



The Exhibit Expert's Guide to Professional Booth Etiquette

I bet nobody told you there are rules of etiquette that govern the show floor. Sometimes we have to go back to the basics and take inventory of our presentation and attitude when we exhibit. Adhering to these simple dos and don'ts will result in a better impression of your exhibit staff by the attendees. Statistics show that 80% of attendees base their opinion of your company on the actions of your employees at the booth.

Upon reviewing this list of suggestions, they may seem like common sense considerations everyone should be familiar with. Unfortunately, you will find numerous infractions at every event. Think about how many times you have witnessed them, or worse yet, committed these blunders. The overall image of your company and staff will benefit greatly if you avoid these infractions at your next tradeshow, consumer show or event.

Share these suggestions with your booth staff and use them as a guide for making the best possible impression.

Don't sit down. Be approachable, alert and ready to greet every prospect. Take the chairs out of the booth altogether. Plan your staff schedule to allow for occasional breaks away from the booth.

Don't leave the booth unattended. If you must leave on a break and you are alone at the exhibit, put a note on the table stating the exact time you will return.

Don't talk excessively to colleagues. A prospect is not likely to interrupt your conversation to ask for information. Stop talking to your booth mates when prospects are in view.

Don't eat or drink at the booth. Glasses of soda and plates of food on the front counter look tacky and unprofessional. Munching on food, chewing gum or drinking in the booth is worse. Step away for a few minutes to enjoy your snack and hide drinks from customers.

Don't get caught on your cell phone. Cell phones are a business necessity, but talking on them while in the booth is a guaranteed turn-off to customers. Move out of the booth to make or answer calls.

Don't knock the competition. Refrain from making negative comments about other companies in the show. Always sell your product or service on its own merits. Today's savvy consumers resent negative attacks on competition and want you to sell them on your benefits.



Don't speak negatively about the show. When a show is going poorly we look for something to blame. Negative comments and grumpy attitudes are always unproductive. Evaluate the possible reasons your products or services are not selling, then make changes where you can. Take some responsibility for your own success.

Don't monopolize your neighbor. Sharing ideas and meeting new people is part of the fun of exhibiting, but the first priority is to sell your business. Remember to excuse yourself from conversations with your booth neighbor when a client approaches.

Do set up early. Give yourself plenty of time to prepare to meet the public. Check your booth supplies and presentation. Arriving early gives you the opportunity to check out the other exhibits before the show opens. If you hired the installation crew meet them at the booth before they begin. Confirming they have clear instructions for erecting and positioning your display and graphics will prevent costly mistakes.

Do dress the part. Your appearance has an impact on an attendee's perception of you and your company. Dress to enhance your booth theme. Dress to stand out from the audience. Wear what you sell.

Do wear comfortable shoes. Prevent hours of pain on your feet and back. Wear flats.

Do inventory nightly. Save yourself the panic of running out of important items. At the end of each day make a list of what products, selling supplies, hand-outs and give-a-ways you will need to restock for the next day. Never run out of business cards and important selling tools.

Do train your staff. Set goals for your sales team. Train them on how to collect leads and close sales. Prepare them with superior product knowledge, updated pricing information and competitive intelligence. Give them the tools they need to succeed.

Do keep the display neat. Throughout the day empty the garbage, straighten your inventory, clean the counters and carpet. Keep excess stock, boxes, purses and briefcases out of site.

Do smile a lot. Greet everyone warmly. Make eye contact and be approachable. Have some fun, while you're at it.