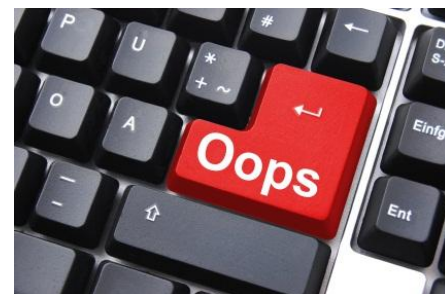


10 Mistakes Exhibitors Make

You've got a tremendous investment, not only in money, but also time and hopefully training in marketing your business at trade shows. Don't get in the way of your own success!

Here are the 10 mistakes I see exhibitors make again and again:

1) **Underselling your company with bad graphics:** All too often I've seen companies represent themselves at trade shows with a patchwork of a "display." I've seen vinyl banners wrapped around foam board, dented or dinged up displays, and a variety of hodgepodge displays. Represent your company in the best light possible. A less-than-professional appearance does not give your prospect confidence in you or your products and services. This type of display will send prospects running to the competition.



2) **Putting way too much text on your display:** You've got literally seconds to get someone's attention as they stroll around the show floor. No one will stop to read a lot of text. Please understand that you cannot tell your entire company story on your [tradeshow display](#).

3) **Not promoting your presence at trade shows:** So you've got a great looking booth and you all ready to go. So where is everyone? Why don't you have any traffic coming into your booth? What have you done to promote your presence at the show? Let your clients and prospects know about your trade show appearances by using an e-newsletter and social media. Plan the launch of a new product/service around a show to create a buzz. Send invites directly to those prospects that you may not have connected with in the past.

4) **Not training your booth staff and discussing proper expectations:** So your booth staffers are sitting down instead of engaging with prospects. Are they more concerned with playing games, texting, or chatting away while prospects stroll right by your booth? Make sure you set the proper expectations before the show. Don't make the assumption that because you have professional sales people they will understand the nuances of how to work in a trade show environment. Staff your booth with people who are as good or *better* than you!

5) **Not listening to your prospects needs:** Don't be so excited to get your message across and sell your product that you miss out on important info about your clients needs. Also, be sure to be aware of body language and pick up any visual cues that may help you understand your clients' needs even better. Take advantage of everything that a face-to-face interaction has to offer.

6) **Depending on a fishbowl to bring in qualified leads:** Lose the fishbowl! Is this type of giveaway really giving you the qualified leads you are seeking? Be an expert provider of solutions and you don't necessarily need a generic giveaway contest to drive traffic to your booth.

7) **Hauling too much literature to your booth:** Most of the literature handed out at trade shows doesn't make it past the garbage can in your prospects' hotel room. Instead, write "Show Sample" on a copy of your literature to display at the show, and then get your prospect's contact info to email or mail the info to them after the show. It will also save you the expense of shipping your heavy literature around. This gives you a great call to action to follow up with your prospect after the show. Explore technology to get information in your prospects hands. QR codes and mobile marketing platforms are great ways to do this.

8) **Not planning for trade show success:** We don't plan to fail, we fail to plan! In talking to clients who haven't seen the results they were expecting, this is something that is very prevalent. If you don't have a good plan in place you won't be able to show an ROI to justify future shows and all you've really done is waste a lot of time and money. Discuss timelines with your trade show marketing consultant, get feedback from industry peers, do your homework.

9) **Not informing your exhibit service partner:** Make sure that the service/I&D crews handling the logistics of your booth understand what's going on with your booth. Get them a lists of shows for the year so that your booth gets from one show to the next, deciding which shows you have time to ship to the advanced warehouse and which events you may have to ship direct to the show. Discuss any unique items such as products in the booth, monitors, height limitations, etc.

10) **Not following up on leads:** Though it seems like a no-brainer, you need to make sure that your leads are called on in a timely fashion. Discuss next steps, quoting, future meetings, and provide any additional information they need. It's time to deliver on the promises and the expectations that you have set at the show.