

## Booth Staff Training Tips

Your booth staff is your most important asset at a trade show or event. Staff members will interact with hundreds (thousands) of your company's best customers and prospects. Each of these interactions is a sales call because prospects' and customers' perceptions and buying behavior will be influenced by everything your staff says and does. Regardless of your staffers' roles outside of the show, they are perceived by attendees as professional representatives of your company who can provide them with information about your products, services and solutions. Your staff should be properly trained to ensure that each interaction is positive and mutually beneficial. The following are tips and suggestions to help you train your booth staff.

### **Define Roles and Responsibilities**

Think about your goals for the show, and then ask yourself "What skills, capabilities and knowledge will I need in the booth to accomplish our goals for the show?" Once you determine the answer, select people accordingly. Prior to the show, let people know their roles and responsibilities (i.e., meet-and-greet, demonstrator, floater, etc.). Each person should know what's expected of them, and how their performance will be measured. Train to address deficiencies.

### **Booth and Show Schedule**

Review the schedule with your staff. Find out if they have made any commitments (i.e., customer meetings, meetings with a high level manager, etc.) that will have an impact on their time in the booth and adjust accordingly.

### **How to Handle the Press**

Explain to your booth staff how to respond to inquiries from journalists. If you have a dedicated PR person, make sure people in your booth know who this is and when he or she will be in the booth. Discuss announcements that were made before, or will be made at, the show. Mention interviews that are already scheduled, and who will be interviewed.

### **Do's & Don'ts**

Trade shows have their own unique set of rules and etiquette. Review the Do's & Don'ts before the show begins, and throughout the show as necessary.

### **Show Goals and Marketing Message(s)**

Convey both your goals and marketing message for the show. Role-play with your staff to ensure that they understand, and can clearly articulate your marketing message. If they can't clearly convey your message, you can't expect your customers and prospects to understand or remember it.

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### Product Training

Explain which products, services or solutions will be highlighted at the show. Prepare a diagram of the booth, note where each product or service will be discussed, and the subject matter expert(s) who will be in the booth to address customer questions. This will enable your staff to professionally transition prospects to the right part of the booth or the right person in the booth when they get questions they cannot answer.

### Sales Skills Training

Most interactions on the show floor last between three and five minutes. Train your staff how to make the most of these short interactions. Train them how to quickly and professionally engage prospects, qualify the person and the sales opportunity, and identify specific customer needs and requirements before they present. Train them to present information that relates to each prospect's specific needs. Then, train them how to close the prospect on the appropriate post-show activity, complete the lead form, and professionally disengage. Don't assume that they can do this. Role-play and practice.

### Lead Processing

Teach people how to process leads. Have them practice asking the questions that need to be asked to properly complete the lead form. If the show is using an electronic card reader, have them practice using it and, if appropriate, explain how to key in additional information and how to process the lead. Also, explain how and when your company will follow up after the show so that your staff can convey this information to your customers and prospects.

Shows are important marketing events. Maximize your investment in it by selecting the proper mix of booth staffers, and then providing them with the training they need to make the most out of each and every interaction on the show floor.