

The Seven Deadly Sins of Exhibiting

Sin #1 – Naivety

Failing to set exhibiting goals is one of the most deadly tradeshow sins. Goals are the purpose of exhibiting and the essence of the whole tradeshow experience. Knowing what you want to accomplish at an exhibition will help plan every other aspect - your theme, the exhibition stand layout & display, graphics, product displays, premiums, literature etc. Exhibiting goals should compliment your corporate marketing objectives and help in accomplishing them. Make sure they can be measured after the show to establish how well you did.

Sin #2 – Illiteracy

You may be able to read the exhibitor manual – but do you actually do it!?! The exhibitor manual is your complete reference guide to every aspect of the show and your key to saving money. Everything you need to know about the show is in those pages: show schedules, contractor information, registration, service order forms, electrical services, floor plans, exhibit specifications, shipping & freight services, housing information, advertising and promotion. Remember that the floor price for show services is normally 10-20% higher, so signing up early will always give you significant savings.

Sin #3 - Arrogance

Do not assume people will automatically visit your stand just because you have a presence at a show. Whatever promotional vehicles you use - direct mail, advertising, PR, sponsorship or the internet, make sure that you give visitors a reason to come and visit you. With a hall overflowing with fascinating products/services, combined with time constraints, people need an incentive to stop at your display. First and foremost their primary interest is in "what's new!?!". They are eager to learn about the latest technologies, new applications, or anything that will help save them time and/or money. Even if you don't have a new product/service to introduce, think about a new angle to promote your offerings.

Sin #4 – Ignorance

Enormous time, energy and money are put into organising exhibition participation - display, graphics, literature, promotional items, travel etc. However, the people you chose to represent the entire image of your organisation are often left to fend for themselves. They are just told to show up. Your people are your ambassadors. They represent everything your company stands for, so choose them well. Brief them beforehand and make sure they know...why you are exhibiting, what you are exhibiting and what you expect from them. Exhibition stand staff training is essential for a unified and professional image. It is vital that people chosen to represent your organisation enjoy interacting with strangers and knows exactly what is expected of them in the booth environment.

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Sin #5: Neglect

Attendees at a tradeshow are your guests. Even if it's just for a few minutes, the attendees are visiting your company. They are in your booth talking to your staff. It is your job to be a gracious host. To do this, you must focus on the attendee's needs. Do this by asking open-ended questions, designed to elicit information about the attendee's real needs and interests. Avoid missing qualifying information and potential valuable leads.

Exhibitions are all about perceptions, which is why it is imperative not to neglect the visitor's experience. It may well be the last day of a tiring show, but it's most probably the first time a visitor has been to your booth. An exhibition is exactly what it says, a display, and can be compared to that of a stage performance. The visitor's first & last impressions need to be both positive & memorable. Simple things like keeping your booth tidy & not having your back facing the aisle-way.

Sin #6: Pride

It is good to be proud of your product, after all you've taken a tremendous amount of time researching & developing your idea. But at tradeshows, you're in an ideal place to educate yourself: to learn about the market, research new processes & expand your initial ideas. Don't be afraid or too proud to be a visitor yourself and benefit from the whole tradeshow experience.

Sin #7: Complacency

The work doesn't stop when the show is over. Ignoring lead follow-up and post-show evaluation are deadly sins that happen after the show. Sadly, show leads often take second place to other management activities that occur after being out of the office for several days. The longer leads are left unattended, the colder they become. Prior to the show, establish how leads will be handled, set timelines for follow-up and make sales representatives accountable for leads given to them. Post show evaluation allows you to improve future performances. Investing the time with your staff immediately after each show isn't a luxury – it's an imperative!

For more information about exhibiting, or for a free consultation about your exhibition needs please contact us;

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