

TOP FIVE TIPS for success at consumer shows



There are many advantages to attending consumer shows and marketplace events, and making face-to-face contact with thousands of potential visitors. Thoughtful planning, well in advance, will help you make a positive first impression and influence consumers. Here are a few tips to get the most out of your efforts.

1. DO YOUR RESEARCH

- Market and show selection are integral to success at any trade show. Once you have determined your market and which shows are suited to your business or attraction, book early to get the best price and booth space. Book your furnishings and booth services early to receive the show discount.
- There are prime spots on the trade show floor that provide the best exposure. Avoid the space closest to the entrance. People tend to walk by to check out the rest of the show and may not notice you. The show organizer can help you determine high traffic areas.

2. SHOW YOUR BEST SIDE

- Looks are everything. Your booth appearance alone should attract prospects. Choose an open design and high quality, appealing visuals.
- Feature up-to-date photos that are evocative and trigger a positive emotional response. Select images of people having fun or experiencing memorable moments. Use photography to lure customers and strike up conversations.
- Display up-to-date, informative literature about your business and distribute freely to potential customers.

3. MAKE A POSITIVE FIRST IMPRESSION

- Keep the booth clean, tidy and well-organized. Wear company-branded gear and comfortable shoes.
- Always be ready to engage a prospect. Greet customers in the aisle with a warm smile, and make eye contact. Be enthusiastic, confident and polite when they approach your booth.
- Stay on your feet. A person sitting seems unapproachable. If buyers want to learn about your product and you make no effort to stand and greet them on their level, they may feel snubbed and take their business elsewhere.
- Keep booth chatter to a minimum. Customers, not colleagues, should be the focus of your attention. Be aware of what is happening on the floor and do not ignore passing customers.
- Avoid eating in the booth. Limit phone use to a minimum.

4. ENGAGE AND QUALIFY YOUR PROSPECTS

- Ask open-ended questions to gauge the prospect's travel interests and intentions. From this information, you can determine whether they are a qualified customer and how much time to devote to them.
- Once you have captured the attention of potential customers, give them reason to stay engaged in the conversation. Make them the focus and give them your full attention.
- Sell them on your business. Have your pitch prepared well in advance and know it inside-out. Be convincing and clear about what makes your business and destination unique. Use your passion and conviction to seal the deal.
- Know how and when to disengage. People who simply want to chat may be taking you away from potential qualified customers. Be polite and steer the conversation to a close by saying "Thank you for this opportunity to talk," or "I think that I have taken enough of your time today. Thank you for stopping by our booth." Offer a handshake and perhaps an inexpensive takeaway item.

5. KEEP IN TOUCH WITH QUALIFIED PROSPECTS AND CONTACTS

- Capture names and email addresses of qualified contacts. Promptly follow up with an email or electronic newsletter.
- Developing relationships with potential customers is a key step to attracting them to your business or destination.
- Deliver on your promise. You do not have to be a five-star property to impress guests. It is the quality of service and the effort that you put into the relationships that will keep your customers coming back year after year. These satisfied, loyal clients will champion your business to their friends and family.