

Three Steps to Trade Show Success

Helping your clients to have successful tradeshow can be as easy as 1-2-3.

With the variety of goods available in the promotional industry being an informed distributor with a simple plan can really pay off.

We suggest viewing the Trade Show in three parts and call them the Before, During and After units of creating a successful outcome every time.

The Before Unit is about creating a buzz. This is the first step to ensuring a great trade-show experience. Create a buzz with pre-show mailings. There are a variety of creative ways to insure those who attend the Trade Show will show up at your booth.

Eric Johnson, Vice President of Marketing and Development at Halls & Company, Brooklyn Park, Minn., suggests mailing half of a promotional product to a predetermined customer list. In this mailing you could inform them to stop by the booth and pick up the other half. "You might send them a luggage strap and tell them to stop by your booth to pick up the luggage tag for their trip home" he said.

Another creative approach is to mail a letter telling recipients to bring it along to the booth to receive a free item such as a tote bag or water bottle. As a distributor, this is a wonderful way to showcase your capacity to service your clients. Coordinating the mailing with your clients upfront and then getting the second half of the product to the exhibitor booth positions distributors well in the eyes of the end-buyer.

For the During Unit, it's all about maintaining the buzz. A great way to do that is with food, of course. This is tried and true in every culture all over the world without exception. In fact, it has been scientifically proven that food is one of the triggers that activate emotion and feelings of joy. Custom printed cookies, popcorn and trail mixes in individual serving sizes can really give a boost to those walking the miles of the showroom floor. With the capacity to print logos on these packages, the treats themselves tell the whole story. Personal care items such as lip balms, mints, and hand sanitizers are also a great bet. Exhibitors would also do well to have a supply of games, pens, T-shirts, hats, and miniature electronic products such as fans.

The After Unit is all about sustaining the buzz. This is where the rubber meets the road. The Trade Show is over and the goal was to collect names and new contacts. What will you do with them now that you have them? In this model, the distributor can really shine by working with their customers to create a mailing campaign. Suggest sending brochures, letters or even follow-up promotional items to continue the buzz created at the show.

Being proactive in assisting your clients to generate booth traffic will no doubt create value for your clients. An informed distributor with a plan can become an invaluable asset to their clients. When value is received it becomes perception, and that adds up to referrals and repeat business beyond the miles walked at the next show.