Trade Shows Mean Bigger Business
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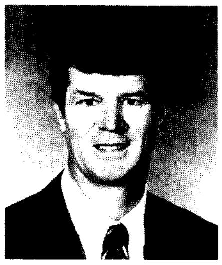
The fundamental imbalances in the economy will be removed to the extent that we promote more investment in the education and training of our people, encourage more research and development in industry, generate more capital formation, and improve efficiency in the management of resources both in the public and private sectors. World trade needs to be recognized as part of a process that generates world prosperity and enables us to acquire products we value highly in exchange for products we value less.

In his State of the Union address, President Bush made the statement "...far more important than my political future...is the well-being of our country." Opinion polls confirm that most Americans also feel the well-being of the country is in danger. Unfortunately, in this election year, the political process is likely to mask the real reasons for the country's economic ills with a quick tonic.



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SALES Marketing

Trade Shows Mean Bigger Business

By John F. Tanner, Jr.

More and more companies are turning to trade shows as a cost-effective method of promoting their products and services. Among the reasons for this trend are the high and ever-increasing costs of personal sales calls, the fragmentation of traditional advertising media and their audiences due to other outlets such as cable TV, and the growing acceptance of trade shows by all buyers including consumers.

If trade shows can mean bigger business, then what should be their role in a marketing plan and how can trade show productivity be improved?

The Role of Trade Shows

Too many companies exhibit at trade shows only because "We always exhibit here" or "Everybody else exhibits here." These companies feel that they are maintaining their presence in the marketplace or boosting their image (or some other nebulous objective) by doing so. However, while trade show participation can enable a firm to maintain a presence or boost an image, most companies can no longer afford to spend this kind of money without achieving more quantifiable objectives.

Today's successful trade show exhibitors are therefore setting other objectives that are more easily quantified—such as direct sales or a set number of qualified leads. Some shows, especially those that cater to consumers, such as craft, home or boat shows, allow exhibitors to make direct sales at the show, thus providing easy measurement of the firm's success there.

Qualified leads, too, are easily quantifiable and usually defined in such a way that not everyone who stops by the booth qualifies as a lead. For example, Troy Cooper (*Baylor '83*), chief operating officer of BSM Corporation, recently launched a sister company called Identity Systems at Comdex, a computer show in Las Vegas. For such shows, Troy defines a qualified lead as a person who 1) is able to buy his product because he/she has the right type or size company and 2) also expresses an interest in his products.

Shows can be used to launch an additional product line or, as in the case of BSM, a whole new company. The role of trade shows, then, is to generate sales or leads to new or existing customers.

To strengthen relationships with existing customers, the marketing manager of Banktec, John Moss (*Baylor '77*), takes his top executives to trade shows for the purpose of visiting with their current customers. While these customers are made to feel important by meeting Banktec's top officials, salespeople are left free to solicit new prospects—the primary objective of showing.

Statistics from the Trade Show Bureau verify that trade shows are an excellent way to reach new prospects.

On average, over 90 percent of the visitors to a company's booth have not been called upon by that company's salespeople in the previous 12 months. Typically, too, half of the visitors come specifically to see new products, new services, and new developments in existing areas.

However, it takes more than simply showing up to make trade shows effective.

Making Trade Shows Effective

Trade show productivity can often be improved through a number of preparatory steps.

❑ The first step is no surprise: Set specific, quantifiable goals. Usually this should be accomplished before selecting which shows to attend. Then plan to exhibit at only those shows that can deliver the audience necessary to achieve the pre-set goals.

❑ Once shows have been selected, the second step is to integrate the message into the company's overall promotion mix. The graphics, booth layout, featured products, and other elements of the booth should continue the organization's overall marketing theme. Any special promotions should be consistent with that theme.

The president of Freeman Exhibit Services, Carrie Freeman (*Baylor '85*), integrates advertising design with booth design. When her company's prospects see an ad, they in effect also see the company's booth. The same design theme is carried over into the sales literature. The result is long-term recall and desired positioning in the buyers' minds as to what Freeman Exhibit Services is all about.

❑ The next step is to get the staff ready for each show by offering special training. Selling at a trade show is different from most booth staffers' usual activities, even if they are salespeople in the first place. An interaction at a trade show booth is usually less than 10 minutes, while salespeople may be used to sales calls that last an hour. For such reasons, and others, special training is often necessary.

❑ Another important part of planning for a trade show is the need to adequately staff the booth. Staffing plans should include sufficient time off because staffers wear out in only a couple of hours if the show is busy. Inadequate staffing leads to empty booths, staffers sitting down and not greeting visitors, or other undesirable behaviors.

On average, over 90 percent of visitors to a company's booth have not been called upon by that company's salespeople in the previous 12 months.

Source: Trade Show Bureau

❑ Many companies fail to meet their trade show goals because the goals are never communicated to the booth staff.

Gail Walker (*Baylor '78*), president of Marquis Communications, Inc. (a trade show consulting company), advises clients to meet with booth staff just before the show opens so that they are familiar with the company's objectives and their own roles in accomplishing these goals. Staffers can also learn where spare brochures and other such materials are stored, what products are being featured, pertinent aspects of the show's floor plan, and so on. This meeting would be in addition to special training.

❑ Set objectives or quotas for each booth staffer; then meet at the end of the day to review the day's results. Some companies will run special contests for their staffers to reward those who meet their objectives. Such contests keep staffers focused on objectives and help ensure that adequate paperwork is completed so that the company can follow up on prospects later.

❑ The last step is to follow up promptly with prospects. Nearly one-third of visitors who are interested in making a purchase fail to do so because there is no follow-up or because the salesperson does a poor job.

Proper follow-up begins with staffers carefully recording the appropriate information at the show. In research conducted by Baylor's Center for Professional Selling, booth staffers were told that the booth visitor was not the decision maker and that their company *should follow up with someone else*. Yet staffers rarely noted the name of the proper contact. The result was that follow-up mail and telephone calls were directed to the wrong people.

Good follow-up systems (also called lead fulfillment systems) put leads in the hands of the appropriate salespeople within days of a show. Those systems also have controls in place so that management can measure the effectiveness of the show in generating future sales. Some companies ask salespeople to report only on their initial follow-up efforts; others want regular reports on each lead until the prospect either orders or is eliminated. Choose a reporting requirement that encourages follow-up but does not create unnecessary paperwork.

Be sure, too, that show schedules are set up to avoid lead fulfillment breakdown. Too many leads at one time can overwhelm the sales force and marketing staff.

The Future of Trade Shows

While many companies are reducing their advertising, training, and sales budgets, *trade show budgets* continue to grow (or at least remain stable) because trade shows have proven to be effective methods of promoting products and services. The results of trade shows can be immediate and quantifiable, something that is difficult with other forms of promotion. Customers also like trade shows because they can learn so much in such a short time. Thus the future of trade shows appears quite bright.

For a copy of *Trade Show Salesmanship*, published by the Center for Professional Selling, call 817/755-3523. The Trade Show Bureau also offers information on marketing through trade shows at 303/860-7626.

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ISSUES IN
Management

Corporate Culture Best Conveyed by Mid-Level Managers

By R. Duane Ireland

A manager's job seems simple enough: determine and devise the most effective and efficient way for a firm to achieve its objectives. To do this, managers must first allocate a company's physical, financial, informational, and human resources and then direct the operation of units for which they are responsible. Without effective managers, the work environment becomes chaotic and objectives are not accomplished.

While it is recognized that *all* organizations require some degree of management, it is equally recognized that the managerial role is complicated and multidimensional. In organizations beyond the smallest, there are three types of managers—first-level, top-level, and middle-level.

The Managerial Hierarchy

First-level managers are directly responsible for the manufacture of a firm's good or service. The sales manager at a car dealership is a first-level manager, as are the production supervisor in a manufacturing plant and a department chairperson in a university. First-level managers spend a great deal of time managing the performance of individuals in their units, planning and allocating resources assigned to them, and working with subordinates to help them complete their jobs successfully.

Top-level managers are responsible for determining the overall direction their firms will pursue. These managers develop a firm's mission, objectives, and key strategies. Top-level managers include chief executive officers, presidents, and board chairmen. For example, Jack Welch, chairman and CEO of General Electric, is a top-level manager just as is Herbert H. Reynolds, president of Baylor University.

Middle-level managers work in between a firm's first-level and top-level managers. A mid-level manager integrates the intentions of top-level managers with the day-to-day operational realities experienced by first-level managers. To do this, mid-level managers translate missions, broad objectives, and strategies into specific objectives and plans for first-level managers. As integrators, mid-level managers review the work plans of various groups and coordinate across the entire organization the actions necessary to fulfill those plans. The general manager of a paper manufacturing plant is a middle-level manager as is the dean of a university school or college.

Tremors in the Hierarchy

For many decades, the three levels of managers completed their separate yet integrated tasks effectively. However, in the wake of recent reductions in the size of many organizational work forces, this arrangement has become somewhat tenuous.