

{THE MEETINGS COACH}

# EXHIBITOR *SUCCESS*

The keys to achieving trade show benefits.

BY AARON D. WOLOWIEC, MSA, CAE, CMP, CTA

**Q:** *I'm planning a trade show. How can I best partner with exhibitors to ensure we're both successful?*

**A:** First, understand that the person who completed the trade show agreement is not likely the person who will set up the display or staff the booth. ¶ Identify and communicate with key players early to ensure they're leveraging activation opportunities before, during and after the show. Following is an exhibitor success guide to serve your organization's needs.

## BEFORE THE SHOW

- 1. Set goals.** Establish realistic, measurable goals (e.g., number of booth visitors, meetings scheduled or qualified leads obtained).
- 2. Train.** Ensure new exhibit personnel know what to expect on the show floor.
- 3. Promote.** Leverage print/online advertising, as well as your company's website/blog and email signatures. Spread the word on Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn.
- 4. Reach out.** Contact expo/trade show attendees, current/past customers, prospects and VIP clients.

## DURING THE SHOW

- 1. Be dynamic.** Ensure booth staffing aligns with your goals, and staff your booth with approachable, friendly people. Put away distracting devices such as cell phones.
- 2. Stand up.** Rarely do people have much success sitting down while prospects walk by.
- 3. Engage.** Quickly engage and qualify prospects that stop by your booth.
- 4. Look good.** Ensure your exhibit space is comfortable and pleasing to the eye.
- 5. Promote.** Use techniques that attract attendees to your exhibit space (e.g., product- or solution-related demonstrations). Disseminate an informational

card or purchase a promotional item that references your website.

- 6. Nosh.** Serve approved food and beverages to drive additional traffic to your booth.
- 7. Play games.** Consider hosting an interactive game at your booth to promote fun and intrigue.
- 8. Host drawings.** Raffle a prize to those who share their contact information with you.
- 9. Meet one-on-one.** Host individual appointments with attendees in your booth or someplace quiet near the exhibit hall.
- 10. State your message, then strategize.** Succinctly inform attendees what you do and how you can help them. Instead of delivering a sales pitch, have a conversation with attendees about their current challenges.

## AFTER THE SHOW

- 1. Follow up.** Deliver personal emails within 24 hours. Consider inviting prospects to coffee or sending them a postcard with a special tradeshow discount.
- 2. Re-evaluate.** Determine what worked and what didn't. Use this opportunity to begin planning for the next show.
- 3. Activate.** Exhibiting once a year does little to build trust and loyalty. Identify additional opportunities to sponsor, exhibit or advertise. 📧



### Aaron Wolowiec

is founder and president of Event Garde, a Grand Rapids-based professional development consulting firm. Event Garde works with association leaders who want to deliver dynamic, meaningful and compelling education and networking experiences.

EVENT GARDE  
eventgarde.com  
616.710.1891

## HAVE A MEETINGS DILEMMA YOU NEED HELP SOLVING?

Email your questions to Coach Aaron at [aaron@eventgarde.com](mailto:aaron@eventgarde.com); please write "Meetings Mag" in the subject line.

