Getting the Most from Your Trade Show Dollars

Preparation for the 2011 NJ HFMA Institute

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Trade Show Objectives

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Your Objectives

The Attendee’s Objectives

How to Accomplish the Objectives

Your Objectives

Sales, Sales, Sales??

Ok, but when?

Do you expect to close deals?
What can you expect to accomplish?

- At local HFMA conferences, I have never closed a sale.
- At the furniture shows, I have signed several contracts a day.

Much Depends On:
- The type and size of the show
- The attendees' level, expectations, etc.
- The norms of the sponsoring organization.

Know the Sponsor's Organization and Philosophy before you go.

Familiarize yourself with the attendance list.

Research the history and milieu of the conference.

For example:
- NJ historically has had less emphasis on vendors' roles.
- NJ's vendor fair has grown, but still is small compared to other organizations.
The Attendees’ Objectives

From my experience:

At the New Jersey and the local HFMA chapters Institutes:

- Attendees are less interested in “shopping”
- They come more for education, networking, and “social time”

Other conferences:

- Mental health associations — laid back, but serious shoppers
- National — more serious shoppers
- Furniture industry — really serious shoppers

Possible Goals for smaller HFMA venues

1. Increase name recognition: how?
   - Booth, literature, sponsorships, entertaining, networking

2. Connect/Reconnect with current clients. Sell more
   - Business to them. They often walk around with potential clients

3. Introduce a new product

4. Increase awareness of your existing products

5. Meet new people

6. Make initial contacts for possible sales calls
How to Meet These Goals

- Attend the education sessions
  (It's a great way to meet people.)
- Go to the events and parties and mingle
- Sit with people at breakfast, lunch
  (They are more interested in eating.)
- Take your clients out to dinner
  (Often they ask to bring non-clients.)

Preparation

Jeff Lampman
Executive Vice President
Besler Consulting
Getting into the Details

- Utilize trade show checklist
- Determine who from your company will attend
- Obtain show contacts and familiarize yourself with show logistics
  - Specific steps that must be followed re: arrival, set-up, shipping, etc.
  - Show hours and events
  - Develop booth schedule

Internal Collaboration

- How does the trade show fit into your company’s strategic objectives (why did you choose this show)?
- What are the key marketing objectives you are looking to accomplish at the show?
- Is the exposure sought broad or focused (i.e., particular product/service)?
- Involve other departments to gain input.
Marketing Objectives

- Measurable, Attainable, Manageable
  - Examples:
    - Obtain a minimum of ___ qualified leads.
    - Make contact with ___ decision makers.
    - Schedule ___ future client meetings.
    - Network with ___ clients/potential clients (e.g., dinner).
    - Publicize company image.

Preparation

- Review advance attendee list.
- Research potential targets.
- Understand competitors in attendance.
- What is the meeting agenda/theme and how can you tie into it?
- What is the message you want your exhibit to convey?
- Plan staff interaction with/approach to potential clients.
Pre-Show Planning

- Booth appearance: How will it differentiate your exhibit/company?
  - What will entice attendees to your booth?
  - What types of collateral will be provided (i.e., sell sheets, case studies, articles, etc.)?
  - Ready all materials and equipment.
  - Inspection, responsibilities, shipping, verification

Marketing Strategy

- Direct mail:
  - Postcard - Pick up your complementary XXX at our booth
  - Advertising - visit us at booth XXX
- Will you use attendee giveaways?
- Prearranged client meetings and/or demonstrations?
- Take advantage of other sponsorship opportunities offered at show?
Marketing Strategy

- How will leads be collected?
- How will leads be qualified?
- Making commitments

Establish follow-up plan and accountability now!

On-Site Strategy

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Your Booth

Staffing

Interaction/Networking

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Your Booth/Display

You don’t have to have an expensive fancy booth to make a good impression and “be noticed”:

- Have a clear concise message.
- Have product materials available.
- Have contact info available.
- Some like to have drawings, games, fun gimmicks to attract people.
- A quality booth or display can be a good investment.
Set-Up

- If you have a new booth, be sure you know how to set it up. Practice before you go. Make sure everything is in working order.
- Set up and tear down at the indicated times. Try not to set up late or take down early.
- At the end of the day, stash all of your valuables in the back or under the table.
- Be a good neighbor - cooperate with your fellow exhibitors.

Staffing

- Meet with your colleagues ahead of time and decide on duties and a strategy.
- Take staff who are knowledgeable about the product and who present well.
- Try to cover all specified exhibit times.
- Act in a professional manner at all times. Be in dress code, don’t eat at the booth, keep the booth neat.
Interaction/ Networking

Some Tips:
1. Never “double/triple team” a potential customer.
2. Make initial introduction casual. Don’t dive into a sales pitch.
3. Wear your name tag - introduce yourself.
4. Ask potential clients questions about their hospital/ themselves. See what they may be interested in discussing.
5. Don’t ask everyone for cards, contact info… Just those who are truly interested.

Follow Up

Brian Sherin
President
Besler Consulting
It isn’t over...

- Letter - thank you for visiting our booth (traditional or email)
- Reach out and touch someone
- Add contact details to mailing list

Be timely! Within a week - start immediately.

Leveraging Your Efforts

- Track leads, contacts and results - Stay on it!
- Meet commitments made to specific attendees (for example, additional data, materials or proposals)
- Post show advertising:
  - Publications
  - Update website with summary
Debrief

- Plan and schedule debriefing prior to show
- Assess results and potential ROI
- Objectives met?
- Exhibit next time?

Best Practices

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Jeff Lampman
Brian Sherin
What practices have we employed or observed that stand out?

What tips do you have?

Questions?