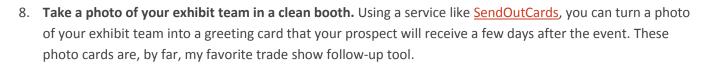
9 Essential Trade Show tips:

- 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. <u>http://www.wrla.org/exhibitor-information/exhibitor-guide</u>
- 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.



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.

