



Exhibiting at Trade Shows

Plan for Success

Purpose of exhibiting at trade shows: to generate sales leads. Plan a strategy *prior* to the event and include a plan for follow-up on leads afterwards.

Plan for the show:

- **Preshow promotion:** Let existing customers know when/where you will be during the trade show.
 - Direct mail
 - Participating in the host organizations promotional efforts
 - Place your own ads

- **Create a budget for the trade show**
 - Know what is provided by the trade show host.
 - Budget should include: booth space, phone and electricity costs, staff time, exhibit display and materials, supplies, decorations, marketing before and after the show, promotional gifts, personal travel, shipping your exhibit, and lead tracking.

- **Supplies**
 - Trade show display
 - Trade show headers and signage
 - Sheet to cover display

- Personal portfolio and calendar
 - Pens for notes
 - Giveaways
 - Tape, scissors, Velcro
 - Your business cards
 - Fishbowl for business cards and drawings
 - Business card holders
 - Hot glue gun
 - Flyers and brochures
 - Tools, risers
 - Freshen up kit (breath mints, toothbrush)
 - Clamp-on lights
 - Snacks and water
 - Catalogue
 - Nametags
- **Train your employees for the trade show**
 - Bring enough people, bring the appropriate people
 - What should they say? Role play for interacting with potential customers
 - Arrive early, stay late
 - Display a thorough knowledge of products and services
 - Be friendly, proactive and enthusiastic
 - Proper attire
 - Attractive nametags
 - Stand at the edge of the booth
 - No private conversations
 - Properly handle rejection
 - Do not eat, drink, or sit at the booth only during breaks away from the booth
 - Take frequent breaks

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- Eat healthy snacks
 - Drink plenty of water
 - Use breath mints
 - Smile and have fun
- **Follow-up and leads**
 - Enter customer information into a database immediately after the show
 - List things you will need for the follow-up mailings
 - Target hottest leads first

If attending a trade show be prepared with preshow promotion, develop your budget, have supplies ready, prepare your staff, and follow-up afterwards.

Visit your local SBDC for no-cost, confidential advising services: www.wsfdc.org