

## 9 Essential Trade Show tips:

- 1. Go online and learn all you can from the trade show website.** Find out the purpose for the show. Discover who the attendees and vendors will be and print out a list of each. Print the vendor guidelines and get familiar with them. Put all this information into a 3-ring binder and bring it to the show.  
<http://www.wrla.org/exhibitor-information/exhibitor-guide>
- 2. Know who your ideal prospect is at the show.** Is your ideal prospect the attendees or the other vendors? Or both? In this case, it became apparent from the trade show website that the other vendors were the ideal client.
- 3. Make a list of the retailers you'd like to meet.** Go through the list and create a list of A,B and C prospects. Make a plan of action to visit the A list vendors first, then B and lastly C.
- 4. Determine your lead capture plan.** How are you going to capture contact information from your ideal prospect so that you can build a relationship with them after the show? Since the other vendors at the show were the ideal prospects for this client, he would need to a way to connect with them. I suggested he conduct a drawing for a product or service that would have high value to the prospect and low cost to the business. People interested in the item would provide their contact information/business card for a chance to win.
- 5. Connect with other vendors in their exhibits.** Since most vendors have limited, or no, time away from their display, visiting vendor prospects at their exhibits was essential. When appropriate, I suggested he mention their vendor-only drawing and, if possible, show them the item they'd be giving away. I also suggested he keep in mind that vendors are there to sell, not be sold to, so to be respectful of their time and their interactions with their prospects.
- 6. Determine your 7-touch follow-up system for all leads in advance.** With many prospects, 6 or more touches are required before they are willing to do business with you. Here are the follow-up steps I use after a trade show. Choose which work best for your business and the order they will occur.
  - Send a short, friendly message via Social Media with a request to connect
  - Send an email that was pre-written before the show
  - Send a greeting card with a photo of the booth staff
  - Call to request an appointment
  - Send promised literature or premiums
  - Send thank you card after appointment
  - Call to follow-up after the appointment



7. **Assemble a trade show toolbox.** A trade show toolbox contains all the items you could possibly need at a trade show in one, convenient, clear plastic tote. Since my client had very little time to put one together, I suggested he simply gather up whatever he could from the items listed on my Trade Show Toolbox Checklist e.g. pens, paper, permanent markers, bottles of water, protein snacks, breath mints, a container or two to hold drawing entries, etc.



8. **Take a photo of your exhibit team in a clean booth.** Using a service like [SendOutCards](#), you can turn a photo of your exhibit team into a greeting card that your prospect will receive a few days after the event. These photo cards are, by far, my favorite trade show follow-up tool.

9. **Follow-up within 24 of the show or sooner.** The biggest mistake most exhibitors make is failing to follow-up. If you commit to exhibiting at a show, commit to following-up with the people you meet there. Period.



So there you have it! The 9 essential, last-minute, must-dos for any trade show. Do them and reap big rewards.