



Design a Dynamic Display

If you've ever attended a tradeshow, you know they are often an overwhelming assault on your senses. The atmosphere is hectic, filled with an array of activities and solicitations from every angle.

As an exhibitor, you have the difficult task of capturing the attention of a few qualified prospects from the hundreds that will stroll past your booth. You must deal with enormous competition, not only from rival companies, but from every other exhibitor around you. The most important thing to remember is that your biggest competitor is time. You have only seconds to attract a prospect. A well designed display in your booth is your key to getting noticed.

Your display is your traveling store, your portable office, your mobile showroom. At a glance, attendees must quickly comprehend who you are, what you do and why they should do business with you. There are three elements that compose your display. They are the hardware, the merchandising method and the marketing message.

When selecting your display hardware, consider the needs of your sales staff. Items such as counters with storage, podiums for computers, or demonstration areas might be needed to facilitate a sale or presentation. Make the purchase even more practical and cost effective by selecting a display you can use beyond the tradeshow. An attractive exhibit looks great in the lobby of your office or a conference room. Use it for recruiting or set it up at a seminar, fundraiser or sales meeting.

The next consideration is the merchandising method. How should you showcase your products or service? The common mistake many exhibitors make is filling the booth with too much product. You can't show it all or say it all so go with the theory of less is more. Include an assortment of styles, colors, flavors, sizes and prices a prospect can examine for quality and workmanship. Consider selecting a clever theme that will coordinate all aspects of your exhibit together. Themes can come from your tag line, marketing slogan or from current events like a blockbuster movie or holiday. They can reinforce your sales statements and create a humorous or memorable way to get your messages across.

Add unusual props to enhance the theme and create three-dimensional impact. Unique items can be used to elevate your products at various heights or hold your company brochures. Coordinate all aspects of your booth to reinforce your corporate colors and enhance your corporate branding and important marketing messages.

The final and most critical element of your display is the marketing message. Attendees pass by each exhibit so quickly, they have very little time to absorb what you have to tell them. The graphics, which are your pictures and text messages, must succinctly communicate your ideas and visually explain your intent. Remember, the primary



purpose of your display is to catch the prospect's attention so they will pause long enough for the sales staff to engage them.

With this in mind, design your artwork using large, eye-catching visuals and composite your messages within them. Many exhibitors make the mistake of listing all the features and services they provide instead of concentrating the message on customer benefits. You want to touch an emotion that will prompt them to stop and inquire about what you do. Tell them how you will solve their problem, remove their pain, or reduce their fear. No one will read your long, wordy text messages so concentrate on short statements that declare how you can make them healthier, safer, happier, richer or save them money or time. Show with pictures and tell them with words how different you are from the competition.

Before the day of the show, set up your display and ask the staff to take a critical look at it. Is the message you wish to convey immediately clear? Does everything come together in a cohesive manner? Can attendees tell who you are and what you do, at a glance? Is the display as professional as your company claims to be? You will have succeeded in creating a dynamic display when every element exemplifies your company image and offers value to attendees.