

Exhibitor Institute

Creating Successful Exhibitors Since 1989

Developing an Effective Pre-Show Marketing Strategy

By Fred Fox/ Executive Director/ Exhibitor Institute

Developing an Effective Pre-Show Marketing Strategy

“With a show of hands, how many of you have a strategic pre-show marketing plan”? This is a question that I ask during every seminar that I present.

Almost no hands are ever raised. Most exhibitors don't see the need or the value in pre-show marketing.

As a matter of fact, many think it's someone else's job (show management) to bring the prospects to their exhibit.

Let's begin with a fundamental philosophy.

It's your job to get your prospects to your booth. Nobody else can, will or wants to. You need to. What if your competitors are planning their pre-show strategy?

Only you can specifically identify the unique characteristics of your prospect.

Only you can develop the compelling presentation that will reveal the benefits of dealing with your organization.

In the 'show' environment, most exhibitors are willing to settle for the fact that their best prospect may just accidentally stumble into their booth.

We need to take steps to *insure* that our best prospect shows up at the booth.

I believe that 15-25 % of your qualified leads should be developed through your pre-show marketing efforts.

Creating a Pre-Show Marketing Plan

- 1) Set an objective
- 2) Determine a budget
- 3) Create a profile of your 'Perfect Prospect'
- 4) Gather your qualified visitor lists.
- 5) Determine the type of campaign you will utilize.
- 6) Select the delivery vehicle's.

Set an Objective

As in any strategic plan, you need to have some sense of your end goal prior to entering into the plan. This number will be a reflection of your company's size, its market share, length of time in the industry, the quality of your data base, the ability and experience of your sales people and many other factors.

Email

Can be very cost effective, but with developing 'spam' and privacy issues it is becoming harder to utilize. Can be very effective with existing clients or others that have given you permission to send. Always give an opportunity for them to 'opt out' of your list.

Your Web Site

Be sure you put your show schedule on your web site. You may also wish to offer a 'Show Special' that prospects can receive if they bring a coupon or other certificate that has been downloaded from your website and printed.

Fax

Make it a 'one pager' offering a 'Show Special' and again, give an 'opt out' opportunity.

Advertising in Trade Publications or Exhibitor Guides

Can be effective and often best if used in conjunction with other strategies in an "awareness" campaign.

Brochures, Flyers & Coupons.

Can be effective in an "awareness" campaign if included with client communications such as newsletters, invoices, etc.

There are other delivery options discussed in the video segments of your Exhibitor Success Center.

Conclusions

Whatever Pre-show strategies you employ, you need to track and quantify the results. However complex or simple your strategies are, they will have no longevity if you can't build on the results.

If you have questions on the development of your strategies, please contact me through the "Access e-Coach" component on the Exhibitor Success Center.

Fred Fox