your leads by 25% (2 divided by 8). Cutting 4% of costs but giving up 25% of potential sales decreases your R.O.I. with minimal savings.

Sure, if you really know that attendance will be down significantly (like in construction or finance), you should bring fewer booth staffers. Otherwise, trim carefully — you may save some money, but lose more profits in the long run.



Ready To Say “No” To A Free Booth Staffer?

Mike Thimmesch

Why would you say no to free? If the following scenario is happening to you, you should.

Every year you have a show in the same distant city, and every year your boss says, “Use old such-and-such from the local office as a booth staffer. That way we don’t have to pay for airfare and hotel to send someone from here.”

At first you thought it was a good idea, too — a way to save about a thousand dollars. But after a couple of years, you’ve realized that old such-and-such is actually a horrible trade show booth staffer. How horrible?

- He hides inside the booth and doesn’t try to engage attendees
- He’s got a negative attitude, is unapproachable and unwelcoming
- He’s got poor product knowledge
- He spends all his time talking (and complaining) to your other booth staffers, tying them up, too
- He gets a fraction of the leads of other booth staffers
- He doesn’t write notes on the lead cards from the few conversations he gets

Unfortunately, your boss hasn’t figured out the problem yet, and won’t unless you tell her. To get the best staff that you need, you’ll have to point out to your boss the true cost of this “free” staffer, and make the case for spending the extra money to get a worthwhile staffer instead.

The hidden cost of a poor performing trade show booth staffer

While you saved on airfare and hotel, you have other, bigger costs you’ve now incurred:

- You miss out on potentially dozens of leads, and the sales from those leads, that a better booth staffer would get.
- Attendees who do talk to the poor booth staffer will form a poorer opinion of your company
- Other booth staffers will be dragged down by the bad booth staffer’s attitude, and they will in turn get fewer leads

The average cost of a trade show lead is \$212, according to ceir.org. If that poor performing booth staffer only took about 5 leads at that show each of the past two year, but your average staffers are getting about 25 (my guesstimates based on experience, yours may vary), you can make the case to your boss that a better staffer would add \$4,240 in value to your marketing. Here’s how: $25-5=20$ leads, times \$212 cost per lead, equals \$4,240 in extra value. That’s over 4 times more value, by spending the \$1,000 to “ship” a proven booth staffer there.

If there is no one else on your staff available to replace him, consider hiring a local trade show host or hostess. Not the stereotypical booth babe, but a professionally dressed, self-motivated oasis of sunshine. If you’re concerned they don’t know enough about your products, you can train them enough to engage visitors, and then they’ll feed the rest of your booth staff with more leads. They may even live in the show city and not require travel expenses, and end up costing you less than paying for your own staffer’s travel expenses.

So be willing to say no to a “free” booth staffer if he can’t get the job done. Only bring booth staffers who are up to the task, even if that means paying more to get them there. You’ll get more leads, your ROI will improve, your other booth staffers will do better, and you’ll present a better image for your company.

Notes:

[illegible]

Conducting the Pre-Show Meeting

Marc Goldberg

Objectives

- ☐ lead generate
- ☐ learn from others
- ☐ sell to existing customers
- ☐ find new prospects
- ☐ position brand/ product
- ☐ clear, written, quantifiable, measurable
- ☐ introduce new product(s)
- ☐ conduct demos
- ☐ use live presentations
- ☐ press
- ☐ increase relationships

Message

- ☐ objectives of message points
- ☐ message points- 2-3 key points
- ☐ special message (merger, newsworthy issues, lawsuit, new product launch, etc)
- ☐ supplement with role play practice
- ☐ supporting points

Schedule

- ☐ event schedule
- ☐ show hours
- ☐ work schedules
- ☐ education programs
- ☐ special events
- ☐ hospitality events

Logistics

- ☐ bus service
- ☐ conference rooms
- ☐ office
- ☐ badges
- ☐ safety / disaster plan
- ☐ personal belongings
- ☐ message retrieval
- ☐ press interaction
- ☐ weather

Booth interaction

- ☐ demonstrations
- ☐ audio visuals
- ☐ team selling
- ☐ role of literature
- ☐ giveaway use
- ☐ promotions, contests and premiums
- ☐ lead cards

Staff education, motivation and refresher

- ☐ time and location
- ☐ being customer oriented
- ☐ engaging – proactive vs. reactive
- ☐ qualifying and communicating
- ☐ verbal and nonverbal communications
- ☐ closing on a commitment
- ☐ attitude and etiquette

If conducting a live pre-show meeting, consider the following :

What Works

- Light Refreshments
- Opening by senior management
- Having a published agenda
- Set specific time frame
- Handout with details

- Use visual aids
- Set high expectations
- Make it mandatory
- Booth tour or review
- Use a bit of humor

What Doesn't Work

- Alcohol before/during the meeting
- Lack of management involvement
- Informal structure - no agenda
- Rambling speakers
- Expect the staff to remember
- No handouts
- No visual aid use
- Apologize for taking their time
- Making it optional
- No booth walk through
- Bore them to death

Booth Captain Checklist: Staffer Performance

Marc Goldberg

This piece is designed for Booth Captain use to provide input and insights regarding the staff's effectiveness in working the event.

Number of Staff ☐ Adequate ☐ Too few ☐ Too many

Staffing schedule

A staffing schedule was used ? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If no, how well did the staffing schedule work?

☐ Very well ☐ Sufficiently well ☐ Did not work

Was the booth adequately covered during: Peaks in attendee flow? ☐ Yes ☐ No
Lunch breaks? ☐ Yes ☐ No

How well did the staff work together?

☐ Very well ☐ Sufficiently well ☐ Did not work well together

Did the staff transition visitors to other parts of the exhibit? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Did they engage proactively? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If no, why not? _____

Were they able to overcome territorial issues? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Did they introduce themselves before prospecting? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Did they qualify the visitor before communicating to determine needs? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Did they communicate information related to the visitor's needs? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Did they capture key points discussed on a lead form for future follow up? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Did they use the lead retrieval system? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Did they give promotional products as opposed to let visitors take promotional products?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Did they thank the visitor for stopping at the end of the communication? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Did non-verbal communications indicate a lack of interest by staff?

- ☐ Talking with each other
- ☐ Detail stations not staffed
- ☐ Staff on cell phones
- ☐ Staff chewing gum
- ☐ Staff drinking coffee
- ☐ Staff sitting down
- ☐ Staff standing behind detail stations making themselves less approachable
- ☐ Staff standing on the interior of the exhibit rather than in the aisle

Would you recommend this staffer to work this show again? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If no, why not? _____



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