



How to maximise trade show ROI

Why planning is critical

Plan, execute and review

Planning a successful booth at a conference or trade show takes more than pretty pictures, girls or giveaways. This simple guide shows how to plan, execute and evaluate success so you'll know if it's worth attending next time.

1. Define your objectives

Why are you attending, to:

- Increase market share with existing users?
- Introduce new products/services into existing markets ?
- Promote new products/services into new markets?
- Increase visibility with potential partners?
- Or just to be seen?

How will you measure success?

- What will you measure?
- Who needs a hard copy of objectives and measures?

What's the budget?

- And what is your projected or acceptable ROI?

2. Define your message

What's the one key message?

- What is new/topical/relevant to this market?
- What is the key message this year/this event?
- How does it support your strategic objectives/core messaging?
- How can you use it in all trade show marketing, communications, booth graphics, banners, brochures, sponsorship message?
- Who is handling the artwork (for booth, collateral, communications)?
- Who is overseeing consistency, budgets, timelines?



3. Plan the booth

What equipment do you need to support the message?

- What space do you need to accommodate equipment (shelves, cupboards, tables etc)
- What special requirements (security, power lighting)?
- How can you also ensure maximum wall/promotional space for your message?

What's the attraction, 'wow' factor, differentiator?

- How will you draw people in?
- How will you stand out?
- Will you have an attraction (gift, raffle, game, guest, entertainment)?
- What are others likely to have?
- How can yours be different, more intelligent?
- What can you give away as a reminder (for those who don't win)?
- What movement/animation/interest will you use (PPT, TV etc)?

What materials are needed in the booth?

- Registration of interest forms?
- Brochures (a few to show)?
- Fliers (many more to give away; linked to theme, prize and brochures)?
- Giveaways (memorable and portable)?
- Prize (to be collected later, if large)?



- Raffle, competition forms?
- How will you prioritise leads (to differentiate for staged follow up)?

NB: Avoid having lots portable material that would be useful for competitors.

How much space do you have?

- How will you avoid congestion, barriers?
- How can you make the booth linear or with several connection points (not just one in middle of front)?
- Will visitors be entertained there or elsewhere?
- How many people do you expect on the stand?
- What furniture will be needed?
- What space is left for key messages?
- How can booth be re-arranged to maximize the impact yet minimize clutter?

4. Confirm who will attend

Who will attend?

- Who are best suited to this event and its delegates (sales, technical, customer service)?
- When do they need to be there?
- Do they all need to be there all the time?
- Do you want to reward someone else with attendance at the event?
- How will you handle breaks, overload?
- Has the travel been organized?
- Who will organize it and by when?

What security/access is needed?

- For the booth and equipment
- For access for your staff?
- For guests (passes etc)?

5. Confirm your booth, constraints

- Have you booked the booth?
- Have you booked any related sponsorship?
- When is final copy needed?
- What are deadlines and constraints for artwork, sponsorship, equipment delivery, removal etc?
- How and when will equipment be delivered?
- Have you made a checklist?

6. Plan your promotion

- How will you promote it (EDM, DM, ads etc)?
- To whom will you promote (EDM list etc)?
- What incentives will you give attendees to visit your booth (link to wow factor)?
- When will you promote it?
- How many times will you promote it, finishing when?

7. Plan your follow up

- What will be sent out afterwards?
- How quickly can you follow up?
- Will it be by phone, email, EDM?
- Who will do it?

8. Plan your review

- Who will evaluate the event afterwards?
- What are the evaluation criteria?
- Were the objectives met?
- What was total conference outlay?
- What is the ROI/balance sheet like?
- Will you attend next year?

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References

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