

10 Tips for Business Expo Success

- **Know what you want to accomplish.** Do you want to connect with current or new customers? Find staff? Network with vendors? Sell something? Test a new product idea? You will get better results if you are clear about your expo purpose before you arrive.
- **Invite your customers to the expo and tell them where to find you.** This is a great opportunity to connect with people who have already done business with you, and one of the simplest ways to ensure a successful event.
- **Be visible.** Make it easy for people to find you by glancing down an aisle. Use words on your signs that make it compelling for people to stop. Create a booth that is visually appealing and interesting. If you are stumped about how to do this, ask for help.
- **Make sure it's easy to figure out what you do.** Have someone who is not in your industry look at your booth/signage and see if they can explain what your business is. You might be the “best in your field” or “locally owned and operated,” but if no one can figure out what business you're in with a simple glance, those words won't help you.
- **Create a coupon or offer that will be meaningful to your target audience, including the existing customers you are inviting.** Mark coupons so you know where they came from when they are redeemed (include an expiration date!). Design your offer to promote an action step you want customers to take. Buy something that day? Place an order now or in the future? Visit your store or website? Make it easy and compelling for them to take that step.
- **Put your friendliest people in your booth.** Engage with people as they walk by. Stand up. Get out from behind the table. If you need to sit down, do it somewhere else. Your purpose is to build relationships, and you can't do that if you are reading a book or texting your kids.
- **Get relief.** Make a plan to have someone friendly work your booth so you have time to talk with other vendors, eat lunch, or take in the expo.
- **Make it easy for people to get in touch with you later.** Bring plenty of business cards or brochures, and make sure they are easy to read. Order new ones if you don't have enough.
- **There is no substitute for a one-on-one conversation with someone who is interested in what you have to offer.** Making a few meaningful contacts may be better than collecting a hundred names in a punch bowl, depending on your expo goals.
- **Follow up with the people you met, preferably in the next 48 hours.** Design a greeting in advance if you want to so you can follow up right away (email, Facebook post, etc). Schedule this follow-up time so you aren't distracted. You have just spent a lot of time, money and energy to attend the expo so make the most of your efforts.