

YOUR

EXHIBITOR SUCCESS

KIT

DMA:2010
CONFERENCE & EXHIBITION

YOUR

EXHIBITOR SUCCESS

KIT

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Ultimately, our purpose is to help you maximize the return on your investment at your next show.

Why exhibit?

Even in this Internet age, trade shows continue to flourish because face-to-face marketing remains the most effective way to sell products and services. It's especially successful when introducing new products.

When compared to the other form of face-to-face marketing, direct sales in the field, sales generated from trade show leads are much more cost effective. Recent studies by the Center for Exhibition Research (CEIR) and Exhibit Surveys, Inc. show that closing a lead generated at a trade show costs almost 40 percent less than a lead generated from the field.

Trade shows are also the only marketing medium where the buyer has paid his own money and invested his time and effort to listen to sales presentations. How can you not include trade shows as part of your company's integrated marketing mix?

Purpose of Your Exhibitor Success Kit

Your Exhibitor Success Kit has been designed to help you — whatever your experience level — do a better job of presenting your company's products and services at trade shows and other special events.

It's filled with tips and tactics you can use immediately in your corporate exhibiting program. It will also introduce you to many products and services that will make your job easier. Finally, it will take you step-by-step through the exhibiting process, from pre-show preparation and exhibit hall onsite activities to post-show follow-up.

Making the most of Your Exhibitor Success Kit

You can make the most of Your Exhibitor Success Kit in two ways.

- 1** You can use the kit as a key to unlock the mysteries of trade show exhibiting. Each section details what you and your company need to consider in order to be successful at your next trade show.
- 2** You also can use this kit as a resource to enhance your knowledge of trade show exhibiting and as a guide to many of the new products and services available to help make your job easier and more effective.

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Have a plan

The first step toward a successful exhibiting program is to “Think Big Picture.” How does trade show exhibiting fit into your company’s overall marketing strategy? Are you exhibiting to increase name awareness? Increase market share? Enter new markets? Who are your target audiences and what do you want to communicate to them?

Set measurable goals and objectives



Once everyone has signed off on how your trade show exhibiting program will fit into your company’s integrated marketing program, you need to set measurable goals and objectives. Then, put the plan in writing. This is a key element for trade show exhibiting success because comparing your results to your plan helps you justify the cost of exhibiting and determine if a show is worth participating in next year.

76% of today’s buyers already have the exhibits they are going to visit pre-planned.

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A good way to set goals and objectives is to involve your sales team in the process. What can you do on the exhibit hall floor to make sales easier for them? Many companies use both specific and quantifiable measurement targets including:

- > Number of qualified leads from your targeted audiences
- > One-on-one meetings with key accounts
- > Value of sales confirmed
- > Number of requests for proposals
- > Amount of media coverage obtained

To make sure that your booth staff is enthusiastic about their trade show participation, set goals that are achievable for your staff. Another way to keep up the enthusiasm during the show is to ensure that you have enough staff on hand so the booth workers can take a break every two hours and have time for lunch. It's hard to sell or be enthusiastic about a product after standing on your feet for six hours straight.

ROI tool kit

A great tool to use in planning your trade show program is the ROI Tool Kit developed by Exhibit Surveys Inc. in conjunction with the ROI Task Force of the International Association of Exhibitions and Events. The project was funded by a grant from the PCMA Education Foundation to the Center for Exhibition Industry Research.

This website includes a series of simple tools to assist exhibitors in planning for an exhibition and measuring your return on investment (ROI) from exhibiting. For example, the pre-show section provides simple formulas that answer such questions as:

- > Should we exhibit?
- > How many staff are needed to engage our potential audience?
- > How much space is required to attract and accommodate our potential audience?

Registration is free for the ROI Tool Kit. It takes about two minutes to sign up. To access these ROI tools, visit:

www.roitoolkit.exhibitsurveys.net/home/welcome.aspx

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Identify the right buyers — who you want to reach

Begin by asking your in-house sales team and your distributors who they would like to have visit your exhibit. From these names, build a list of customers and current prospects to target in your pre-show promotion program. Be sure to include all sales inquiries from the last 12 months. Many shows can help you supplement your list by providing lists, by job category, of pre-registered attendees. You may also want to include members of the association(s) involved with the show.

Attract the right buyers to your booth

In today's business environment, you need to be proactive in engaging the buyers you want to attract to your exhibit. Buyers are coming to trade shows for shorter time periods and according to CEIR, 76 percent already have the exhibits they are going to visit pre-planned. You need to work hard before the show to be sure the audience you seek does visit your exhibit.

Also, don't worry too much about a drop in the number of visitors to your booth. Today's mantra is "Quality, not Quantity." Be sure that management understands that attendees who come to shows today are truly interested in your products or services and are seeking solutions. You may find that these smaller, more qualified audiences actually accelerate your selling cycle.

Proven pre-show marketing techniques that work

If you do ANY pre-show promotion, your chances of attracting your targeted attendees increase dramatically. According to The Power of Exhibitions, the landmark study of trade shows commissioned by CEIR, exhibitors who integrate marketing components into a total exhibition program increase both their target visitor attraction and lead conversions into sales.

If you send out anything at all, even just one direct mail piece, your chances of attracting your targeted attendees to your exhibit are more than twice than that of an exhibitor who does nothing.

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The press release

Whether you use e-mail, social networking, blogs, websites, Internet newsletters or printed media, you still need an effective way of delivering your company's message. In almost every case, the best way to do this is by writing a press release.

The most important feature of writing a press release is to understand that it is not written like an essay, theme or term paper. It doesn't have a beginning, middle and end. Instead it's written in an inverted pyramid style with most important information in the first two paragraphs — the who, what, where, when and why about your company and its products and services. This style is used in case there is not room to use the entire press release. If editors can use only the top three or four paragraphs, the important information, including your booth number on the exhibit hall floor, is included.

Tips on writing a press release

- > Never use "For Immediate Release" on a press release. Editors assume that if you send them a release, you want it used as soon as possible. Some editors will throw the release away if they can't use it immediately.
- > Include a contact name with title, office telephone, cell phone that will be with you onsite and e-mail.
- > The opening paragraph ideally should be 25 words or less and grab the reader's attention.
- > The following paragraphs can further describe the product and include a quote from a company executive about the product or service being discussed.
- > Sentences should be kept short. Avoid technical terms and acronyms that might confuse the reader.
- > Avoid advertising terms such as revolutionary, unique and No. 1.
- > The final paragraph should be a description of the company and its services and the website where the reader can go to get more information.
- > End the release with "###" or "The End" centered at the bottom of the page.
- > If the release continues onto another page, the word "more" should be centered at the bottom of the page. Most press releases should be a maximum of one to two pages in length.
- > Today's editors almost always prefer to receive press releases by e-mail.



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Photos

Photos are very important to the success of a press release. The old adage “a picture is worth 1,000 words” is really true. Editors will use good professional photographs. The easiest way to send photos is directly embedded in the press release or as an attachment to the release. Editors also don't mind going to a website and downloading a photograph.

Always write captions for your photos and be sure that what you send or have available on your website is high resolution.

Press kits

Press kits are a one-stop source for the media to get information about your company and products. Most shows have a press room near the show floor. Your exhibitor manual will have the location of the press room, mailing address and how many press kits to send to the press room.

Information included in the kit should be kept simple and to the point. Journalists are not interested in marketing materials or annual reports. They are after the hard news you are bringing to the trade show. Items to put in a press kit include:

- > Press releases about products or services being exhibited at the show
- > Supporting literature about the products or services
- > A fact sheet about your company
- > A CD-ROM with photos and the press releases in an electronic format
- > A business card with your contact information

The best press kits are enclosed in a folder that is marked clearly on the outside with the company's name, booth number and from one to three reasons why a member of the media will be interested in your press kit.

Your press kit also should be available electronically — online at your website, on a flash drive or a CD-ROM.

In addition to having press kits at the show, electronic versions should go out at least two months prior to the show. These can be either a CD-ROM or an e-mail linked to a corporate website.

After you have prepared your press releases and determined who the buyers are that you want to attract to your exhibit, it's time to choose the right vehicles to deliver your message. Following are some of the ways you can use your press releases to realize the power of exhibitions.

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Free opportunities

Management of the best trade shows have arranged for a variety of free opportunities that you can take advantage of for free. They reason that if they can help you have a successful exhibiting experience, you will come back year after year. These free opportunities include:

- > A list of media members attending the show
- > Editorial space for your press releases in-house publications that are planning special pre-show issues
- > Inclusion of your press releases in e-mail blasts to attendees
- > Listing your press releases on their website
- > Inclusion of your press release in show releases about featured products and services at the show
- > Inclusion in Twitter “New Product Tweets” sent out by the show
- > Posting on show Facebook pages and on LinkedIn discussion groups

The opportunities for participating in the free programs arranged by show management can be found in the exhibitor’s manual sent to you by the show. But beware. Many of these opportunities have time sensitive deadlines. You need to look for these opportunities immediately upon receiving the exhibitor’s manual. Some of the free opportunity deadlines can be as much as three months in advance of the show.

Websites and Social Media

Don’t forget your own website and social media in planning your pre-show promotion. A link to your press releases, information about the products and services you will be displaying at the show, along with the show name, location and your booth number should be prominently displayed on your company’s home page. With social media, such as Twitter, LinkedIn and Facebook, you often can establish direct contact before the show with an attendee who is part of your target audience and begin the sales process in advance.



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If budgets are tight or you have a budget for more than one direct mail piece, send a full-color postcard for one of your mailings

Advertising

Using the media mailing list provided by show management can help you determine which publications, websites and e-mail newsletters to use in your advertising program. You want to be sure that you are in the issues that are providing advance coverage of the show in which you are participating. Be sure to investigate advertising opportunities on the show website as well. Almost everyone going to a trade show will visit the show website several times. Remember, associating your marketing efforts with those of the show makes attendees more open minded to your marketing message.

Direct mail tips

Direct mail still works. In fact, you can enhance your show relationship by mailing a free show pass to the mailing list you developed with your sales staff's input. Almost every show offers these VIP registrations to exhibitors and they are perceived as a value by those who receive them. Here are some tips for your direct mail piece:

- > Be sure it includes your company name, booth number, show name, dates and location.
- > Give a reason why attendees should visit your exhibit, such as to see new products or view a demonstration.
- > Provide an incentive for opening your direct mail piece, such as a VIP registration or a free ticket to the exhibit hall floor.
- > Offer an opportunity for the attendee to make an appointment to visit your exhibit.

If budgets are tight or you have a budget for more than one direct mail piece, send a full-color postcard for one of your mailings. They are inexpensive and, according the Direct Mailing Association, more than three-quarters of your audience will look at both sides.

Sending multiple mailings will help your company stand out from the competition. Plan the first piece so that it arrives 30 days before the show and the last piece to arrive the week before the show starts.

Along with the list of customers and prospects developed by your own company, the show makes available lists of attendees who have pre-registered. You can rent use of these databases. They are useful because they are broken into buyer categories so that you can pinpoint just the attendees who will benefit from your products and services.

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Complete details about **Exhibitor Invite a Customer & TrafficMax** are available at **compusystems.com**

E-mail blasts

In addition to maintaining the preregistered attendee databases for trade shows, CompuSystems, Inc. (CSI) has developed a number of pre-show programs to help you reach out to show attendees.

CSI's Exhibitor Invite a Customer Program offers exhibitors the ability to create a unique code to allow their customers and prospects to register free or at a discount. Often, show management offers a free pass that you can use in your VIP E-vites.

CSI's TrafficMax Service takes advantage of many facets of the Exhibitor VIP E-vite program, but also broadens your reach to include the show's attendee registration list. TrafficMax is a real-time Internet list marketing system that allows you to mine the attendee registration data and send targeted mailings or broadcast e-mails promoting your booth. TrafficMax components include:

- > **Attendee list rental**
- > **List segmented by industry, demographic profile and geographic area**
- > **Integrated broadcast e-mail service — supports HTML and plain text, and the HTML option comes with e-mail tracking reports**
- > **Postcard service — you can choose from pre-designed templates or you can upload your own artwork**

How to get e-mails read

While an inexpensive way to get your message out, most trade show attendees are swamped with e-mails each day. Some good ways to help get your message opened and read are:

- 1** Put the name of the show in the subject line. Attendees are more likely to open and read e-mail that contains the show name.
- 2** Avoid words such as "free" in the subject line because spam filters often will delete them.
- 3** Just as with direct mail, give buyers a compelling reason to stop by your exhibit.
- 4** Have an offer that interests your target audience.
- 5** If your offer is a giveaway, be sure it ties into your booth theme.
- 6** Ask the recipient to preschedule an appointment at the show.

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**CSI product features may vary by show*

After all your hard work to attract the people you want to your exhibit, it's important not to let the onsite advantage of trade show exhibiting get away.

CEIR research indicates that 86 percent of exhibitors go to shows to generate leads. Yet, this same research found that 79 percent of leads are not followed up. Why? The research found that the lead information obtained was inadequate or that no lead follow-up system was in place.

Fortunately, there are a number of lead retrieval systems available to organize this process and turn the leads into sales.

Lead retrieval

CSI has several products that simplify and organize lead retrieval and follow-up so that you can maximize your sales opportunities. They are available using a portable desktop unit, a laptop computer or a mobile unit.

CompuLEAD Desktop® is a portable desktop unit that gives you an easy way to quickly and effectively capture and qualify leads on the show floor. It's lightweight, small in size and features a slot reader to scan attendee badges and capture full contact information in 10 different categories. You simply drop the badge in the card slot — no swiping is required.

When you rent CompuLEAD Desktop, you are supplied with your own personal USB memory drive to store your leads electronically in Excel format. The USB drive is built right into the unit, so when a lead is recorded it is automatically stored to it.

Several other features to help you manage your leads more effectively on the show floor include:

- > You can recall a lead that was taken at an earlier time using the keypad and then edit it.
- > The proprietary lead management software allows CSI to quickly add features and functionality to meet your needs.

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CompuLEAD Pro

CompuLEAD Pro® scans attendee badges and automatically transfers sales leads to your PC. Here are some of its advantages:

- > It allows you to manage your leads using CSI's powerful lead management software, LEADlink Plus!
- > You can qualify prospects extensively with generic and custom options.
- > You can edit your prospect's contact information as you scan the badge.
- > You can add unlimited notes to records and create an electronic file of your leads any time with the click of a mouse.
- > You can create extensive product lists and unlimited survey questions.

CompuLEAD Mobile

CompuLEAD Mobile® is a lightweight, hand-held device that allows you to scan attendee badges without having to take them out of their holder. It instantly records sales lead information and allows you to qualify your prospects with generic or custom codes. Your sales leads are provided to you at the end of each day or at the end of the show and include full contact information and your selected qualification codes. This product is battery powered, saving the cost of electrical drops.

One final note: Be sure to set aside time to train your booth staff on the use of the lead retrieval device you choose. In order to achieve a relaxed and smooth interaction with prospects, staff members must be able to easily operate the equipment.

One of the great things about lead retrieval products is that they give you the information you need to measure, on a daily basis, how the results you are achieving compare to your pre-show goals. You should have daily meetings with your booth staff during the show to discuss results. In the event that you are not meeting your targets, these daily meetings give you a chance to discuss why and to talk about what can be done differently to achieve the results you need.



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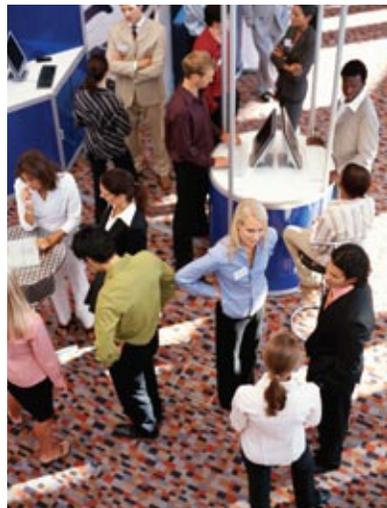
To be sure that you maximize your leads onsite, there are a number of techniques you can use to enhance all your pre-show work. These include:

Outside the exhibit hall

- > Airport ads remind attendees of your presence as soon as they arrive in town.
- > Billboards reinforce your featured products as they ride from the airport to their hotel.
- > Hotel TV ads give you more time to present your company's products with verbal reinforcement.
- > Hall ad boards or kiosks continue to build image awareness and can directly generate visits to your booth.
- > Hospitality events give you a competition-free environment to do a soft sell on the people who attend.

Onsite advertising

- > Show Issues are well read by attendees who are planning their visits. The show issues also can reach out to people not attending the show, but who still might be interested in your product.
- > Show daily ads are read by almost everyone who attends a trade show. They are a great way to build product awareness and generate leads.



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Follow up with the leads you captured

Don't let all the hard work you have put into planning for the show go to waste!

Plan your follow-up strategy before you leave for the show and follow up on your leads right after the show. This shows your customers and prospects that your company cares about them and is responsive. Remember that CEIR studies show that 79 percent of exhibitors do not follow up. Prompt follow-up is the proper thing to do. It will most likely give you a huge competitive advantage over your competition.

BuyerConnect

BuyerConnect®, CSI's post-show promotional service, helps make following up with your leads much easier. The service is free if you use any of the company's lead retrieval services during the show. After your event, BuyerConnect provides you online access to your personal list of people who stopped by your booth.

You can quickly and easily follow up on sales leads your staff captured on the show floor and compile reports. You also can view, download and print your leads, send broadcast e-mails and even print mailing labels. A nice personal touch is to send each of your leads a thank you letter referring to information you recorded during their visit to your booth.

Make sure all your leads receive a follow-up with requested information within two weeks after the show ends. Along with BuyerConnect and a thank you letter, a personal telephone call or e-mail are great ways to insure that your leads turn into customers.

BuyerConnect Attendee

BuyerConnect® also has another great advantage — it's available to attendees as well, as a reverse lead retrieval system. Anytime an attendee's badge is scanned by you on the exhibit hall floor, your company's information is automatically uploaded to a website for attendees' use post-show.

CSI contacts each attendee by e-mail within one or two days after the show and gives them a password that will provide them with easy access to their exhibitor contact list on a secure website. They can then view their leads online, download them onto an Excel spreadsheet or print out a user-friendly PDF. There is no cost to the attendee for this service.

As a result, attendees not only receive your contact information after the show so they can follow-up, but they are reminded of the positive experience they had visiting your booth and the interest they had in your products or services.

**CSI product features may vary by show*

POST SHOW

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Use the Internet

Attendees will go to your website after the show to learn more about your company, staff and products. Be sure to keep show-specific information on your site for at least three months after the show, and have a dedicated e-mail address for questions and to request more information.

Evaluate and measure your performance

Post-Show Evaluations

Within a week after the show ends, make sure you debrief your show team. The purpose is to determine how you can improve your company's ROI at your next trade show. Topics for discussion include whether or not you achieved the goals and objectives set forth in your pre-show planning.

Other subjects to consider:

- > Sales achieved and customer interaction
- > New leads captured and their buying plans
- > Conference sessions attended
- > Demonstrations conducted and feedback
- > Effectiveness of advertising, sponsorship of hospitality events
- > Meetings with editors
- > Effectiveness of incentives used
- > Effectiveness of your booth size and staff

Measurement can provide much more than justification for exhibiting. It is the marketer's companion to making good decisions — decisions that will lead to improved results, and to better return on investment. — CEIR

YOUR EXHIBITOR SUCCESS KIT

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ROI Tool Kit

Don't forget about the ROI Tool Kit in compiling your reports on the effectiveness of your trade show participation. This free kit (www.roitoolkit.exhibitsurveys.net/home/welcome.aspx) has a number of formulas to help you determine your exhibiting success. Among the questions it can help answer are:

- > How much of your potential show audience did you reach?
- > How active was your staff in reaching your potential audience?
- > What is the ROI potential from leads and inquiries obtained?

Conclusion

Trade shows work! They are especially important in times of economic uncertainty. Instead of cutting back on your exhibiting program, use the tips and tactics outlined in this kit to exhibit smarter. Pick shows for which you can set measurable objectives and that attract the audience you want to reach.

Even if attendance is down at shows you attend, remember that your show staff will still see more people at one show than in several months of sales calls in the field. Also, the attendees who come are motivated buyers and you will have more time to spend with them. Finally, by exhibiting now, you are letting your customers and prospects know that you are ready for their business when the economy rebounds.

YOUR

EXHIBITOR SUCCESS

KIT

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Exhibitor Service Help

708-786-5565

exhibitor-support@compusystems.com

www.compusystems.com

Resources

Center for Exhibition Industry Research

972.687.9242

www.ceir.org

The Power of Exhibitions, II, Power of Exhibitions in the 21st Century, Effective Methods for Visitor Promotion Part II: Exhibitors

Exhibit Surveys, Inc.

800.224.3170

www.roitoolkit.exhibitsurveys.net/home/welcome.aspx

“ROI Tool Kit”

Skyline Displays Inc.

800.328.2725

www.skylinedisplays.com

Successful Exhibiting Strategies in Uncertain Times

Marketch, Inc.

508.836.2633

www.marketch360.com

Exhibit Managers Companion Planning Worksheets

- > Strategy and Design Planner
- > Select Your Best Booth Staff
- > Effective Staffing Skills
- > Powerful Promotions
- > Staff Evaluations
- > Report Your Post-Show Results

Exhibitor Webinars

Susan A. Friedmann

518.523.1320

www.thetradeshowcoach.com

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