



## Adding Trade Shows to Your Marketing Mix *Put Special Events in Your Marketing and PR Strategy*

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*One of the most effective ways to use special events in your firm's marketing strategy is through participation in trade shows. The right trade show is one which not only targets the primary buyers of your services, but also has a proven record of attracting attendance by those who can make or initiate a buying decision.*

At the beginning of the year, evaluate which shows are right for you and include them in your marketing plan and budget. Look for industry trade shows that correspond to your firm's client niches and local or regional trade shows that are less expensive than national shows.

Do your homework when selecting the right trade show. Focus on your target market. Who are your target prospects and what shows are they likely to attend? Are the show's managers reputable? Ask for a profile of last year's attendees, including job titles, industry, and what products or services they were interested in. By matching these with your own client base, you can determine if a show's attendees are likely to become your clients. Ask if your competitors are participating, how large their booth space is, and where they are located on the show floor.

Don't worry about huge attendance figures. Since the average encounter between an attendee and an exhibitor is 4 minutes, you have the potential to relate to a maximum of 15 potential customers an hour. Assuming there are two people at your booth and you are at the trade show for eight hours, you have the potential to make 240 contacts between the two of you. So, it doesn't really matter if 5,000 or 25,000 people attend the show. What counts is how you qualify and follow-up on those approximately 240 leads.

Once you have carefully selected a trade show, establish some trade show objectives that are realistic, attainable and measurable. Set goals for the number of booth visitors you expect, qualified leads you require and expected rate of sales return on your investment.

At the end of the year, a critical evaluation of the results can provide valuable information you can use to strengthen your marketing program next year. Was each show right for you? Were you reaching the right audience? Was the expense justified given the return on your investment?

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