

▶ The benefits of exhibiting at trade shows are well known to many marketers. You'll meet prospects who, by their very attendance, have expressed an interest in your products or services. Many eventgoers will have traveled from afar, offering you an excellent chance to expand your pool of sales contacts.



At the event, you'll have a chance to shake hands with prospective buyers, hear their concerns and explain in-person how your offering will fulfill their needs.

Do you have a product that sells better with a demonstration? A trade show offers you an opportunity to set-up and showcase your item. That's often impossible or impractical to do in other forums such as the web, over the phone or even sales visits.

### MAKE THE MOST OF YOUR EVENT MARKETING OPPORTUNITY

Others, including your direct competitors, are no doubt wise to the advantages outlined above. So, it's likely they'll be staffing a display, booth or table a row or two over.

Here are some ways for you to stand out among other exhibitors, attract the largest crowd possible ... and maximize your promotional prospects!

### USE THIS LONG-RANGE/MID-RANGE/SHORT-RANGE SIGN STRATEGY

- **Employ long-range signs:** These signs are ones that can be readily viewed from 100 feet away or further. Large signage that's often suspended from the ceiling above your booth, posted on a tower within your display or placed on a back wall, rely on long-range signs to alert event attendees to the location of your trade show booth or display from across the event hall.
- **Use mid-range signs:** Another key element in a long/mid/short-range strategy, these signs should be sized so they're readable from 10 to 50 feet away with the intent of drawing visitors ever closer to you. Position them at or just above eye level, which is between 5 and 8 feet from the floor. For the best effect, mount them on the walls of your display or the back wall of an inline display. You can also place retractable banner stands in front of your display to get more attention.
- **Display short-range graphics:** The third element of the signage strategy, your short-range or close-in graphics deliver your key messages once visitors have approached or entered your exhibit space. Informative instead of promotional, they're meant to be viewed from 1 to 10 feet away. Short-range graphics will typically feature your company or product information and might include charts, graphs, infographics or photos. Place them at visitor eye level, which is between 5 to 6 feet from the floor.

### CATCH MORE EYES WITH THESE ADDITIONAL BEST PRACTICES

While effective signs will go a long way in drawing visitors to your trade show display and making your effort a success, they provide just a start to the strategies you might employ. Here are some other ideas on how to capture attention at trade shows.

- **Elevate your game:** Work with your trade show display team or scout out ways to elevate your display or some key element of it. A simple, raised platform may be one solution. By standing tall, you're much more likely to stand out!

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- **Embrace technology:** Take a good look around most exhibit halls today and you'll discover that bold, bright dynamic digital monitors, LED signage and interactive touch screen displays are the norm and not the exception. Aim at equaling, if not exceeding, the technology employed by your key competitors!
  - **Cut the clutter.** Less is often more when it comes to event marketing. Carefully consider the primary message you wish to communicate, pare back your presentation to the essentials, and tuck any extras (e.g., sales collateral, giveaways) out of sight until

needed. Offer your guests every opportunity to focus on what's most important — your products, services or brand.

- **Give visitors a break:** Offer tired eventgoers a reason to linger at your display by providing free WI-FI, a cellphone charging station, branded water bottles, light snacks or, if space allows, a lounge area. They get a welcome respite from the busy event floor. Meanwhile, you get an opportunity to garner goodwill and facilitate more meaningful, sales-based conversations.

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## BOTTOM LINE: INVEST IN THE BEST DISPLAY POSSIBLE

While it may be tempting to economize on a trade show booth or display, in the long run it pays to invest in your trade show displays.

Why? Consider that you have but one chance to make a great first impression. And, given that many attendees will be encountering your company, discovering your products and services and meeting your representatives for the first time, your trade show display and supporting signage offers you that once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.

The long-term return on investment will likely be just as rewarding. A creatively designed and well-built

trade show will undoubtedly look better longer. This is an important consideration if you plan on exhibiting at show after show, year after year.

What's more, many trade show booths and displays can be repurposed. Today's industry event, for example, may be followed by an employment recruiting fair and a subsequent corporate outing.

Considering these factors, it's no wonder that many event marketers discover that quality displays will deliver excellent value over time and long after your initial investment



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