

# Boothmanship Basics

Whether you are a trade show rookie debuting in a “ten-by-ten” or a seasoned show veteran with dozens of shows exhibiting in a “fifty-by-fifty island,” the purposes of attending trade shows are the same: to increase sales; generate leads; network; and enhance brand awareness of your company or products. To accomplish these goals, the physical booth must attract the appropriate attendee while your sales team must connect with them to close the deal onsite.

Boothmanship is the art of combining booth design and booth etiquette to attract, connect and win over attendees. These skills help eliminate many often over-looked and self-imposed barriers to attracting attendees out of the aisles and into your booth. By following some simple and not-so-obvious Boothmanship DOs and DON'Ts you can get more people into your booth where they can go from “attendee” to “customer” with a little encouragement from your sales team.

## Booth Design: Invite attendees to step into your booth

### DO:

#### **Simplify your message.**

Don't bombard the attendee with marketing slogans. Your graphics should answer 3 questions: Who are you? What do you sell? What makes your product great/special?

#### **Have a rifle vs. shotgun approach.**

This is easy if you have one product or service you offer. But if you have multiple products and services, you need to understand that you can't showcase everything. Pick some key new products or best sellers to highlight. Keep catalogs and samples of other items to the side for more in-depth conversations.

#### **Create a sitting or private area.**

If possible, consider a private area for prospects to sit and have in-depth discussions. Inviting people into your booth and offering privacy is an appreciated break. Of course, make sure this area is off to the side or even an office if possible. This will allow you to use the area for true prospects and not for attendees simply looking to take a break.

#### **Focus on carpet.**

After hours of walking on hard concrete floors, a booth with padded carpet often encourages visitors to stay longer for the added comfort. Also, color is key. Many companies pick carpet color as part of booth design - this is fine. But, if color is not part of your design you should pick a color that blends or matches aisle color. Often the visual line that is created between aisle carpet and booth carpet acts as a deterrent to attendees.

#### **Gimmicks work!**

Trade shows should be fun. The attendees love to mix fun with business so offer a special promotion or giveaway within your booth. Just make sure that the gimmick is approved by show management, fits your company's image and the sensibilities of your clients.

### DON'T:

#### **Rely on static displays.**

Motion captures attention. A looping video showing demos or short presentation can invite attendees in without them feeling pressured to start a conversation with a sales person. A rotating display will add interest to your booth helping it stand out from the others on your aisle.

#### **Use fancy fonts and images in your signage.**

Think of signs as ads not art. The quicker and easier to read the more attendees will comprehend the message. Beautiful fonts that look like art or cursive writing appeal to the creative marketers, but often are hard to read and are ignored.

#### **Use neutral colors.**

Be bold. Where fancy fonts are ignored, **bold colors attract the eye**. Think of the show floor like a neighborhood - this is one time you want your house to stand out. Neutral colors don't attract attention and tend to blend into the background.

#### **Create barriers.**

Placing tables and displays on the aisle line to create an interior 'room' for your display may seem like a good idea, but ultimately creates an image that isn't inviting. Equally, attendees will not want to enter a booth they feel they can be easily 'trapped' in by sales people. Leave your booth as open to the aisle as possible. This will encourage attendees to step in quickly and create the opportunity to impress.

#### **Forget to clean!**

Your booth is the first representation of your company. A clean, organized booth represents professionalism. Keep boxes, supplies and trash out of sight. Make sure to vacuum carpet each night and organize displays so that each morning the booth looks as it did on opening day.