

# Tradeshow Marketing - It's Time For Success

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Are you ready to network? The role of networking is very significant for effective business building during tradeshows. When you are willing to combine networking savvy with a well-prepared tradeshow plan, success is just a show away. Here are several steps that can provide you and your associates with effective tradeshow networking strategies to create a lasting memory and position your business long after the tradeshow has ended.

**First Step** - Clarify what your objectives and expectations are for the tradeshow. Reflect and redefine what networking, prospecting and an enthusiastic attitude means to you. It is important to know where you are going with it and to be able to create an attitude which is permeated by a sustainable level of enthusiasm.

**Second Step** - Make a list detailing: 1) what products/services you are providing; 2) what are the benefits of your services/products - All too often we emphasize the features of our products and services when we need to focus on the benefits clients receive when they establish a relationship with us; 3) what potential questions are you prepared to answer?

**Third Step** - Create a story of your business that includes a powerful self-introduction. Prepare a 30 second dialogue for line-ups and a 3 minute dialogue if you have more time for promotion. Stress your uniqueness and passion for your business and how you can serve your clients needs.

Does your attitude have a positive reflection? Can you clearly articulate the value/benefits you are willing to provide for your customers/clients? Remember that stories and analogies create lasting memories and you want people to remember you long after your first contact.

**Fourth Step** - How will participating in this tradeshow fit into your marketing plan? How many contacts/clients are you hoping to reach? What is the follow-up plan after the trade-show? Planning ahead for how you will utilize these leads ensures that you can create clients from your networking contacts.

**Fifth Step** - What marketing materials/hardware and resources do you need for a successful show? Do you have an attractive booth plan? These resources include product readiness, time, personnel for the show and a successive follow-up plan.

**Sixth Step** - What are your prospecting tools? These are the tools that will serve you long after the tradeshow and will assist you to become a savvy networker. Prospecting allows you to strategically utilize your unique position and secure the ideal customer for your service or products. Prospecting creates the focus necessary to save time and money.

List your strengths and weaknesses within each of the following areas:

- 1) Personal attitude and image - are you walking your talk?
- 2) Do your closest associates really understand what your business is all about? Remember they can be your best advertisers and sources of referrals.
- 3) How effective are your marketing tools?
- 4) How effective are your phone skills? This skill is crucial for tradeshow follow-up.
- 5) Are you using fax, email and newsletters effectively?
- 6) How effective is your database?
- 7) How effective is your self-introduction and your business story?
- 8) Describe who your ideal client/customer is.
- 9) What strategic alliances can you create at the show? Networking requires meeting and greeting people and following up on those leads.

**Seventh Step** - It's SHOW TIME. Set-up your booth early, allow enough time to meet the other exhibitors and to follow-up throughout the show with a few moments to chat with your fellow exhibitors. Remember it takes 6-10 exposures before a relationship can be created. Share leads and a networking contact with others. Stay energetic and have enough people in your booth so that you can have networking breaks. Plan for enough time to follow-up on the leads.

**Final Step** - Have fun and enjoy the adventure that being an entrepreneur can create. You will find that these events can motivate, inspire and enable you to take the next steps to expand your business. You will also find the other exhibitors to be an excellent source of support, contacts and knowledge. Remember you are aiming for the ultimate success and you expect to reach it! Tradeshows are an excellent tool to publicize your business and the bottom line is ...be prepared !

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