

2012 JOINT MEETING AND TRADESHOW

SARATOGA

THE RIGHT TRACK TO SUCCESS!

MARCH 18-21, 2012

*Jointly sponsored by the College Stores Association of New York State
and Campus Stores of New England.*

Have a great show! Tips for vendors from Campus Stores

Have a plan.

A significant part of your marketing includes promotion pre-show, at-show and post-show. Most exhibitors fail to have a plan that encompasses all three areas. Budget is naturally going to play a major role in deciding what and how much promotional activity is possible. Developing a meaningful theme or message that ties into your strategic marketing plan will then help to guide promotional decisions. Know whom you want to target and then consider having different promotional programs aimed at the different groups you are interested in attracting.

Include direct mail, broadcast faxes, advertising, PR, sponsorship, and the Internet as possible ways to reach your target audience.

Give visitors an incentive to visit your booth.

Whatever promotional vehicles you use, make sure that you give visitors a reason to come and visit you. With a hall overflowing with fascinating products/ services, combined with time constraints, people need an incentive to come and visit your booth. First and foremost their primary interest is in “what’s new!” They are eager to learn about the latest technologies, new applications, or anything that will help save bring great products to their stores. Even if you don’t have a new product/ service to introduce, think about a new angle to promote your offerings.

GETTING STARTED

- Review your notes from last year’s show
- Set specific, realistic, measurable goals
- Establish a budget
- Assign duties
- Reserve booth space

- Read and understand the policies and procedures

LEAD MANAGEMENT

- Create a short lead form
- Prepare open ended questions
- Have room to add personal comments
- Attach the lead's business card to the form
- Create a plan to follow up on the leads

DESIGNING A BOOTH

- Define your target audience
- Establish the needs of your target audience
- Decide on a theme and a message
- Maintain some consistency w/other advertising
- Emphasize 'NEW'
- Keep it simple, get to the point
- Be informative and educational
- Make it easy & quick to read & understand
- Ask for input from staff members
- Consider using: big visuals, high resolution photo images, colorful graphics — but don't over do it, easy to read, complementary fonts, product models, hands-on demonstrations, spot lighting, motion, audio, etc.
- Proofread everything
- Design your booth to be open and inviting

BE PREPARED

- Know about the competition
- Familiarize yourself with local, national and industry news
- Take an emergency display repair kit: Consider including, Scotch tape, duct tape, packaging tape, Velcro, black felt marker, extra display parts, scissors, heavy string, needle and thread, safety pins, replacement bulbs, extension cords, power strip, assortment of tools, etc.
- Take additional supplies: pens, business cards, note pads, breath mints, tissues, etc.
- Take a towel and cleaning supplies
- Take a list of key phone numbers that you might need or might want to share
- Have a contingency plan for potential problems

REHEARSE

- Demonstrations

- Introductions
- Asking probing questions
- Answering anticipated questions: Especially the tough questions
- Answering objections
- Ending a conversation
- Filling out lead forms
- Cross-selling
- Setting up the display

BEFORE THE SHOW OPENS

- Arrive to the show early
- Build a rapport with neighboring booths
- Take photos of your booth & staff for your files
- Find a safe place for your valuables
- Start a log of activities, events, & observations
- Prepare to make friends and have fun

STAFF APPEARANCE

- Don't overdress or under dress for the audience
- Be approachable and professional
- Stand up straight and tall
- Have open body language
- Always smile
- Avoid distracting mannerisms
- Face the aisle but don't block the entrance
- Stand away from colleagues
- Wear badge on your right
- Wear comfortable shoes
- Consider only a mild perfume or cologne

BOOTH RULES

- Staff with articulate, knowledgeable, motivated and personable people
- Understand & work towards your preset goals
- Pay attention, focus
- Take breaks when needed but not in the booth
- Do not chitchat with each other in the booth
- Do not eat, drink, sit, or read in the exhibit
Do not make phone calls from the exhibit
- Do not leave booth unattended

- Keep the booth neat and clean keep the booth open and inviting
- Staff your booth until the show is over
- Avoid tables as barricades.
- Leaving the center of the exhibit open will increase the traffic by 25%. Place tables off to the side and always have an open entry.

THINGS YOU NEED TO DO

- Network with attendees and other exhibitors
- Network before, during and after the show
- Network at show functions, in the lounge, etc.
- Collect competitor's information

ENGAGING ATTENDEES

- Smile, make friendly eye contact
- Say "Hi" or "Hello"
- Let attendees come to you
- Be prepared to answer the question "What do you do?"
- Grab their attention with good open ended questions
- Ask about their needs
- Qualify before pitching
- Listen, listen, listen, listen
- Don't interrupt
- Ask follow-up questions
- Ask their opinion
- Call them by name
- Don't be too technical at the show
- Consider spending no more than a few minutes/attendee
- Schedule follow-up appointments as necessary
- Politely dismiss unqualified visitors by thanking them for stopping by
- Be enthusiastic and interesting
- Show confidence and sincerity
- Stay motivated — be motivating
- Show good manners, courtesy and respect

GET PHYSICAL

- Shake hands during introductions
- Exchange business cards
- Personally hand out literature
- Personally hand out promotional items

- Let visitors handle your product
- Let visitors participate in demonstrations

HANDOUTS, GIVEAWAYS AND DRAWINGS

- Hand out inexpensive literature
- Tell qualified leads that you will mail them detailed information
- Have giveaways towards back of booth to draw-in attendees
- Display only a few giveaways at a time
- If possible personally hand the giveaway to the attendee
- If you hold a drawing: Make it easy to enter, accept business cards, entry forms or lead forms, award your product or an industry related prize, place entry box in prominent location, mention the drawing in pre-show promotions

AT THE END OF THE DAY

- Have a staff meeting
- Analyze the crowd
- Analyze your staff's performance
- Analyze the competition's performance
- Make necessary adjustments for the next day (for multi-day shows)
- Review and discuss that day's leads
- Update your log

Things to Avoid

“Radar Vision” --The first thing representatives usually do is look immediately at the visitor's name badge to determine who the person is and whether the person is worth speaking to. Make eye contact first, introduce yourself, and then look at the person's name badge.

Stacking Brochures or Giveaways on Counters--Usually, the exhibitor will stack hordes of brochures on the counters and attendees will walk by freely grabbing brochures and then dashing away with an armload of the company's brochures. Displaying only one or two copies of a brochure is more likely to create a request from the visitor. Piles of giveaways tend to attract bag-stuffers. Display only one or two giveaways. It creates interest but reduces the “grab-and run” effect.

Asking “May I help you?”--When a salesperson asks, “may I help you?”, the most common response is “No, just looking.” Always ask the visitors how they are familiar with your product(s) or company and what created their interest. By asking these questions, visitors are more willing to share information with you.

“Guarding” Your Booth--Sales people will usually stand at the exhibit table with their arms folded looking like they are guarding the table. Always stand 3 feet from the displays or equipment. Be an observer and not a guard. Allow prospects to approach the displays without your inference.

Post Show

ANALYZE AND FOLLOW THROUGH

- Follow-up your leads immediately
- Evaluate the show, your performance and your competition's performance
- Measure your results and compare your results to your goals
- Complete your comprehensive file on the show
- Plan a revised strategy for the next trade show or exhibition

ADDITIONAL USES FOR DISPLAYS AND GRAPHICS

- Lobby displays
- Seminars
- Presentations
- Meetings
- Training
- Recruiting fairs

Learn from Others.

Walking the floor at a trade show can be a fabulous learning experience. When you do it keep an eye open for exhibiting techniques that you can incorporate into your next show. Also, listen to how your competition responds to the tough questions, probes for information and closes sales.