

## 6 Tips to Maximize Your ROI at Your Next Exhibition

While walking the next tradeshow you attend, you'll see a couple different types of booths. In some booths, staff will be engaging with prospects and customers, while showing off compelling demonstrations and product introductions, timed carefully to be released during the event. These booths are usually busy with crowds of people —these companies prepare in advance, train their staff and prepare their participation like any major investment. The other type of booth you will see is one that has few or no visitors, with a disengaged representative who looks as though he or she would rather be anywhere but where they are in that moment. Not only does their disposition give off an unwelcoming feeling, their booth is also lacking any supplies or displays that are of interest to attendees.

To be the interesting, engaging company at your next tradeshow, consider these six tips as you prepare:

### 1. Tell Attendees Where You'll Be

Connect with your key prospects and potential customers weeks, or even months, before the event to invite attendees to your booth. Make sure to utilize all available channels of communication, including: email, social media and direct mail. Include your booth number and any other applicable pieces of information that attendees can use to find your booth. It's also helpful to give your customers a reason to visit your booth, maybe a new product or service you'll be introducing, or a person they might want to meet. For important customers, make a specific appointment when you can give them personal attention.

### 2. Prepare Your Staff

Consider sending your top technical staff to tradeshow so that your team members are recognized as subject matter experts. Train and brief your staff on all levels of your business and presentations so that while your booth is humming with visitors, each team member is well-prepared to address attendees' and press members' questions. If there are special meetings, demos or appointments that staff are to hold or attend, ensure that there is a clear schedule and understanding of responsibilities across your team.

### 3. Build Out Your Booth

It's no secret that an interesting demo or captivating booth design draws attendees' attention to your display. Carefully build and test any materials or displays that you bring to ensure success during the tradeshow. Don't make people probe to find your displays – move your demo to front of the booth, or even in the aisle, so that interested attendees can easily find your prized attraction. If there's nothing about your product or service that you can

demonstrate effectively, consider an unrelated but attention-getting “curiosity” to draw people in, maybe a raffle, game or anything with movement---as simple as a beach ball suspended in a stream of air. Don’t forget to have the necessary materials and personnel available to make repairs if necessary.

#### 4. Provide Compelling Collateral

Leading up to the tradeshow, ensure that all collateral, hand-outs and your evaluation board are ready to go. Having takeaway information for attendees is key to being remembered following a tradeshow.

#### 5. Interact with Press Attendees

While customers are important, don’t forget about the members of the press that will be attending the tradeshow, visiting your booth and watching your demos. It’s important to not only interact with the press, but also prepare for their inquiries and requests---they need publishable content that your mutual customers will find interesting! Bring your press kit, USB drives with applicable information and don’t forget to follow-up afterwards – members of the press compile videos and articles featuring **your** company and those are priceless pieces of promotional material.

#### 6. Take Notes and Follow-Up

The number of people that you’ll meet at a tradeshow booth can be overwhelming. Ensure that you and your team are taking notes, collecting business cards and scheduling meetings to continue communications and build relationships with the prospects you’ve acquired. After the tradeshow, following up with your prospects is key in developing further relationships with attendees and potential customers. If they have a good experience in your booth this year, there’s a good chance they’ll stop by again next year.

Following these six steps is sure to improve your ROI. Once you’re finished with your next tradeshow, it’s time to prepare to do it all over again next year and the year after. Don’t fear though---it’s amazing how much luck you can have by doing the right things, preparing in advance, and sustaining the effort over multiple years.

References: Tim Burkhard, Associate Publisher, High Frequency Electronics