



Classic Exhibitions: Do's and Don'ts

So you've managed to secure an excellent position at the exhibition, the stand looks great (and so it should the amount you've spent on it!). Your marketing material is up to date and you've come up with some fantastic ideas for attracting visitors.

So what about your people? There's the usual sales crew, support staff and a couple from admin to make up the numbers. They'll be fine, it's not like it's difficult or anything the customers are coming to us right?!

Research has shown that over 75% of an exhibition stand's effectiveness and therefore its return on investment is down to the people manning it. However for many companies their investment in the most important element is often a new logoed polo shirt and a bit of product training.

It's easy to make some very elementary mistakes. Below are five classic do's and don'ts, they may seem obvious but next time you're at a tradeshow walk round and see how the exhibitors measure up, you might be shocked.

Do

1. Work on your questioning skills

No-one wants to listen to a one way sales pitch, understand their background and issues first then speak.

2. Drink lots of water

They reckon you lose a pint an hour on a busy stand, if you start to dehydrate you'll lose concentration and be less effective plus it helps preserve your voice.

3. Use your breaks

Exhibition halls can be oppressive environments, too hot or cold, lights, noise, and air conditioning, try to get outside for some fresh air, walk around stretch.

4. Agree a next action

Ensure that you agree with your prospect what will happen next so you are both clear where you stand and record the details to make sure it happens.

5. Look welcoming keep smiling

Obvious I know, but can be surprisingly hard to do when your feet are hurting and you've had a late night.



Don't

1. Say "can I help you?"

It invites the response "No thank you, just looking" and it's boring because everyone else will be saying it and you want to be remembered. Try asking about what they're looking at or why they've come to your stand today.

2. Pounce

Nobody wants to be jumped on. So make yourself available by making eye contact and smiling and let the customer get settled before you make your move.

3. Eat on the stand

In a survey of visitor pet hates, eating and chewing gum came out close to the top, eat a healthy breakfast to keep you going and use your breaks to refill.

4. Huddle or guard

Two classic body language mistakes are huddling together with your colleagues in cosy conversations and positioning yourself at the entrance or edge of the stand with your arms folded. Both make your stand feel unapproachable.

5. Monopolise Visitors

Keeping visitors on the stand when they want to go is the equivalent of overstaying your welcome at a friend's house. Any hope you may have had of developing some business will rapidly disappear and all they will be left with is the memory of a pushy sales person. You may be anxious to make sure they hear about that last fantastic benefit, but if they're shuffling towards the exit let them go gracefully.

Done well, exhibitions can be fantastic opportunities to develop business but only if your people know what they're doing, the good exhibitors make it look easy that doesn't mean it is though.

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