



Trade Show Basics

Planning and Conducting a Trade
Show Presence



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Why Participate in a Trade Show?

Reasons for and against



Why?

- Trade shows offer several advantages
 - Offers direct marketing opportunity
 - Facilitates an active dialog with potential customers
 - As opposed to a one way communication like a website or advertisement
 - Enables potential customers to see your work
 - Attracts attendees that have an interest in the trade show theme



Why Not?

- Doesn't reach consumers that define your market
- You don't do well with people/crowds and have no one who can represent you
- You are uncompetitive when compared with other trade show exhibitors



Selecting a Show

- Base the decision on the audience
 - Wholesale show that attracts retailers
 - Consumer show that attracts buyers
 - Does not have to be a show of your peers
 - Shows that are not wood product related but attract similar demographics might also be beneficial
 - Examine the list of show exhibitors
 - Are they marketing to the same customers as you are?



Make the Most of It

- Invite current customers and prospects that live in the trade show area
- Invite local media to visit your booth
- Bring examples of your work that are most relevant to the show's attendees
 - Also items for sale that appeal to attendees
- Allow attendees to be hands on with your products and interact with you
 - Demonstrations



Setting Goals

Trade Show Expectations



Setting Your Expectations

- Does the trade show allow you to sell?
- Does your work lend itself to selling existing units or are you selling future production?
- What price points are you selling?
 - The higher the prices the lower the sales
- What is the state of the local economy?
 - If the show is localized, factors such as local employment, housing sales, and business activity may impact your results
- Where is your booth located on the show floor?
- How well marketed is the show?



Be Realistic

- Set three levels of goals
 - Minimum goals, satisfactory goals and ideal (maximum) goals
- Base your show strategies on achieving your top level goals
- Base your goals on three related factors
 - Number of people stopping at your booth
 - Number of people that qualify as prospects
 - Number of people that you sell



Support Your Goals and Strategies

- Make sure you have enough staff
- Make sure you have enough product(s)/samples
- Make sure you tell the right story
 - Be consistent
- Sharpen your listening skills
 - What are people who stop to talk really saying?



Advance Preparation

The exhibition begins before the show



Researching the Event

- Does the show have a track record?
 - Has it been well attended in the past?
 - Are there a lot of repeat exhibitors?
 - Is it well marketed?
- Will the show attract attendees that will benefit you?
 - Talk to other exhibitors who have been there before



Budgeting

- Budget for as many costs as possible
 - Exhibiting, including booth and setup costs
 - Expect some damage to your display/product
 - Food and lodging
 - Round trip transportation – you/your exhibit
 - Marketing and contact materials
 - Follow up on any leads – time/materials
- Add 10%-20% for unanticipated expenses



Pre Show Marketing

- Inform your contact list
 - Especially your local prospects and past customers
- Send out press releases
- Promote your appearance on your website, Facebook, MySpace and Twitter
 - Updates social media pages at least once a day leading up to and during the show
- Assume that the show has been promoted to target attendees by the organizers



Essential Supplies

- Extension cords and triple taps
- Masking/duct tape (Gorilla tape is excellent)
- Clamps, especially spring type (clothes pins)
- String/cord/rope, especially low visibility monofilament fishing line
- Crazy glue and adhesive backed Velcro
- Assorted screws/bolts/nuts and drivers
- Wood sticks/tongue depressors
- Utility knife and scissors
- Colored markers and scratch repair supplies



Planning Your Booth

- Use the Vermont Brand
 - Booth Design
 - Storytelling
 - Photos
 - Scents
 - Colors



Planning Your Booth

- Impact as many senses as possible
 - Sight, sound, smell, taste, touch
- Think of the trade show as a supermarket shelf
 - What is going to help me stand out visually?
- Use aroma therapy products to add scent
- Use music or sound deadening material to create audio contrast
- Offer snacking opportunities



Planning Your Booth

- “Extend” your booth into adjacent areas
 - Ceilings
 - Aisles
 - Adjacent booths
- Use color, light, motion, scent, and sound
- Use the pipe and drape provided strategically
- Make the most of your power supply



Planning Your Booth

- Use your booth to interrupt the flow of traffic past your booth
 - Carpet that extends into the aisle
 - Scents that attract traffic
 - Sounds that attract traffic
 - Visual elements that extend up and out from the booth
 - Motion that extends up and out from your booth
 - Example: banners that flutter from a fan



Tracking Mechanisms

- Create a special website landing page for show attendees
 - Track traffic to the special page
- Build a mechanism for attendees to leave their contact information with you
 - Sign up sheet, collect business cards, etc.
- Have your contact information readily available
 - Business card, brochure; with website address as above



During the Show

Making the most out of your
appearance



Trade Show Decorum

- Always be respectful of other exhibitors
- Be friendly, knowledgeable, courteous
 - Encouraging without being aggressive
- Treat every visitor as if they were millionaires
 - Appearance and demeanor are not good indicators of potential to buy
- Attendees are your guests



Communicating with Attendees

- Verbal communication constitutes only 7% to 20% of what is perceived in face to face encounters
 - Tone of voice is between 25% and 38%
 - Boredom, fear, arrogance, anger, joy, aggressiveness, nervousness all come through in the tone
 - Body language is between 45% and 55%
 - Crossing your arms, rolling your eyes, looking at your watch, having your back to the crowd, wearing a t-shirt and ripped jeans



Generating Leads

- Most visitors will not convert into sales at the show
 - Large number of impressions
 - Make sure they have your contact information
 - Medium number of leads
 - Make sure you collect their contact information
 - Small number of sales
 - Learn how to identify hot prospects



Five Steps to Selling

1. Qualify the prospect
2. Making your pitch
3. The Close: asking for the sale
4. Handling objections
 - After each objection go for closure
 - “Does that answer your question?”
 - Ask for the sale again
5. Get a deposit/sign a contract



Qualify: Identifying Hot Prospects

- Four “Tells”
 - Interest in your work
 - Engaging in a discussion around their needs/wants/desires
 - Specifics about design and construction
 - Questions about details like species selection, scheduling, delivery
- Each step gets you closer to closing the sale



The Pitch

- What is it about you or your work that makes you distinctive?
 - Style or vernacular
 - Design
 - Craftsmanship, training, skill set
 - Personal story or inspirations
 - Materials you use
 - Techniques
 - Special features



The Close

- Ask questions that beg a positive response
 - Is this what you look for in a piece?
 - Does this level of craftsmanship match what you want in a piece?
 - Would you like to talk about design?
 - What species of wood do you prefer?
 - What period or movement appeals to you most?



Customers May Close Themselves

- When can you get started?
- When can I expect delivery?
 - How will you deliver it to my home?
- How long will it take you to make it?
- What are my options for wood species or design changes?
- What do you have in stock now?
- Can I come visit your shop?



Asking for the Order

- Final Close
 - “When would you like to take delivery?”
 - “Would you like me to get started looking for wood for your piece?”
 - “Shall I work up a design and send it to you?”
 - “I usually get a small deposit to begin the design, then 50% before ordering the materials and beginning work...how would you like to take care of that?”



Objections

- Objections often mask other issues
 - Helps to separate immediate buyers from genuine prospects and “tire kickers”
- Buyers have specific questions
- Prospects generally need more time
- Tire kickers refuse to commit in any way



Profiling Prospects

- Are they asking about your work or telling you about their needs?
- Are they interested in you as a person/craftsperson, in your skills/techniques, or interested in the finished product?
- Do they want a lot of detail?
- Are they direct and to the point?
- Are they inspired by your work?
- Are they trying to get to know you better as a person?



Personality Profiling

Analytical:

Wants to investigate details such as numbers and financial outcomes. Usually takes a longer time to make decisions. Furthermore, the wrong decision is perceived by this personality style as failure. An Analytical can become obsessed with "getting it right." Failure is unacceptable. The ideal Analytical message focuses on the numbers and must include financial detail that would render the message fairly ineffective to other personality types. Give them lots of information, statistics and lots of time to absorb the data. If you try to force or pressure an analytical into quick action, you'll just turn him or her off. You might even score compatibility points by encouraging him or her to take all the time they need and to ask plenty of questions.

Task Oriented
Positive Logic

Driver:

Likes things to be done and done NOW! This person is quick to anger and slow to accept feedback. The Driver wants to know the bottom line quickly and expects other people to immediately understand all the details and salient issues. Wants facts, not feelings. This person likes to make decisions quickly and move on to other things. Use a fact based bottom-line oriented pitch and reinforce the notion that s/he is in control of the situation.

Askers

Tellers

Amiables:

Are often quiet, timid and desire to have everyone be a friend. This personality style avoids conflict whenever possible and often makes decisions based on consensus. The goal of this personality style is to maintain harmony within the workplace. Amiables are often liked by all and tend to be great confidantes. However, back an Amiable into a corner, and they will come out roaring like a lion. Base your pitch on positive emotions. An Amiable will probably take a strong interest in you personally and will want to trust someone. Ideally, you can foster a sense of trust in you as an individual. Remember to take plenty of time to build an agreeable relationship with this person, and don't push for quick decisions.

People Oriented
Positive Emotions

Expressive:

Easily excitable, highly energetic and loves to be the center of attention. Often this personality style makes decisions on a whim, or by factors that excite him or her. They often make decisions without clearly thinking through all aspects of a potential decision. Expressive personalities love to have fun and are usually the life of the party. Reacts strongly to emotional factors, but will likely move quickly. To persuade such a person, show a lot of enthusiasm. Keep the spirits high.



Customer Types

	Driver	Analytical	Amiable	Expressive
Orientation	Task	Task	People	People
Assertiveness	Tell	Ask	Ask	Tell
Favorite Word	Now	How	We	Me
They Want	Action	Process	Relationship	Inspiration
Makes a decision	My choice	Scorecard	Voting	How impressed am I?
Communications "Musts"	Brief and to the point	Details of the process	Working Relationship with you	Expressive centered; enthusiasm and creativity
Design process	Fast	Developing with changes	Casual/informal	Creative
As a Customer	Demanding	Tedious	Supportive	Hectic



Customer Interactions

	Driver	Analytical	Amiable	Expressive
Initial Mindset	Skeptical and challenging	Somewhat open, especially if better than other makers	Somewhat open, but protective of current personal relationships	Doubtful; hasn't been impressed by anyone lately
Initial Conversation	Quick. 5 minute or less overview, they drive the rest of the conversation	Long and wandering. 15 minute minimum focusing on detailed needs/desires followed by questions about similar projects	Variable, but medium length. Focusing on needs/desires and the people who will work on their project	Quick unless inspired. Questions about the Expressive and "their" experience with similar projects...all about them
Project Progress Updates	Brief, but complete in-progress summaries; in writing	Detailed project updates; in writing	Tie project personnel by name into project updates; in person or on phone	Put the Expressive at the center of the project; brief updates; in person or over the phone



Competitors and Other Exhibitors

- Take photos and make notes of other exhibitor booths that attract attendees
 - Exhibitors that seem to attract a lot of traffic
 - Exhibitors that seem to make a lot of sales
 - Exhibitors that seem to generate a lot of buzz
- Also note exhibitors that don't attract attention
 - Examples of what not to do
- Incorporate the best practices into your future exhibits



After the Show

Debrief and Follow Up



Debrief

- Meet with staff and collect perceptions
 - Of the show
 - Of the booth/presentation
 - Of the show attendees
 - Of other/competitor booths/presentations
 - Of your selling effort
- Put together a plan to make changes
- Assume that competitors will mimic what they think you did well



Plan For Your Next Show

- Plan changes to your booth and presentation based on your best practices notes and photos
- Attend shows you might be considering in the future to get a feel for the dynamics



Follow Up

- With buyers first
 - Within the first week or less
- With prospects second
 - Within two or three weeks
- Track responses of all other attendees
 - Website visits
 - Telephone calls
 - Emails
 - Other contacts



Evaluation

- Evaluate the show right away; after one month, six months and 12 months
 - Sales, pending and potential sales, positive contacts
- Use the data from each show to compare
 - What accounts for the differences in results?
 - What, if anything, can be done to improve results at lesser performing shows?



Q&A