



Why Train Exhibit Workers?

by Keith Reznick

In Research Report MC 29 the Center for Exhibition Industry Research (ceir.org) states: *"Making the decision to train your staff is a monumental step towards increasing your return on investment."* Why? Their research has also found that **85% of an exhibitor's success lies in the performance of the staff!!** Whether the conversation occurs on the convention floor or in the customer's office, the people representing your company ARE your company in the eyes of your prospects and customers. After a short conversation, an attendee leaves the booth with an impression of the seller that is positive, negative or neutral. *People* are the most influential factor in buyers' perceptions of a supplier, followed by the company and finally its products and services.

Without practical skills training, most people staffing an exhibit mean well but most don't intuitively know how to:

- Leverage their expertise in the unique show or event environment;
- Integrate your key messages into each interaction;
- Ask the qualifying questions that will improve lead quantity and quality; nor
- Represent your company to its best advantage.

Attendees' Expectations are High

Attendees we've interviewed (<http://www.creativetraining.com/train/attendees.php>) expect exhibit staff to: 1) show interest in being in the exhibit and in each visitor; 2) ask questions and listen carefully to each person's specific needs before responding; 3) be knowledgeable about the products and services; and 4) provide specific suggestions for post-show follow-up. Attendees further explained that they are turned off when exhibit staffers: 1) are talking on the phone; 2) are talking with each other when they approach an exhibit; 3) launches into a sales pitch or a demo before finding out about the visitor's interests; and 4) doesn't listen or stays on their own agenda instead of identifying and addressing the attendee's interests.

What's The Cost of NOT Training Your Exhibit Staff?

Although it's difficult to quantify, consider the cost sales lost because: 1) the attendee's 'brand experience' was less than satisfying; 2) qualifying questions weren't asked and/or leads were never captured; 3) your company didn't make an attendee's 'short list' of potential suppliers; and 4) challenging questions were not answered well (i.e. "Why would we select your company compared to any other company exhibiting at this show?"); and 5) key messages were not conveyed and cross-selling opportunities were not created.

Measurably Improve Results

Some of our clients have used 'mystery shoppers' to observe, interact with, measure and evaluate their exhibit workers' performance. Exhibit workers we've trained scored an average of 25 to 35 points higher (on a 100 point scale) than their co-workers (at the same show or event) whom we did not train.

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