

THE SHOW'S THE THING!



The trade show season is upon us. Soon you will be bombarded with free invitations, e-mails and post cards asking for your attendance at "Metro's Largest ...", "Huge Symposium...", "The Trade's Biggest...". Trade shows can be a fantastic opportunity for you to showcase your product or service to a very wide audience of buyers, manufacturers, sellers or more specific trades or vertical markets.

As the economy improves, your willingness as a business owner to put some dollars back into a marketing budget (a place they never really should have left) might result in your choosing a trade show to re-invigorate or introduce your product on a large scale. Trade shows, merchant fairs or expositions are far more work than they first seem, and can add up in expense quickly if you are not show savvy. As a sales trainer I advise clients to prepare themselves and research the show to determine if it is a good fit for your business objectives.

Are you looking for mass exposure? If this is the case a trade show open to everyone is a good choice. Be innovative in your choice. I wrote a marketing article on The Sex Show in Toronto a few years ago and met a podiatrist who had a booth. I inquired as to his reason for attending and the connection, and he told me that he would see 50,000 people over the weekend, and they all had feet! Check the historical attendance of the show or ask for the attendance list from the previous year. Ensure that your total cost including man hours, space rental, booth, set up and electrical, as well as any promotional items to give away are all measured against your anticipated return.

Once the decision is made, here are few tips to ensure that you get the most out of your show experience. First and foremost make sure the people manning your booth are courteous, friendly, outgoing and knowledgeable. Submit some press releases of your plans to exhibit; they may be picked up by some media. Use the web effectively. Announce your plans on your website, send an e-mail blast, use Twitter, Facebook or any other social media to let all your contacts know where to see you. Send a simple, inexpensive postcard announcement to clients and prospects. If the show has a guide or web page, inquire about cost to advertise. Watch for opportunities at the show to further expose your product or service such as an innovation award or honorable mention, best of class etc.

As far as the booth itself, ensure it is open and inviting; no chairs, tables should be to the sides to allow traffic in, graphics or images should be high quality. Ensure something exciting is happening, demonstrations etc. - and do not agree to rent a space beside a competitor. Whatever you give away, it should be good quality and tie into your company or a promotion. Rent a card scanner, they are well worth the time savings of collecting cards. My experiences at shows have been great when they were well planned and executed; I'm sure yours will be as well. By the way, a change of shoes and throat lozenges are my secret tips for longer exhibits. See you at the show! ❖

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MBX BUSINESS SHOWCASE TRADESHOW

NOVEMBER 4, 2009
5 P.M. TO 7:30 P.M.
NOVOTEL HOTEL

Last year's launch of the MBX Business Showcase was met with great success, so MBOT is bringing it back this November 4!

MBX welcomes members and guests to network and exchange information as they make valuable business connections. At this particular MBX, members will have an exclusive opportunity to book an exhibitor table to utilize with information and samples of their company's products/services.

Just in time for the holiday shopping season and 2010 business venture planning, don't miss the chance to put a spotlight on your organization at this event.

Event
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