

Lincoln West's Exhibiting Marketing Tips

***“Marketing takes a day to learn. Unfortunately it takes a lifetime to master.”
Phil Kotler***

Can you guarantee you will talk to everyone you need to at an exhibition?

Exhibitions have become increasingly important for generating new business, networking and developing existing relationships with customers and prospects.

An excellent way to stay on schedule is to make appointments in advance with the people you need to see. An email or telephone call to arrange a meeting during an exhibition can prove to be very valuable.

Exhibitions are crucial because they allow a company to refresh existing relationships and form new ones. Effective time management is therefore crucial in gaining a maximum return on investment.

“I must govern the clock, not be governed by it” Gold Meir

Do your customers know that you will be at the show?

Research shows that 83% of the most successful companies at a range of exhibitions mailed their clients and prospects before the show (source CEIR)

If you don't tell anyone you're exhibiting, who will? Invite customers, prospects and any other stakeholders that hold an interest in your company. Inviting existing customers is paramount to a successful exhibition. An exhibition is an excellent way to strengthen relationships with customers as it gives you the chance to talk to them face to face rather than through emails or telephone calls.

At an exhibition creating a hype around your stand can attract new customers. By having a lot of attention around your stand it shows how approachable and friendly your business is which in turn attracts new prospects!

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Gaining new customers is essential in growing profits, however so is retaining existing ones. An exhibition is an excellent way to strengthen relationships with customers. **Remember “if you are not taking care of your customer, your competitor will” - Ben Johnson.**

Are you maximising all types of correspondence?

Every day a business communicates with the outside world through many forms of media such as email, telephone or even by fax. A FREE form of advertising is available through these channels of communication. For example, you could add the exhibition name and your stand number to the Email signatures of all the company employees

You could even invite the person on the other end of the phone to join you on your stand for a chat and a complimentary drink. Inform as many people as you can of your presence at the exhibition.

“Communication works for those who work at it “– John Powell

Does everyone on your stand look approachable and friendly?

At exhibitions people generally DO judge a book by its cover. If a visitor walks past your stand and everyone is either on the phone, eating their lunch or staring at their laptop screen then it’s understandable if they don’t come on to your stand. It’s vital that everyone on your stand is smiling and is looking ready to talk to any prospects at any time. Remember this might be the 137th visitor to your stand, however, for every visitor it is their first experience of your business so make it memorable for the right reasons.

Needless to say the day to day business goes on while you’re at the trade show, so make sure you don’t need to be checking Emails or taking calls throughout the day. If you do need to take an important call then walk away from the stand, provided there are other people to man the stand in your absence.

Is generating new sales leads your reason for attending an exhibition?

The answer is usually YES, yet many companies fail to follow up sales leads. Typically in the lead up to the show there is a lot of preparation and activity surrounding the upcoming event. Many businesses make the mistake of forgetting about the show once it’s over. This is easily done and not uncommon.

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It is vital that a timeline is created that clearly sets out when the sales leads need to be followed up and by whom. Another factor that needs to be accounted for is a system that accurately records the sales leads that are generated, whether it is through an electronic tracking system or an enquiry form that is well constructed. This will make it easier for the sales person to make the follow up call and hopefully make the sale!

Following up a sales lead shortly after a show also ensures that the relationship formed at the exhibition is kept fresh; this makes it easier to talk to the prospect if they remember who you are and preferably your conversation.

“Waiting is a trap. There will always be reasons to wait. The truth is, there are only two things in life, reasons and results, and reasons simply don’t count” – Robert Anthony