

White Paper

What's Working In Exhibiting

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To find out what's really working in exhibiting now, we partnered with *Tradeshow Week* to survey and analyze the best practices of trade show exhibitors. The response was amazing. Exhibitors shared over 1,000 new tips, filled with methods to make the most of a trade show program. 94 of these tips are included in the 32-page **What's Working in Exhibiting** White Paper.

The White Paper starts by answering two big questions: How are exhibitors increasing their results, and how are they stretching their exhibiting budgets.

Exhibitors said they had most success boosting their results with pre-show marketing and show selection. Show selection also was a key method to stretching exhibiting budgets, as was reducing booth staffing expenses, and saving on display shipping.

Further successful methods are related in the White Paper for 7 key parts of a trade show program. Here's the gist of what your peers said are making their trade shows more effective in each exhibiting topic:

Show Selection This was the only facet of exhibiting that was frequently mentioned as a key driver in both improving results and reducing costs. Survey respondents on average were going to 2.2 fewer shows in 2009, about 15.2% less. As one exhibitor commented, fewer shows can be a good thing: "We did fewer shows, but with a greater presence."

Budgeting Exhibitors reported they were going to trim their 2009 budgets by 9.2% on average. Those who were decreasing their budgets outnumber those increasing by 4 to 1. However, about half are kept their budgets the same. Other than reducing their number of shows, the two most popular methods of stretching their budgets are to reduce booth staff expenses and to save on shipping with lighter weight displays.

Measuring Results 90% of exhibitors said they are doing some sort of measurement. The key: Create a process and formula to actually measure and report sales generated from trade show leads. Exhibitors who could show sales to justify their trade show program actually were twice as likely to get their budgets increased instead of decreased. As one exhibitor said, "The only successful justification is sales revenue. One good sale will pay for a full show's marketing."

Lead Management Best practice: Put more effort into following up your leads. When exhibitors focused on lead follow-up, more of them actually increased than decreased their budgets. Lead management elements included persistent, planned follow up, a good CRM / database program, and a person responsible for it. Note: these are the same elements needed for measuring results!

Exhibit Design Less really is more. Exhibitors reported their primary ways to change trade show exhibit design to improve trade show results was to simplify, including a more open and less cluttered layout, and exhibit graphics that are bright, clear and straight to the point. Most exhibitors favored more flexibility to easily change graphics and booth configurations.

Booth Staffing By far and away, exhibitors say sales people make their best booth staffers, followed by their top management. Exhibitors are getting better results by improving how they select staffers, communicating their goals before the show, and booth staff training. Said one survey respondent, “We pick the ones that have proven track records and set high expectations for any newcomers.”

Promotions Exhibitors rely most on direct mail and email for their pre-show promotions. When asked which at-show promotions are working best, exhibitors liked free giveaways/drawings, discounts, and demonstrations. One exhibitor described their proactive pre-show marketing thus: “We identified targets and reached out to key attendees before the show. We invited key prospects to lunch/dinner meetings to have more in-depth conversations off the show floor.”

Free White Paper

Much of marketing is taking risks and experimenting. Your peers have been doing just that, and this new report lets you tap into their recent successes and failures. Take advantage of their wisdom, and get yourself a copy of the ***What’s Working In Exhibiting*** White Paper.

To get a Free copy of *What’s Working In Exhibiting*, contact Skyline at **1-800-328-2725** or visit www.skyline.com/whitepapers.



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