



## Improving ROI through Pre-Show Promotion

Pre-show promotions can increase booth traffic by 33% to 50%. Many successful exhibitors use pre-show promotion to:

- ◆ Attract pre-qualified prospects to their specific booth
- ◆ Pre-schedule appointments to ensure they see the 'must see' attendees
- ◆ Enhance their "brand" by ensuring that SFS attendees have perceptions of their products, services, solutions and capabilities are updated and accurate.

Why bother with pre-show promotions? According to the Center for Exhibition Industry Research, a not-for-profit trade show and exposition industry research group in Chicago ([www.ceir.org](http://www.ceir.org))...

*75% of the attendees at a given show come with pre-planned personal agenda.*

Still not convinced you need to promote yourself to get the right people to your booth? The Center's research also discovered that:

- ◆ 46% of executive decision makers made purchase decisions while attending a show
- ◆ 77% of executive decision makers found at least one new supplier at the last show they attended
- ◆ 40% of any given trade show audience is attending the show for the first time
- ◆ 50% of the attendees have not been to another show in the previous year
- ◆ 50% of the audience wants to see "What's New" in products and services

### Attract Pre-Qualified Prospects

Not everyone will be a good prospect for every exhibiting company. Target your promotions to pre-qualified prospects and existing customers. To ensure that you are targeting the right attendees, work with your vice president of sales or other sales manager to define the specific type of prospects or customers - or specific attendees - they would like to see in the booth. The better you define your specific target audience, the better you can target your promotion.

### Pre-Schedule Appointments

In order to improve their competitive posture, accelerate the buying process, and enhance relationships with existing customers, active sales opportunities and other pre-qualified prospects, many companies have their salespeople pre-arrange meetings in order to:

- Conduct tours of the exhibit to ensure that prospects and customers have updated and accurate information about how your company can help them succeed

- Facilitate time-efficient and cost-effective executive-to-executive meetings to build or enhance relationships at the decision making level of the customer organization
- Demonstrate products or equipment that would be difficult and expensive to display in the field
- Provide pre-qualified prospects and existing customers with access to your company's experts - personnel (i.e. technical resources; research and development staff; senior managers; etc.) they would generally not have access to

### Enhance Your "Brand"

Can your best customers accurately describe your company's current capabilities? Are they aware of *all* of your products and services? Can they articulate all the ways that your company can help them succeed? The more dated and inaccurate their perception of your capabilities, the more sales you are missing.

Pre- and at-show promotions will provide you the opportunity to convey your key messages (and differentiators) to ensure that your prospects and customers have a perception of your company that is updated and accurate. Inaccurate perceptions means lost opportunities, lost sales and worse, lost customers.

Show attendees are bombarded with marketing messages prior to, at, and after a trade shows. To 'stand out from the crowd' and be remembered as you want / need to be remembered, we suggest that you create and use a marketing message that is simple, clearly defined and easily remembered. Your message should:

- Leverage, support and enhance your brand
- Be consistent with how you want your company, products, services, solutions and capabilities to be perceived and remembered
- Be conveyed in all of your pre-, at- and post-show ads and promotions
- Be understood and supported by your booth staff. If your staff can't articulate your message, your marketplace probably won't be able to either

### Types of Promotions

Types of pre-show promotions include:

- A personalized invitation or letter which conveys your marketing message and motivates the prospect to visit your booth – i.e., new product announcement, meet with a senior manager in your company, etc.
- If your company is hosting a hospitality function after show hours, send invitations to pre-qualified prospects and customers. This invitation should invite them to your booth to pick up a pass for the hospitality suite. If you just send them a pass for the hospitality suite, they might miss your booth.
- Advertising in trade magazines, websites, eNewsletters, the show directory, or other industry related resources. Make sure that all the ads you run during the two months prior to the show have a tag line which mentions the show's name and your booth number.
- Incentives that will motivate pre-qualified prospects to stop at your booth.
- A contest or gift to motivate prospects and customers to stop by the booth.

*These suggestions were authored by Keith Reznick, President of Creative Training Solutions ([www.creativetraining.com](http://www.creativetraining.com)) a company that designs and delivers training programs and products for booth workers. More than 30,000 business professionals have participated in CTS programs and learned how to be more effective on the show floor.*