

Getting Booth Visitors Via Online & Social Promotions



INTRODUCTION

In this book Skyline has compiled 26 blog posts originally published in the *Skyline Trade Show Tips* blog. The posts combine information about social media tools and tactics, pre- and at-show promotions, digital marketing tools and general marketing tips.

These posts were written by multiple authors associated with Skyline Exhibits with over 100 years of combined marketing and sales experience. From experienced trade show consultants, traditional marketers and digital marketing practitioners, these authors know Trade Shows and how to leverage modern marketing tools to help draw new and returning visitors to your trade show or event.

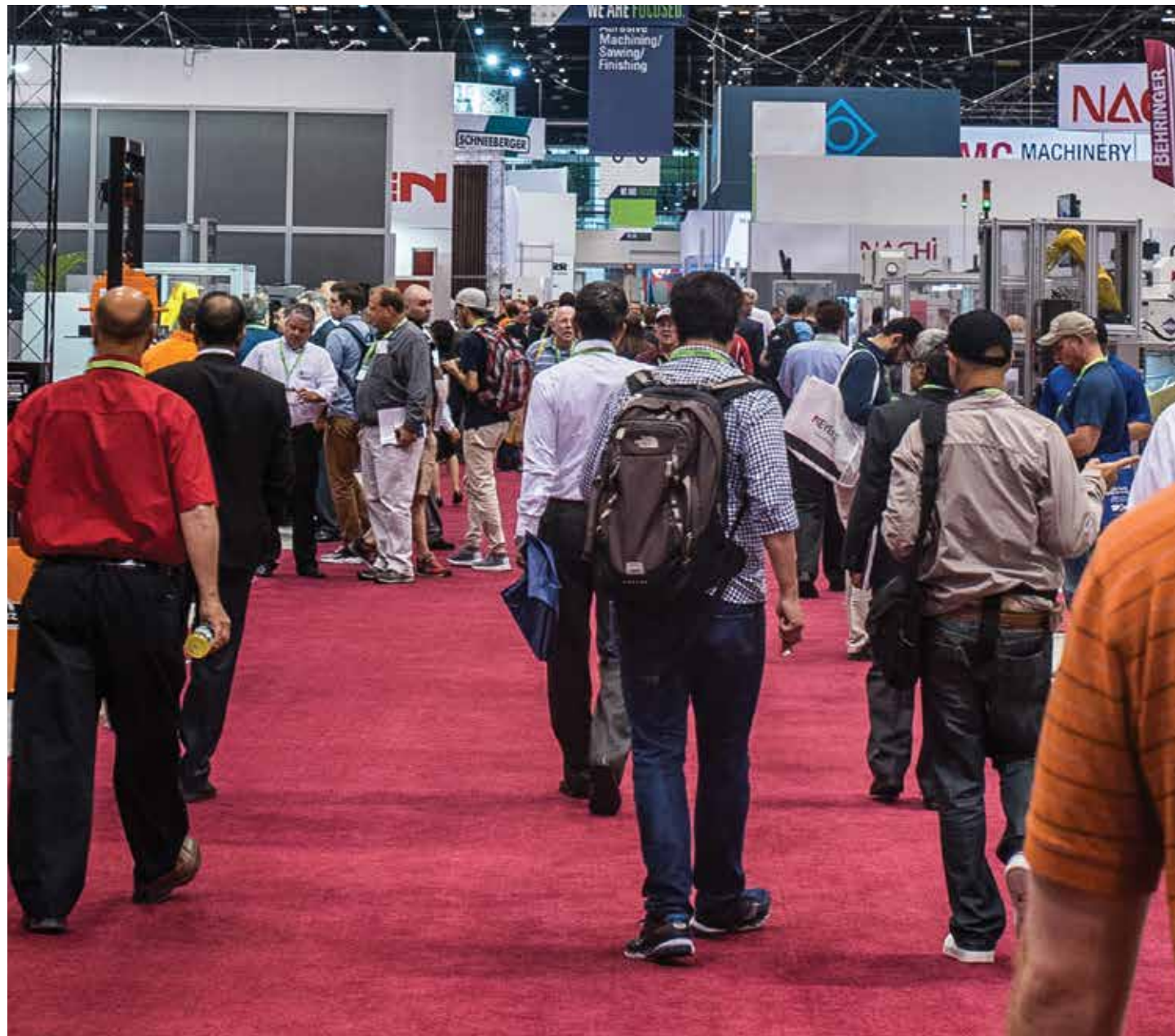


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SOCIAL MEDIA TIPS & TRENDS



TRADE SHOW SOCIAL MEDIA CHECKLIST

— Chad Erickson

Effective social media marketing means taking the proper steps before, during, and after the show. To ensure you cross everything off your social to-do list, refer to the following checklist:

PRE-EVENT PLANNING

- Create a calendar for event marketing.
- Work with your designer to conceptualize any info-graphics, Twitter cards, Pinterest pins, social display ads or other visuals for your campaign.
- Add your event to your email signature.
- Create an event page on LinkedIn, Facebook, and/or Eventbrite, as well as on your own website.
- Submit the event to the relevant directories, so that it shows up ASAP in listings.
- Create a highlight reel from last year's event and upload it to your YouTube channel. This can also be repurposed for Facebook and Instagram and used as a teaser for the next event.
- Find out what the show's official hashtag will be and come up with your own company hashtag.
- Designate a social media leader to be the primary voice and driver for your messaging.

Effective social media usage means being an active and engaged part of your social community!

PRE-EVENT MARKETING

- Commit to doing X posts per day/week on each of your social platforms.
- Amplify your updates via promoted posts, tweets, and updates to reach new, lookalike audiences.
- Send a LinkedIn InMail to prospects you'd love to see at the conference and expo to alert them to your attendance.

- Upload any and all email lists to AdWords, Facebook, and LinkedIn, and create Custom Audience campaigns to serve display ads to just these people.
- Participate in any discussion groups on LinkedIn that are relevant to your event.
- Start following the show hashtag several weeks in advance to stay up to date on what's trending.

AT THE SHOW

- Use Facebook Live to capture and webcast the most exciting moments as they occur.
- Use photos of attendees in your social updates. ID the people (with their permission) to encourage social sharing and interaction.
- Utilize HootSuite or another social scheduler to post on your behalf when you are busy at the show.
- Use the Twitter @ sign to engage directly with your sponsored speakers or other known social brand champions in attendance.
- Engage in social listening to see what topics and events attendees are interested in. Respond to other attendee questions rather than just inviting people to come to your booth.

POST-SHOW FOLLOW-UP

- Go through any leads you gathered, and connect with those people on LinkedIn, follow them on Twitter, or like their business page on Facebook.
- Follow up with your leads and connections via email.
- Post an event summary on your blog with photos of the show highlights.
- Create and share a Twitter Moment of the event highlights.

Most importantly, nurture your social leads and build your network year-round, rather than being a fair-weather user. Effective social media usage means being an active and engaged part of your social community!

SOCIAL MEDIA TRENDS FOR TRADE SHOW MARKETING

— Matt Bohar

Just when everyone became comfortable with Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, new platform features and emerging networks are changing the social media landscape. Here's a look at some of the top social trends, and their potential impact on exhibit marketing:

EPHEMERAL CONTENT

Facebook, Instagram & Snapchat stories are all examples of ephemeral content – spontaneous social posts that only last for a very short period of time. It's an intimidating form of content creation for businesses, who have mostly focused on creating well thought out, enduring posts. That's why Instagram created Story Highlights for Business – a way to permanently archive your Instagram stories and then curate and feature them at the top of your Instagram profile. This is a great place to showcase your top recent trade show moments, or to give a nod to your best partners and influencers.

FACEBOOK ALGORITHM CHANGES

Facebook made a major change to its News Feed in early 2018, saying it would be showing users more posts from friends and family, and fewer from businesses and publishers. Going forward, trade show marketers will thus have to rely more on promoted posts, ads and influencers to reach their Facebook audiences.

A NEW SOCIAL NETWORK?

The social network Vero has been around since 2015, but it only began seeing explosive adoption in early 2018. Vero competes with Instagram for photo sharing. It offers many features that Instagram doesn't, including allowing users to share links. Those social links may become an increasingly visible source of inbound traffic



to exhibitor websites, similar to the traffic your site gets when you share links to it on Facebook or LinkedIn.

CHATBOTS FOR ALL SIZED BUSINESSES

Chatbots are computer programs designed to simulate talking to a customer service rep or sales rep. Once used only by large companies for fielding simple queries about business hours or return policies, many are now being developed for small business use, such as for handling restaurant reservations or for responding to inquiries received via messenger apps. With more than 80% of customer inquiries or complaints ignored or poorly handled, AI-driven chatbots can help busy exhibitors field questions and escalate hard leads to your sales team.

The evolution of digital marketing presents new challenges and opportunities for the exhibit industry. Adjusting to the changing expectations of your virtual audiences can help you better capitalize on your in-person interactions, as well repurpose your content from live events on your social channels.

THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA FOR EVENTS AND TRADE SHOWS

— Mary Buffa

Have you heard enough about the rise of social media, and its impact, yet? You might think you've heard all you need to know but think again. With social media already having an immense impact on our culture and everyday lives, it is constantly evolving and growing in popularity. Thankfully, it is easier than ever to get your name and brand out there.

We know that the majority of our readers are wanting more information on trade show impact, display design, and innovative expo strategy. If you aren't convinced that you need to be, or will be, using social media before, during, and after your events, here are a few thoughts that might convince you otherwise:

- **It gets your name out there:**

Pushing social media campaigns before major events give other exhibitors and vendors the opportunity to know you and your brand before event day. This gives you the advantage over people getting their name out there on the day-of.

- **Connecting with future leaders:**

Research shows that more than 90% of millennials use social media. Having a strong social media presence is a key factor in connecting with future leaders in the millennial generation.

- **Organic traffic towards your booth:**

By running your social media campaigns during an event, other attendees will start to recognize your name and seek out your booth to find out more. Posting your giveaways and promotions before and during the event can create intrigue and organic traffic towards your booth.

- **Further engagement:**

The more that the public becomes aware of who you are and what you do, the more likely they are to

engage with your business. Increased recognition can increase sales and future opportunities. The simplest way to implement this through social media is to link posts back to your website or blog in order to gain online traffic.

Social media is a free, easy and thriving resource for any business to gain audience and sales.

Social media is a free, easy and thriving resource for any business to gain audience and sales. Staying ahead of the curve during this age of technology is imperative for longevity in your business. Go ahead, download a few apps and see what they can do for you and your business.



HARNESSING THE HASHTAG TO IMPROVE TRADE SHOW AND EVENT MARKETING

— Shawn Lacagnina

In the minds of many business owners, social media marketing and trade show marketing are two entirely separate fields. Smartphones changed everything. Social media has intertwined itself into every aspect of marketing and ignoring it can be a costly mistake. Social media marketing is a fairly complicated field, but even a small business can use some of its most basic functions to boost its bottom line. With a minimal amount of work, you can use social media to improve your results in trade show marketing, and your trade show marketing efforts will cause your social media exposure to grow, so your business gets a greater return on all of its marketing investments.

...social media is continually and quickly evolving, and hashtags are no exception.

WHAT ARE HASHTAGS GOOD FOR, ANYWAY?

Hashtags are everywhere. A hashtag—written with a # symbol—is used to index keywords or topics on social media. This function was created on Twitter, and allows people to easily follow topics they are interested in. You can't go online without seeing dozens of them, they're plastered on the sides of transit buses and commuter trains, cereal boxes and our coffee packages. We see them in the movies and on little badges in the corners of our TV programs. Most everyone has a vague idea what they are for, however, many business owners mistakenly believe that they don't need to worry about learning all this hashtag and social media "stuff," because Millennials are not their target demographic. That may have been true at one time, but social media is continually and quickly evolving, and hashtags are no exception. Large corporations have been spending a

lot of time and money researching and developing new ways to use social media in general and the hashtag in particular to generate more profits. Experimental programs are already in place with Twitter, Amazon, and American Express to allow customers to make purchases using hashtags. Whether you love them or despise them, hashtags are here to stay.

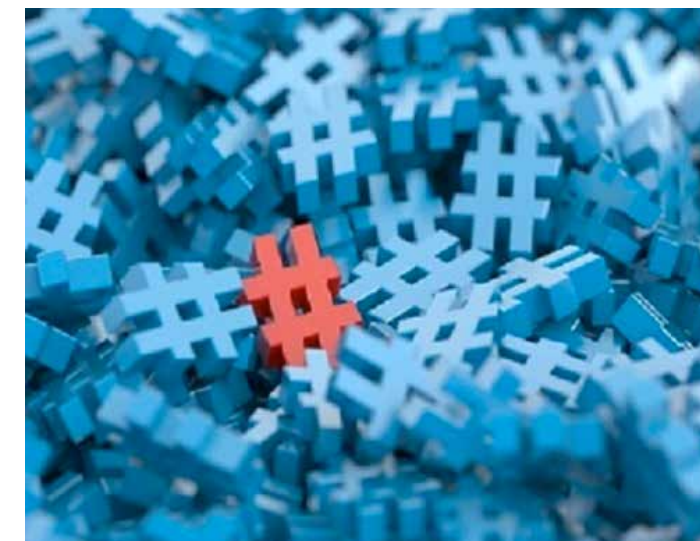
HOW CAN HASHTAGS HELP MY BUSINESS?

By using hashtags to promote your trade show marketing efforts and using hashtags as part of those efforts at trade shows, you can expand your brand and message exposure exponentially. Since the hashtagged word becomes an index of conversations around a specific word, you gain more insight into who's talking about your brand and products. Hashtags are used on virtually every social media channel, for easier insight into what consumers are saying, where they are, and how they're using social media. All of these things can help you target your future marketing efforts even more precisely. By planning and putting in some effective research up front, your marketing exposure will begin to grow and gain momentum on its own, going forward. Here are some thoughts for starting your own marketing snowball:

- **Choose Carefully** – When you choose hashtags for your brand, your products, or your promotions, you need to use some care. It's best to choose the simplest, shortest hashtag possible. Once you have some ideas in mind, search for it on each social medium, and on Google. See if it's in use and check to see if any likely misspellings of your proposed hashtag are in use. You may find that one of those is in use by something you don't want your customers accidentally being directed to. Another important consideration is misreading. Hashtags are not case-sensitive, but often they're

written with capital letters to help readers understand and remember them. Realize that people will type your hashtag out with all lowercase or different capitalization than you intended, so it's important that the meaning not depend on capitalization. For example, one hashtag-gone-wrong used the country code CH to promote The Hobbit in Switzerland. The creators wrote #HobbitCH. Oops. There are no spaces in hashtags, so also consider what will happen if a reader envisions the spacing of the hashtag differently from what you had in mind – like Susan Boyle's debut album party, which was #Susanalbumparty. Ummm... no, thank you.

- **Hitch A Ride** – Whenever you make a post with your hashtag, think about what other hashtags you might include on the post. Don't go crazy: two or three per post is enough depending on the social media channel. But if, for example, you're promoting a new product at South by Southwest, include #SXSW in your post, because that better-known and more popular tag will get your post and your own hashtag much bigger exposure than it would get on its own. Also, events and trade shows promote their own hashtags so you will maximize your efforts by using theirs. If your post involves a giveaway, include #entertowin as a tag, and it will start circulating on its own! Be careful not to jump on every hashtag trend out there. Attaching yourself to a trending hashtag can be negatively perceived, especially if that hashtag has nothing to do with your company, product or event.
- **Give Them Something to Talk About** – Creating something post-worthy at a trade show doesn't have to involve a 10-story ferris wheel or a supermodel. Last fall in Utah, one exhibitor placed a single banner stand on the outside of their booth. The banner was simply a photo of a giant crocodile with a hashtag on it. The aisle was jammed with people waiting to take a picture



with the crocodile! You can use photographs or drawings, or even well-designed graphical banners with funny, motivational, or philosophical sayings on them. How about a selfie from inside your exhibit to win a prize every hour? Be creative.

Hashtags allow you to create a collection of social media posts around the same or similar topic by making it easier to search, find, and share those thoughts. It allows you to connect with and engage other social media users around a common theme or interest.

Try using hashtags to promote your next trade show or event – before, during, and after the show or event! Incorporate the show's existing #s with one of your own (for example: Hey, check out the newest widget in booth 5555 at Widget Show next month! #worldsgreatestwidget #WidgetShow). Encourage everyone in your organization to use them in related social media posts. It costs nothing outside of the time to think through the process and implementation. The payoff could be priceless.

THREE LINKEDIN MARKETING TIPS FOR TRADE SHOW MANAGERS

— Holly Kunzman-Lippitt

LinkedIn is a valuable tool for B2B marketing, but only if you use it to its fullest potential. In this article, we explore three broad ways of using LinkedIn for trade show prospecting.

ORGANIC REACH

It's not enough to just continually connect with new contacts on LinkedIn. Building a large network won't do much good if you never share helpful or insightful content with them. You need to nurture those connections by regularly creating engaging posts that

You need to nurture those connections by regularly creating engaging posts that establish you as an influencer...

establish you as an influencer within your industry. This makes you more of a "go-to" source when potential clients eventually decide to seek out information on products and services like the ones you offer. And it's a great way to connect with old clients or prospects that get a firsthand example of how you are relevant and can help them in their new role or industry. It's also a great way to connect with old clients or prospects who may not know that you can be a resource for them in certain aspects of their business. With your connection request comes your blog posts, past and present; your articles of interest, and, most importantly, your live, active resume.

What makes for engaging content? Self-promotional content rarely earns a lot of feedback. Industry news **can** be engaging, as long as it's a critical piece of emerging news, as long as you're regularly the first person in their network to continually "break" these

types of stories, and as long as you are skilled at summarizing the relevance of each story to your followers.

But posting your own original LinkedIn content is a far better approach. You should write in the first person ("I," "me," etc.) to build your social identity. The content itself should help the reader better understand his or her business. The hashtags you use and the shares you receive from within your network will then expose your content to an ever-growing list of LinkedIn users who will want to connect with you to follow your insights. Giving recent examples of finished projects is a great way to engage followers.

Use the tools LinkedIn provides, under Notifications, then Post Analytics, you can see what top companies view your post, their titles and city. This can be a valuable tool in strategizing who to reach out to.

TRACKING WEBSITE VISITORS

While growing and nurturing your contacts is an ongoing affair, there will be times when you'll want to use LinkedIn to manually track down hot sales prospects. One of the best ways to do this is to monitor the companies that have recently visited your website. If you are using a Customer Relationship Management tool such as Hubspot or Salesforce, you can typically see these company visits within your software's interface. A quick check of the company employee roster on LinkedIn can reveal a list of key staff, one of whom might be the person who recently visited your website. A few well-placed calls, InMails and LinkedIn connection requests can get your name and contact information in front of key personnel at this critical sales conversion point.

If you don't have a CRM, there are other tools that can alert you to recent companies that have visited your



website, including Leadfeeder or LinkedIn's own Insight Tag. The Insight Tag is free and easy to install, but requires you to have a business page on LinkedIn and a LinkedIn ad account. It only works if an actual LinkedIn user visits your site, but the information it provides on these users more specific than what your CRM or Leadfeeder will reveal, in that it will also show the job title of the individual who visited your site. This can help you zero in when attempting to identify that site visitor via a cold call to the company.

PAID CAMPAIGNS

LinkedIn offers a number of ways for you to reach out to prospects who are not already connections, including via the use of sponsored content, ads or InMail direct message campaigns. Regardless of which form of paid placement you use, it's often best to target prospects who are already familiar with you or your company. One method is by using LinkedIn to serve retargeting

ads to your recent website visitors. You can also upload a list of your own customers or qualified prospects. If you decide to prospect more broadly, consider targeting people who may not know your company but who are at least familiar with the upcoming show, which you can do by uploading a current or prior-year attendee list from the trade show, or by targeting companies that you know always send representatives to the show in question.

Individuals on LinkedIn who are neither familiar with your company nor planning to attend the same trade shows you are, are obviously much colder prospects. For this reason, targeting companies by industry, geography, etc., is likely to have a diminished return on investment. But by using a combination of organic, manual and paid reach, you can continually grow your circle of influence and reach out to core prospects before or after important trade shows.

SOCIAL LIVESTREAMING – USING LIVE VIDEO FOR TRADE SHOW MARKETING

— Chad Erickson

It wasn't that long ago that trade show video marketing involved little more than a short, looped teaser to draw traffic into your booth and maybe a handful of longer videos for back-booth demos.

Starting in 2016, live do-it-yourself social video began to shake things up. Suddenly the focus switched from scripted, pre-recorded footage to a more organic and interactive live video experience.

If you have been slow to embrace any form of video marketing—or if you have yet to experiment with anything but native, pre-recorded videos—consider the following tips for joining the world of live streaming:

CAPITALIZE ON LIVE VIDEOS BENEFITS

- Video created and shared on social media allows

you to reach an audience far outside the exhibit hall.

- The immediacy of live video often means greater virality and user engagement, allowing you to better connect with your community. Estimates are that live video gets 6x more engagement than native video.
- Acting as a live broadcaster at a trade show can lead to vendors, customers and business partners relying on your social feed as a virtual window to the rest of the event.
- Facebook videos are featured more prominently in news feed than other business page content, and thus can allow you to regain some of the free social traffic that disappeared after Facebook made its 2018 algorithm update.

CHOOSE THE RIGHT PLATFORM

- Facebook Live – Since so many users check their

News feeds throughout the day, Facebook Live videos tend to be seen by a lot of your followers, but the platform also typically enjoys less viewing time per video. Archived videos are also often almost impossible to later find via Facebook's awkward search function, and similarly aren't well-indexed in Google search results. Facebook Live is thus often best for posting brief, timely, high-engagement updates from the show floor.

• YouTube Live – Because YouTube is a video-first channel, users commit more time to watching videos on this platform. After broadcast, your search-optimized YouTube videos are also easier to find via a YouTube or Google query. But getting people to tune in to the initial, live video typically requires a lot more pre-show promotion.

- Instagram Live works similarly to Facebook Live, and can be especially helpful if you cater to a millennial audience.
- Periscope – owned by Twitter, this live video-casting platform may be ideal if you have a large Twitter following.
- Brightcove and other dedicated video platforms may be a better solution if you intend to produce lots of lengthy video, if you want to maintain control to all your rights, or if you want to monetize your own videos.

CHOOSE THE RIGHT CONTENT

- Q&As – if you often receive a lot of questions about your products or services, live social video can be a great place to field them.
- Interviews – Consider having one of the event's featured speakers stop by your booth. An interview with one or more of your suppliers or business partners can also be of interest to your core customers.
- New Product Reveals – The visual and immediate nature of live video make it ideal for unveiling a new



product or service. Viewers will clamor to be among the first to see your new offering.

- Behind the Scenes Videos – Video gives your customers and prospects a chance to learn more about your company, processes, or staff than what's revealed on your website. Live video can give them a rare peek into the personalities and daily activities of your business.

PLAN AHEAD FOR LIVE VIDEO QUIRKS

Not every staff member will feel comfortable “performing” in front of your smartphone lens, so identify your star talent and do some practice sessions before going live. Since audio quality and connectivity can fluctuate at an event, you may want to shoot your videos in a room with a hardwired internet connection where you can also better control the acoustics. Of course, you'll also want to be sure to promote your live streams in advance, sending reminder notices so that you have a waiting audience when you go live.

By embracing the ephemeral nature of unscripted live social video, you can lend an added sense of urgency, interactivity and virality to your trade show marketing.



INTEGRATING INSTAGRAM – ARE YOU USING IT?

— Amy Armstrong

Instagram is one of the most popular social media tools on the market, and it's easy to understand why; we're visual learners. Instagram, which launched in 2010, is a photo and micro-video communications distributor. In essence, it's a place where you can share the visuals of your life, brand, and experiences.

In this post, we'll explain 3 reasons you should be using it to enhance your exhibit experience and brand. You'll be surprised how easy it will be to integrate it into your overall marketing plan.

YOU GET TO BE INCLUSIVE

Creative marketing is an amazing thing, and every business has their own special flavor of doing it. On Instagram, you get the opportunity to be creative about your brand not just its products/services. One major change in marketing over the last 10 years has been "inclusion," and if you're not including people in the experience of your brand, you're missing out.

A few ways to do this are:

- Taking photos or videos of team meetings
- Highlighting how your product integrates into a "normal" person's life.
- Interviewing team members about "funny" items (what are you doing this weekend, etc.)

By being inclusive, you actually make your brand an emotional investment for the user. These types of posts create a human connection behind the brand. Your Instagram followers know that someone runs the business Instagram account they follow. Humanizing your brand makes your company more appealing to interact with, especially on social media.

BEHIND THE SCENES ADVERTISING OPPORTUNITIES

While you're including people on the engaging, fun, and brand elements of the company, you'll also be able to include them by introducing the behind the scenes. Guess what, everything is a bit of a mess behind the scenes (and you can own that). Instagram allows you the opportunity to show your audience how you:

- Hide boxes, cords, and such while you're at the trade show
- How tired you look after the event
- The ridiculous outfit that "John" wore to the exhibit
- What it really looks like to prepare for an exhibit performance/demo

By documenting the behind the scenes of your company with Instagram, you'll be able to create a way of laughing, experiencing, and enjoying the reality of business (and life) with your audience. This will help you create a more approachable brand.

HASHTAG YOUR MOVEMENT

Hashtagging is a great way to create a movement, tie into others, and ultimately create something that is bigger than yourself. A hashtag is simple, it's literally placing a # sign before a word (like this: #Skyline). When you do this in the text of your Instagram post, you'll be creating a movement. For example, during the Super Bowl there was a #SuperBowl hashtag that you could search and see what people – all around the world – were saying about the game.

Now, your business likely won't have the reach of the Super Bowl, but you can create your own micro-movement with a hashtag. Here are some things you may

want to create hashtags for:

- #FreeHatsFromSkyline
- #SkylineTakesOverDallasConference
- #BehindTheSkylineScenes

Then, as you use these hashtags, you and your audience can create feeds of content throughout the day to enhance your online presence. Here are a few things to think about with starting a hashtag movement:

- How will we encourage people to use our #hashtag? Giveaway? Contest?
- What is the purpose of the micro-movement?

One emerging tool occurring more and more on the trade show or event floor is the use of the hashtag to promote a company in conjunction with Instagram. For example, a company will encourage visitors to take a

picture or selfie in the booth and to use a specific hashtag given by the company in the caption in order to be entered into a raffle drawing or prize. This becomes very effective in promoting a company online, creating an increase hashtag trend for the company, and create the live social media presence at the event or trade show.

Instagram can be a very powerful resource to aid in the success of your trade show booth. These are just three reasons, but there are actually much more. Experience and inclusion marketing continues to change the industry. Will your company – and trade show booth – keep the pace? Create an account today to get started. You'll love how simple it is.



INSTAGRAM FOLLOWER BOTS: SOCIAL AUTOMATION DOS AND DON'TS

— Brit Waye

If you use Instagram, you've probably noticed that when you post to your account and use a popular hashtag, you will often attract at least one new like, follower or comment. Sometimes, a quick check of these mysterious Instagram profiles will make you feel as if you've struck gold, they have tens of thousands of followers! They appear to be minor celebrities—potential influencers! More impressively, they are only following a few hundred accounts, and yours is one of them! Naturally, you show your appreciation by following them back.

But if you check your account a few days later, you might notice that you are no longer in that influencer's radar. Congrats! You were just tricked by a "Follow/Unfollow" bot. The tens of thousands of followers that account had? Your account is now one of them.

If you're now worried that social media fame is all about trickery and amassing a bunch of fake followers, read on. The following 'do's and don'ts' will help you find a healthy balance between slow-but-steady organic channel growth and natural-looking, accelerated social automation.

INSTAGRAM AUTOMATION DON'TS:

- DON'T be too quick to embrace bots of any kind. Most bot services are in violation of Instagram's policies for API usage and are thus increasingly getting blocked by Instagram. It is entirely possible for your own brand account to get shut down by Instagram if they decide you are posting in an unnatural way. Using a social automation management company is a much safer approach.
- DON'T ever buy followers. Most such followers are fake, bot accounts.



- DON'T use the spammy #followforfollow or #likeforlike hashtags, and don't use the Follow/Unfollow bot campaigns I described earlier. Similarly, don't use a bot campaign to post comments for you; such automated comments are often silly emojis and generic comments (e.g. "I need to show this to be colleagues!") that may end up sounding fakey or even deeply inappropriate if posting someone's personal photo. Stick with "like campaigns" only. The people whose posts get liked by your bot will check out your profile out of curiosity, and you'll passively get new follows from a few of them each week.
- DON'T set up your automation in a way that seems unnatural. Your automated activity should look like human activity. It should always come from the same IP address, and should mimic the way you post naturally—in short bursts, during the times of day when you would normally post (mornings, lunch, end-of-day

and before bed). If you're afraid of working with fly-by-night bots or are intimidated by missing an important setting on a tool such as FollowAdder, the social automation managers at Social Sensei are well-versed at setting up and running compliant and natural-looking automation campaigns for you. (If you choose Social Sensei to manage your automation, use our Skyline code "sky10" to save 10% of your monthly fees.)

INSTAGRAM AUTOMATION DOS:

- DO schedule your posts. This can ensure they get posted at the best time of the workday, or when you are busy with other things. HootSuite is a great tool for this.
- DO spend time each day checking the top trending posts under your top ten industry hashtags. Look at the account profiles behind these posts. Ignore most of the posts that are following few accounts but that have tons of followers, as these are probably bot users who are unlikely to follow you back. Focus on the ones that have a followers-to-following ratio closer to 50/50. "Like" a handful of their posts each day, and leave a meaningful, authentic comment or question. If you find a new account with content you truly love, then follow that account. This the best way to earn new, high-engagement followers.
- DO follow back any authentic-looking followers and interact with all of your followers' daily content. Occasionally repost the content of your VIP followers. Your followers will return the favor by engaging with your own content, thus improving the authenticity and attractiveness of your feed.
- DO continue to post quality content to your account. Quality content should be insightful, helpful, beautiful, humorous or inspiring. You won't get followers if your content isn't "follow-worthy!"



- DO use Instagram ads to promote each of your most visually-interesting posts. Doing so will earn you likes that are signals to other profile visitors that your content is worth reading. You only need to spend a few dollars in click fees per promoted post.

DO use Instagram ads to promote each of your most visually-interesting posts. Doing so will earn you likes...

- DO watch your "heart" icon for people who are responding to your automated "like campaign." Many will like your posts in response but may initially be reluctant to follow you. Check their account to see if they fit the profile of a client, partner, or amplifier of your social content. If so, follow them—they will then likely follow you in return.

Social automation shouldn't be fakey or annoying. When used in conjunction with organic engagement techniques, it can be a huge timesaver and a great way to boost your follower count while retaining an authentic social presence.

SNAPCHAT IN TRADE SHOW BOOTHS: DOES IT MAKE SENSE FOR YOU?

— Cam Rooney

As a company, you want to interact with your consumers as much as possible. From updating new products or showing them the behind the scenes of how your company works, Snapchat has made it easier to do so. Have you ever wondered if it makes sense to use Snapchat in your trade show booth? Like with almost all technology, it depends on your customers and whether they do/would use it! Snapchat is a messaging app that allows fellow Snapchatters to send photos and videos to one another. Users can also follow celebrities and (you guessed it) brands! You can add fun lenses and filters, captions and doodles, but don't spend too much time perfecting your snap, because it will self-destruct within 10 seconds of the recipient viewing it.

Does such a fleeting interaction have a place in your trade show booth?

QUICK SNAPCHAT FACTS

Before delving into trade show applications, let's take a look at some quick facts about the app so you can think about how it might fit with your current social media marketing:

- The core audience is 13-25 year-olds – ideal if your target market is teens and young adults.
- Most users are women; roughly 70% – ideal if you're targeting women with your product or as a decision-maker.
- 26 million users – while not as many as other social media giants, those users are sending 400 million snaps per day.



SNAPCHATS FOR BRANDS

If you're going to incorporate Snapchat, you'll want to go about it in much the same way as you do other social sites:

- Create your brand account.
- Promote your presence – you may do this through your other social sites, your website, or through email marketing.
- Create relevant content – while Snapchat is a fun and casual platform, you still want to think about what your followers will find valuable and relevant.
- Don't overshare – as with other social media, you'll want to find a good balance of fun and promotional snaps. And just because other Snapchatters are sending hundreds of snaps per day, doesn't mean you need to follow suit. Respect your followers, just like you would on other social sites.
- Cross-promote content – save your snaps and share them on your other social sites for your non-Snapchatting audience.

SNAPCHAT IN YOUR TRADE SHOW BOOTH

You're always looking for new trade show booth ideas, and technology and social media is consistently topping the charts. Here's how to incorporate Snapchat into your booth strategy:

- Take lots of videos and pictures – even if you're not sure how to use and share them just yet, Snapchat is known for its candid real-life video and picture quality. It's not professional, and it's not filter-fanatic Instagram. It's like your followers are at the show.
- Introduce your booth staff – short intro videos and, if you're feeling silly enough, use the filters in the app for doe-eyed and bunny-eared "headshots." Showing a human side to your staff is a great way to seem approachable for your followers walking the show floor.

- Show a product demo – not a professional video. Think real-time videos of visitors demoing your product in your booth. Are they amazed? Excited? Confused?



- Walk your visitor – and behind the camera audience – through the situation, so they feel like they are really there!
- Give a tour – show followers your booth or walk the show floor to give them a "day in the life of" experience.
- Make a story – a loop that contains videos and pictures of your day that's available for your followers to view for 24 hours after you post it.

If you have a young audience of Snapchatters, trade shows are a great place to capture media and share the experience! People want instant news and Snapchat videos are even better. You can continually post and get people talking about your brand and booth. Give it a try at your next show and have fun with it!



GIVEAWAYS & PROMOTIONS



HOW TO BRING THE RIGHT PROSPECTS TO YOUR TRADE SHOW EXHIBIT

— *Kayla Goeman*

Trade show marketers are inundated with advice on how to drive traffic to their booths. If you start reading through that advice, though, one thing they often neglect to address is the issue of how to bring in actual prospective buyers. Yes, marketing depends on numbers and so does sales, but it's not all about pumping warm bodies through your exhibit. You can waste a lot of time, money, and opportunities by flooding your sales team with the wrong kind of traffic. Obviously, they will spend time at any given show talking to some people who won't buy, and that's part of the gig, but you can help them out by planning your marketing campaign and your booth space in a way that does not actively attract those non-buyers.

PRODUCTS AND SERVICES WITH BROAD APPEAL

There are lots of ways to break down types of buyers and products, and marketing and sales techniques. For now, let's consider two major categories: Products and services that have a broad appeal, and those that are useful or appealing to a smaller, narrower group of prospects. In the first case, you get a much bigger pool of potential buyers. This offers your sales team more opportunities to sell, but it can also leave them swamped, and when you're dealing with a product almost anyone can use, it's difficult to know which prospects to court and which to broom. In this scenario, pre-planning, marketing, and booth design can help out by presenting visitors with a way to reveal themselves as being receptive.

Use banner stands to create a place for a massage chair in your booth. Or use a portable workstation or tables with custom graphics to offer a charging station. Trade show attendees are a fairly wary lot, and they're hesitant to slow down too much, so the people who choose to spend those extra minutes in your booth are revealing that at least on some level, they're receptive to your message.

NICHE MARKET PROSPECTS

If your product or service is targeted for a niche market, you need to attract people who are both in that niche and receptive to your message. In some ways, this can make marketing a little easier, because you know where to begin looking for those prospects you need. Attracting these prospects begins well before the trade show. One of the biggest reasons to start early is that in a niche market, the buyers have fewer choices of vendors, so they're more likely to research ahead of time and arrive at the show with a short-list of vendors. Don't overlook the power of an invitation. It's not enough to merely inform your contacts of what you will be presenting and offering at the show; you need to invite them to come and give them some solid reasons to add your company to that short-list.

MAKE A GIVE-AWAY WORK FOR YOU

Holding a giveaway at a trade show can generate a lot of contacts and traffic, but again, are they valuable contacts for your business? You'd gather a large crowd by throwing money off the roof, too, but it's not going to benefit your company in any meaningful way, and neither is giving away an expensive prize, unless you've chosen a prize that will appeal strongly to the prospects you need and have less appeal for people who will never be buyers of your product. If your prospect pool is broad, maybe giving away an iPad is a worthwhile investment. Who doesn't want an iPad? If you're looking for a more precise pool of prospects, though, put some more thought into a prize, so you get a meaningful return on that investment.

The biggest takeaway? Know your prospect. When deciding how to attract prospects to your trade show exhibit, understand what they are looking for and how you can help them, then move forward with your approach.

THE SWAG ALTERNATIVE: HOW EXPERIENTIAL PREMIUMS BUILD BETTER BRAND LOYALTY

— *Mindy Feih*

How many t-shirts, mobile device chargers, water bottles, umbrellas or other items have you received at trade shows? How many of them do you still own, and how many of them have actually changed your view of the company that produced them?

Custom imprinted swag (aka stuff we all get) has been a marketing staple for decades, despite the fact that much of it ends up being lost, tossed, given away, or otherwise forgotten shortly after a conference. Today, more and more brands are ditching the plastic trinkets in favor of less tangible, more experiential premiums.

EXPERIENCES LAST LONGER THAN THINGS

While it seems counter-intuitive that a one-time event actually is more enduring than a physical object, psychological studies prove otherwise. While we all delight in a free gift, we tend to become accustomed to—or even bored with—our physical possessions. In contrast, experiences live on in memory long after an event has past. The emotions we attach to those memories color our perceptions of the people with whom we shared the experience.

For this reason, more exhibitors are offering in-booth experiences ranging from photo booths to contests to lectures. Outside the hall, VIP events such as mixers, tours of local landmarks, or other quality-time experiences offer attendees experiences they won't get anywhere else. Such experiences thus offer more lasting brand value than a custom printed keychain.

VIRTUAL SWAG

While attending a live event, attendees increasingly share their experiences on their social channels. One of the most popular recent forms of virtual swag has been

the custom social media filter. From animated selfie masks to digital photo filters, lenses and frames, brands are developing their own tools to help audiences customize their social media photos. Facebook, Snapchat, and Instagram all offer sponsored ways to blend your logo and logotype with user-generated content.

Because social audiences use these tools to show their friends they support your brand, these social filters can have much more collective visibility than an imprinted pen or USB stick.

Some businesses can actually see a negative return from using premiums.

THE HIDDEN NEGATIVE TO PHYSICAL SWAG

Some businesses can actually see a negative return from using premiums. A Yale study found that thank-you gifts like mugs and totebags can actually decrease the amount of contributions that nonprofits receive. The reason is that the selfishness that recipients feel upon getting the gift “crowds out” the happy feelings of donating to charity—thus reducing the average donation! Since for-profits similarly want their customers to feel good about doing business with them, it makes sense to ensure your premiums should impart a sense of community, rather than appealing to negative emotions such as greed. That's much easier to accomplish with an experiential freemium.

Physical swag will never disappear. But before you invest in your next purchase of booth premiums, spend some time thinking of creative ways to incorporate your swag into a true interactive experience. Your giveaways (and your company image) will enjoy much more longevity.

RETURN ON INVESTMENT: 7 SECRETS TO BETTER LEVERAGE YOUR NEXT EVENT

— *Eric Schwartz*

Without proper ROI measurement, marketing endeavors such as trade shows can become the proverbial redheaded stepchildren of the organizational budget: feeling shunned for their differences and prone to being omitted when economic conditions get tough. But by following the steps below, it can be easy to justify your exhibit expenses to your key stakeholders.

Pick the Right Event. This sounds like a no-brainer, but a surprising number of exhibit managers devote too much time and budget to events with limited potential. Consider the costs of exhibiting, the number of qualified prospects likely to attend, and the often-overlooked costs of travel lodging, shipping, etc. to that particular destination. Just because a given show was lucrative three years ago doesn't mean it's worth attending this year.

Look for Effective Cost-Saving Opportunities.

Mindfulness toward exhibit expenses can go a long way toward preventing painful, emergency spending cuts down the road. Signage replacement or booth rental can be viable alternatives to a more expensive booth replacement over a larger design overhaul.

Have Quantifiable Goals. To be able to attach a dollar figure to an abstract goal, you need to correlate it with a specific outcome. For a goal such as brand awareness, you can arm yourself with information by knowing how many people visited your booth, or how many people visited your website as a result of your exhibit. We have found that this latter figure is often the one missing from most trade show manager's datasets, often because they don't use tracking URLs and Google Analytics to prove exhibiting's contribution to inbound marketing.

Know Your Full Costs. Most exhibitors keep excellent track of all the direct, pre-show and onsite expenses. More often missing from this ledger are the follow-up costs, as well as the “soft” costs such as staff time that may have otherwise been spent on other sales and marketing projects.

Know Your Conversion Rate. What percentage of the prospects from last year's show ended up becoming this year's paying customers? Although you may be able to quickly rattle off the total number of prospects on your mail list, knowing their average conversion rate (and recalculating it from time to time, as your prospect list expands) is a far more critical metric.

Estimate Average Customer Lifetime Value.

Using your own historic sales data, you can project the total revenue that specific customers will generate during their lifetime. There are several formulas for doing this, but all hinge on knowing your average customer lifespan, retention rate, order history and profit margins. Knowing this can allow you to take a handful of trade show leads and sales and demonstrate their much larger net worth. Your CRM system should be able to automate and simplify much of this.

Measure as You Go. Running detailed, post-show reports is one of those tasks on which many of us procrastinate. But if you're doing accurate time and expenses tracking before, during and after the show, you can often get a general feel for which marketing efforts may be generating leads vs. just usurping valuable time and money. Paying as much attention as you can will later help you focus your eventual, detailed reporting on the most efficient aspects of the trade show marketing mix.

ENGAGING WAYS TO PROMOTE YOUR TRADE SHOW OR EVENT PRESENCE

— *Kayla Goeman*

If you show up at a marketing event or trade show and no one visits your booth, you probably won't consider it a success. With so many platforms and companies fighting for attendees' attention, it's not enough just to show up, you should be promoting your trade show presence early and often. How do you know which platforms and marketing channels are the best for your business? There are many factors that go into deciding how you should pre-promote your attendance at an event, including budget, staff resources, and time. Here are some of the most practical ways for you to promote your trade show presence this year.

FACEBOOK

With almost a billion daily active users who spend an average of 40 minutes on the site, Facebook is the first spot you should be promoting your trade show participation. The best place to start is a Facebook event, which can be started from a personal account or preferably a business page. Events posted through a business page have extra insights and perks, including the ability to boost or advertise the post, an option for users to be "interested" in the event, which shares it with their audience, and insights into the reach and demographic of your event. If the event you're attending has a Facebook page, you can tag it in your description for even more exposure. You can share updates leading up to the event through the "wall" of your event, but keep in mind 581 million Facebook users are "mobile only", so keep any updates mobile friendly, stay away from sharing large files or PDFs that may be difficult to open on a mobile device.

TWITTER

This micro-text social media platform is one of the most prominent, as well as one of the best to connect with other vendors and visitors to your event before the doors



open. Most events have an official or unofficial hashtag, or keyword, that connects anyone communicating about the event. By following the hashtag on Twitter, you will discover a brand new audience to follow and dialogue with. Share your own updates as well, including the hashtag in your message so it will be shared with the niche audience. Twitter is ideal for personally inviting participants to visit your booth the day of the event, which may set you apart from the masses, and lead to increased foot traffic from Twitter users who will seek you out when they arrive.

LINKEDIN

Known mostly in professional circles, LinkedIn is an often-overlooked tool for promoting your event. With LinkedIn, you can leverage your professional connections and your company's business page to get the message out about your trade show presence. First, share a company status update to share the news with LinkedIn users who are part of your business page group. You can also pin this update to the top of your

business page, encourage others to like and comment, and pay to sponsor, or advertise to target followers. Individuals within your business can also share individual status updates about their role in the trade show, and target specific first-level connections with a direct message that will be delivered to the individual's email account and LinkedIn inbox. LinkedIn is ideal for professional conferences or B2B trade shows.

PERISCOPE

Many marketing thought leaders are claiming live video will be the next big thing in social media marketing, and you can get ahead of the curve by promoting your trade show presence or event on Periscope, a live video app that lets you broadcast to the masses. Periscope is available on Android and iPhone devices, and is simple to use: create an account; use hashtags, for instance, the event hashtag, and "go live". Users who tune in to your broadcast share kudos by tapping their screen, which brings up tiny hearts of approval for all the viewers to see. Users can also chat during the live broadcast. Periscope provides the option to Tweet the live video link, or access for only 24 hours through the app. Periscope not only gives a behind-the-scenes look at your business, but will put a face and voice to your company, which will help them connect more quickly when they visit your trade show booth.

E-MAIL CAMPAIGNS

There's good reason e-mail marketing has been around for more than a quarter century: it works. Although there's a fine line between informing enough and informing too much, a solid e-mail marketing plan can do wonders for your pre-event promotions. There are a few keys to success when it comes to e-mail marketing. Your e-blasts should provide added value or a value proposition,

which is a short statement that explains why he or she should visit your booth. Your list should be highly targeted; e-mail marketing companies like MailChimp and Constant Contact give users both the option to target segments of an e-mail list according to conversations or past e-mail engagements, so you reach the most important people on your list. You can even purchase the attendee list from the show organizer to make your presence known. The show organizer is there to provide a successful conference. Finally, the e-mail marketing should give all the details of the event, such as booth location and time. Send out a few e-mails with similar information no less than a month before the event, and at least once a week until the event. This will help your business stay top-of-mind for the event attendees.

BANNER STANDS ARE STILL A KEY FACTOR IN MARKETING YOUR BRAND

Whether you choose to use Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Periscope, an e-mail campaign or all five, online and social media promotion is an affordable way to market your presence at a trade show or event, but has its limitations. For offline marketing, banner stands are one of the most versatile event pieces you can buy. Banner stands can help you fill the in-person void in your event marketing in a few different ways. First, they provide versatility and portability; banner stands can be used on the floor of a retail store, in an office, or in the lobby of the event to direct attendees to your booth. Second, banner stands can be designed with bold, eye-catching graphics, which can be a powerful tool for promoting your event presence, much more than graphics on a screen.

With a mixture of emerging technology and old-school marketing techniques, attendees will be eager to visit your booth and learn more about your products.

12 TRADE SHOW AND EVENT PROMOTION MISTAKES TO AVOID

— Sofia Troutman

1) Giving away a low-quality trinket. If you can only afford something that will break the second time your client uses it, save the money and buy coffee for your staff on the day of the show instead. Another option may be to give your clients coupons for a discount on their next purchase and only give an inexpensive, but durable, giveaway to other clients such as a pen or branded post it notes. You may not get points for originality, but it is better than being remembered as the company that had the water bottle that leaked.

2) A drawing for something that has nothing to tie it back to your company or message. Everyone loves the tech giveaways, but they are more likely to draw everyone to your booth. This brings a potential for not reaching your target audience. Trust me, there are too many Apple Watch and iPad giveaways and they are not always relevant to the brand. I once won an iPod. I love it. I can't tell you the company that gave it to me (I feel a little bad about that). Instead create a giveaway that does tie into your branding. For example, Skyline gave away donations to one of three charities the year we launched our "Helping the World Trade" core purpose at EXHIBITOR. While this was not related to trade shows, it did tie into our release of our core purpose of "Helping the World Trade" which in part is about sharing with our clients that we care about helping them and our communities succeed.

3) Bringing a speaker that does not tie their presentation back to your product or service benefits or booth theme. Instead, consider having a knowledgeable speaker in your industry or someone who can help improve your customer's productivity at work. It is great to have someone who can draw a crowd, but they should also be able to draw the



right crowd and give them a message that is relevant to your brand. Consider an educational speaker or someone higher up in your company that can speak to your product in an entertaining way. Another idea is to host a networking meeting for top clients and promote it via a special invitation just for them. If your exhibit is large enough you can host it in your booth, otherwise reserve a room at a nearby restaurant after the show and spring for appetizers and their first beverage.

4) Not having a social media hashtag for your show communications. #notleveragingyourinvestment. Make sure you include the hashtag for the trade show or event you are participating in and others for your company or relevant industry publications. If you have a tagline for your theme, make sure to include that consistently in all your communications as well.

For example, if you are at CES, the Consumer Electronics Show, you would use #CES #CES2016 @nameofyourcompany #Yourtradeshow/eventtheme

There are many factors that go into deciding how you should pre-promote your attendance at an event...

5) Waiting until the day of the show to share that you are exhibiting at the show on social media.

If you did not send anything to your followers at least four weeks before the show, then they don't have you on their radar. You should ideally send at least three communications before the show via your different channels. We recommend you focus on LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter. However, depending on the nature of your product you may also want to do Instagram or Pinterest.

6) Not sharing what your message/draw is for visiting your booth well before the show starts.

Make sure that your key message is consistent across all your communications: pre-show promotion, industry advertising, event or trade show signage and publications and exhibit signage. Do you have anything new to share? Maybe a newer product or service? Will you be providing demos or training in your booth? Will there be hands on opportunities with product or face to face opportunities with key company representatives? Whatever your key message, make sure potential attendees know about it.

7) Poor giveaway branding. Do you think your client will use the giveaway? Is the look consistent enough with your brand that it will remind their client of what



you do for them or are they so ugly that you hope they will not? Make sure your branding is appropriate, legible and attractive. Think about how long someone will hang on to the promotional piece and consider wear and tear before making your selection. If you have a more formal brand, you should stay formal with your giveaway and messaging.

If you have a playful brand or if you are edgy, then show it.

8) Not providing clients with a benefit statement or content that will help make their job easier or inform them why they should consider your product or service. It is surprising to see how often you get a promotional email or postcard and have a hard time

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figuring out what they do. Some large companies may be able to leverage past communications and rely on their brand equity, Coca Cola for example. In general, most companies should say what they do and their product/service or organization's benefits.



9) Not sending your best clients an invitation to visit your booth. You may assume that they already know about the show or that whether or not you send an invitation will not make a difference. However, they are more likely to attend and visit you if you send them a personalized invitation. Remember, they are busy and although they may have attended, or not, in the past you want to stay on their list of companies to consider.

10) Not finding out client and attendee demographics to better select promotional items most relevant to them. Don't assume that the latest popular gadget – or worse, the cheapest giveaway – should be your giveaway at your next show. Take a moment to look at information about attendees provided by the show or information you have about your clients. Then think about what they would appreciate when making your promotional material selection.

11) Email promotions with bad hyperlinks, art that doesn't display, bad redirects or high SPAM scores. Email promotions with high SPAM scores will go directly to recipient's SPAM folders or can't get through their firewall. Work with your e-marketing or IT specialists to make sure your email promotions have the best chance of making it to their intended recipients.

Whatever you choose to do to draw customers to your trade show or event, be sure to always think of how it will affect your company perception...

12) Not training your staff well before your event about what you are promoting and why. Make sure they know the overall objectives of the event. What are your goals, target market, giveaways, who gets what and why? I was shocked when an existing client came to our exhibit one year and told a staffer that he did not need to talk to anyone because he was already a client. The booth staffer barely acknowledged him, turned around and moved on to the next person. The appropriate response would have been to thank him for his business and make sure he got at least the same, or better, giveaway and messaging as new prospects. Clearly, this staffer should have had better training.

Whatever you choose to do to draw customers to your trade show or event, be sure to always think of how it will affect your company perception in the long run, as well as your ability to get new leads.



DIGITAL MARKETING TIPS



WHAT IS DIGITAL MARKETING?

— Sofia Troutman

It seems like everywhere you go there is someone who is tasked with Digital Marketing. In fact, many people now have titles such as Digital Marketing Manager, Digital Marketing Operations Manager, and Manager of Digital and Online Marketing. But what is Digital Marketing? I have heard it described as any marketing involving electronic technology and data collection.

DEFINITION

According to Wikipedia, Digital Marketing is: “An umbrella term for the targeted, measurable, and interactive marketing of products or services using digital technologies to reach and convert leads into customers and retain them. The key objective is to promote brands, build preference, and engage with customers and increase sales through various digital marketing techniques. It is embodied by an extensive selection of service, product, and brand marketing tactics, which mainly use the Internet as a core promotional medium, in addition to mobile and traditional TV and radio.”

HOW CAN YOU LEARN DIGITAL MARKETING?

GROUPS & BLOGS DEVOTED TO DIGITAL MARKETING

There are groups in LinkedIn for it – 4,330 groups at last count. The Digital Marketing group has over 900,000 members. It has become a hot term used in various blogs including Mashable, TSNN, and the American Marketing Association (AMA) blog.

COURSES

The University of Illinois, through Coursera, offers a certificate in Digital Marketing. This Specialization explores several aspects of the new digital marketing environment, including digital marketing analytics,



search engine optimization, social media marketing, and 3D printing. When you complete the Digital Marketing Specialization you should understand the foundations of digital marketing and learn examples, concepts, and tools to help you digitally create, distribute, promote and price products and services. This Specialization is part of the University of Illinois iMBA Program.

INC. magazine rated “Marketing In a Digital World” as a top online class for professionals. Even the AMA offers a number of digital courses such as Digital Strategy and Analytics. In addition to more traditional marketing concepts taught in this course such as audience segmentation and customer journeys, this course also shares how “digital strategy is the process of identifying, articulating and executing on digital opportunities that will increase your organization’s competitive advantage.” After reading this, even I want to sign up.

There is even a Digital Marketing Institute with a Post-

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graduate diploma in Digital Marketing offered online. There are also a lot of great articles online, and many other companies offer webinars and free materials that you can review to get up to speed. In fact, many local libraries offer introductory courses on blogging, social media, basic database creation and more.

WHY SHOULD YOU LEARN DIGITAL MARKETING?

STATISTICS

The Digital Marketing Institute shares these statistics as proof of the need for this discipline:

- 76% of marketers think marketing has changed more in the past two years than in the last fifty.
- Adobe – a vendor of digital marketing tools.
- 57% of CEOs believe social media will push past call centers and channel partners to be among the top 3 ways to engage with customers.
- 70% of executives at large companies and agencies say their digital marketing teams are strong in some areas but mediocre or weak in others.

Marketing Profs quoting the “Online Marketing Institute” who sells corporate training and certification programs in Digital Strategy among other certificate programs.

Clearly, marketing has evolved significantly over the last twenty years as more and more companies and individuals use the Internet to research companies and products. Companies reach out to current and potential customers online and increasingly, even complete their purchases without ever talking to a company representative. Additionally, there is an increasing amount of collectible data to track client activities and demographics.

CONSULTING AND AGENCIES

There are now Digital Marketing Agencies that specialize in helping companies adjust their marketing strategies to accommodate this changing, increasingly tech-focused environment or meet their digital marketing needs when the skills of their employees have not yet evolved to the changing environment. For example, they may provide app development, website design, content creation, lead generation, social media management, email marketing and pay-per-click advertising advice.

However, you could argue that Digital Marketing is just a collection of new tools that should be used just like any other marketing tactic, thoughtfully and as part of an overall strategy. In Mark Ritson’s Marketing Week article “The Death of Digital is Upon Us,” he states that Digital Marketing as a term should be obsolete. He quotes Diageo’s CEO Ivan Menezes in analyzing his company’s success: “It is not about doing Digital Marketing, it is about marketing effectively in a digital world.”

HOW DOES DIGITAL MARKETING COME INTO PLAY WITH TRADE SHOWS AND EVENTS?

SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media can be used to promote events before, during and after the fact. This promotion can increase attendance and engagement at the event. It can be used to poll attendees about their preferences before the event and gather real-time information during and after. This can be dangerous if things did not go as well as you hoped. Depending on your type of event, you can have your clients share social posts and even ask them to rate your company using social platforms. With all of this comes great data you can gather to further fine-tune your marketing tactics. In fact, events give marketers a great reason to communicate with clients on social media and further the client relationship from a digital connection to a personal face-to-face engagement.



EMAIL MARKETING

Email invitations are sent as a matter of course for almost every event. It should come as no surprise that it is a great idea to invite your clients and prospects to visit you at your next trade show via email. Just make sure you give them an incentive to do so, whether it be an activity, giveaway or a new product demo. It is also nice to have a feature that enables them to add the event to their calendar and to share the invitation with others.

BLOGGING

In your blog, you can post about your event and the activities you will be doing that may interest your clients and readers. This is a great opportunity to give your clients a sneak preview of the products, demos, and giveaways they can expect to see if they visit you at the show.

VIDEO CONTENT

While production of videos used to be left to the experts, due in part to the cost of producing them and distributing them, now anyone can create and share a video. You can create videos with an iPhone and share them

on YouTube to promote your event. Stream video of your demos on Periscope or share your videos on Facebook. Just be mindful of creating content that is not compelling to your audience thus losing their interest. Video is great if you do it well.

INTERACTIVE & TRACKABLE DIGITAL SIGNAGE

Creating digital signage is getting easier as there are apps and vendors to help you create content that can be used at your event to showcase your products and services. Also, these can be set up so you can integrate brochure requests, email and interactive capabilities. Some will even have a feature that can track what items you, or your prospects, look at and for how long. This can be a particularly useful feature if you are launching a new product or trying to gauge interest amongst the existing line you are showcasing.

CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

The next time you gather leads or any client information at a show make sure it is optimized for easy entry into your CRM. This way you will be better equipped to follow up on those contacts and to estimate the revenue generated as a result of your show presence or event.

ELECTRONIC BROCHURES

Many of our clients now use electronic brochures that can be viewed on a tablet or digital monitor during the show and emailed to their clients immediately – either during the conversation or right after.

Some software will even allow you to mark up the brochure via a touch screen before emailing the brochure to a client. Some still bring paper brochures for those clients who want something to take away at the show.

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Back in the early 2000s, the big breakthrough was to offer electronic brochures on a thumb drive for prospects to view. This provides the client the information they want in an easily accessible, savable and searchable format. You can also keep track of the brochures you distributed at the show in your CRM, which will help your sales reps by letting them know what the client inquired about.

WEBSITE MARKETING

Whether you choose to have an event microsite, to add a mention of it on your homepage, or a dedicated event page on your site, a web presence should be part of your arsenal. If people are thinking about attending or planning to attend an event but want more information, their instinctive step is to... Google it! Yes, you need to make sure they find the information you want them to know – location of the show, your booth number, your giveaway offer, new products you may be launching. This should all be easily accessible. You should add these links to all your social media postings about the event to help drive traffic to the page and improve your SEO (Search Engine Optimization) ranking.

You should add these links to all your social media postings about the event to help drive traffic...

SMS (SHORT MESSAGE SERVICE) OR TEXTING

According to the book “The New Rules of Marketing and PR” by David Meerman Scott, some companies use text as a way to make it easy for people to sign up to receive communications from a company. However, you need to be careful. Ensure that people who sign up know what they are doing and give you explicit consent

to communicate with them. One recommendation from Constant Contact is to provide a clear, incentivized call to action to promote a keyword, like “text keyword to 12345 to receive X offer and to join our texting list.” CTIA, The Wireless Association, has best practices outlined on their website. As they also state, you must be very careful not to contact the receiver too often or outside of the context that you laid out or they will unsubscribe or, worse yet, not want to do business with you in the future. That said, a useful text message will probably be appreciated. My dentist sends me a text, with my permission, on the day of my appointment. If you set meetings with your clients at a trade show or provide a time-sensitive premium, a reminder text that they can opt in for will likely be appreciated.

VIRTUAL REALITY (VR) & AUGMENTED REALITY (AR)

This has been getting a lot of press lately and most people don't know the marketing capabilities of this new digital technology. However, it is clear that the ability to make people feel like they are interacting in an environment that is digitally enhanced has huge opportunities for marketing and for events. Some of our clients are starting to use features of AR as part of the experience they provide to attendees visiting their booth. I can't wait for us to have the capability to incorporate that experience and create a new, enhanced way for clients to experience our messaging and brands.

I am sure there are many new facets to Digital Marketing that I don't know about and that are still evolving as I write this. However, I hope that this article helps give you some insight into what it is and what it will become. Digital Marketing offers a new – and evolving – set of tools to help us better communicate with clients about who we are and how we can help meet their needs.

TRADE SHOWS GO DIGITAL

— Sofia Troutman

Digital is everywhere, so it is no surprise that almost every trade show exhibit has some sort of digital content. In fact, according to our latest research, 75% of exhibitors said they used technology and digital content in their booth in the past twelve months. That number increases to 86% for island exhibitors. Also, about a third of exhibitors that do not use tech now, plan to start using it during the next 12 months, which would increase tech use to over 80% of all exhibitors.

That said, another interesting point we learned during this research is that while in our 2015 exhibiting tech study showed the perception among exhibitors about using technology was overwhelmingly positive, in 2016 the response was more mixed. It seems that as more exhibitors used technology, some started discovering the issues that can come with it, especially if you are not prepared. Among the problems expressed were: high costs, interference with making a human connection, complexity, and bulkiness. The biggest problems identified had to do with lead retrieval systems. While these systems are incredibly helpful when they work properly, they can be a significant pain point when they do not. Always, ensure you have a backup system if the Wi-Fi goes down or if your lead app fails to synch up as planned. There is nothing wrong with having a paper backup to take down lead information just in case. There are plenty of ways to prepare early, and ensure your technology is in working order.

The digital content used at trade shows is overwhelmingly created by internal staff. In fact, 83% of our survey respondents create their own digital content. Unfortunately, much of this content is not as good as it could be. Many exhibitors limit themselves to a few simple slides or to just showing their existing website. However, island exhibitors are nearly three times more likely than inline exhibitors to have digital content created by their local marketing communications agency. If done



right, and especially if incorporated into a broader marketing campaign, this same content can be re-purposed for other uses such as online ads, used within the lobby of a company, or for other events.

Even when exhibitors do spend on content, the investment is typically small relative to their entire budgets. Our research showed that 62% of exhibitors spend less than \$1,000 on content creation on average per show. 38% of exhibitors spend \$1,000 or more. Island exhibitors invest significantly more — while only 5% of inline exhibitors spend \$5,000 or more on digital content creation per show, 25% of island exhibitors do.

It may be worth it for you to consider having an agency create digital content for your next trade show or event and coordinate with the rest of your marketing team to split the cost. The content could be videos, motion graphics, a microsite or an app. This same content could be used on your company's corporate website, on social media, in an email campaign or in a lobby. Think outside the box and you could all win by having consistent messaging that will be magnified by your coordinated effort and high-quality digital content.

TWO BASIC STEPS FOR TRACKING EXHIBIT MARKETING CAMPAIGNS

— Matt Bohar

Virtually every trade show exhibitor's website has Google Analytics tracking installed, and if yours doesn't – may we ask why not?

To use it effectively for marketing ROI, you need to make sure you're tracking all of your marketing campaigns. Here are the two most common Google Analytics tracking tools you may not be using:

TRACKABLE CAMPAIGN URLS

While your email marketing software automatically tracks metrics such as how many people received, opened, or clicked on one of your campaign links, it won't automatically show how those click-through-visitors engaged with your website.

By adding UTM tags to campaign URLs via Google's Campaign URL builder, you can later use Google Analytics to determine which email blasts resulted in sales, leads, most time on site, or other key performance indicators.

The Campaign URL builder can be used to create any offsite hyperlinks that will link back to your site, including links you provide to your affiliate partners, links you share on social media, or URLs that you feature in printed marketing materials.

To later see which campaign URLs are performing the best, just log into Google Analytics and check under Acquisition > Campaigns > All Campaigns.

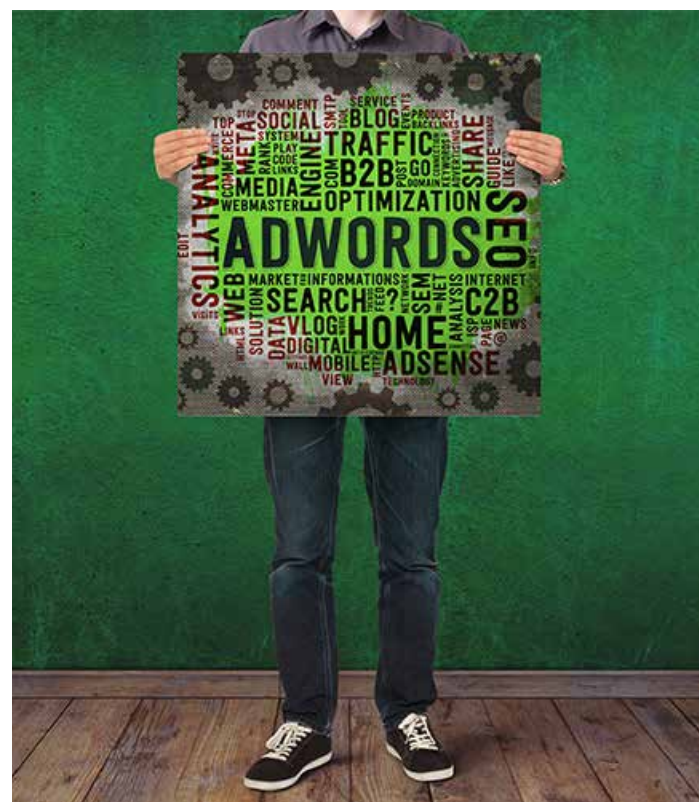
ADWORDS & ANALYTICS LINKING

Google AdWords is a great way to raise awareness for your exhibits, whether through search, display or remarketing ads. If you don't link your AdWords

account with your Google Analytics account, you are missing important data about how that paid traffic is (or isn't) interacting with your website!

To find out if your AdWords or Analytics accounts have been properly linked, just login to Google Analytics and choose Acquisition > AdWords > Campaigns. You'll see a message at the top of the screen in AdWords and Analytics with simple instructions for getting these two Google platforms to share data.

Tracking all your advertising, email, referral and social campaigns can help you tap into the robust data in your Google Analytics accounts – revealing which marketing platforms, content, ads, etc. are earning you the best ROI on your exhibit marketing dollars.



ADVANCED DIGITAL MARKETING CAMPAIGN TRACKING

— Matt Bohar

In a prior blog post, I explained how exhibitors often fail to measure the website engagement they receive from their email blasts and pay-per-click advertising. Such stats aren't automatically tracked in Google Analytics, so manually enabling campaign tracking can give you rich insights into the effectiveness of your inbound marketing.

In today's post, I will discuss three other critical metrics you should be tracking, but probably aren't: media file views, e-commerce statistics, and the search terms people are using to find your website in Google.

TRACKING MEDIA FILE VIEWS AND DOWNLOADS

While your Google Analytics account automatically tracks views of your html web pages, it doesn't automatically track how visitors view your other content, such as downloads of your PDF product spec sheets or views of your embedded videos. Such file views are often the sign of highly-engaged website users, so you want to understand how these people arrived on your site, so you can attract more of that type of traffic. To do so, simply use the handy Google Tag Manager to add a tracking code to your website links and click buttons.

ECOMMERCE TRACKING

If you sell products online, it's important to understand how much each transaction cost you, so that you can achieve an effective ROI on your digital marketing. Shockingly, many exhibitors don't enable ecommerce tracking in Analytics, and are thus missing out on this data, as well as information on where sales traffic is coming from, which types of visitors are abandoning their shopping carts, etc.



TRACKING YOUR SEO KEYWORDS

If you've looked at your Google Analytics account even once, you've likely seen the missing, inaccurate, or deeply unhelpful information that appears under All Traffic > Channels > Organic Search > Keywords. To truly see what type of keywords people are using in Google to find your site, you need to first register your site with Google Search Console, and then link your Search Console account with your Analytics account. The process only takes a few seconds and will immediately show you how many times you have appeared in search results (and for which keywords), how highly you rank in Google for these queries, and how many people clicked on your website in search results.

Google Analytics is a robust tool for understanding your website traffic, but its out-of-the-box setup settings don't track these and other key metrics. By spending a few minutes doing some manual setup, you or your web team can get a much better idea of the effectiveness of your digital marketing efforts.

HOW TO USE ONLINE MARKETING FOR A TRADE SHOW OR EVENT

— Greg Johnson

While there are still a few, very specific times where you will utilize direct mail, the vast majority of trade show marketing strategies have gone digital. In today's business culture, having an online presence and knowing how to reach customers online isn't optional; it's a necessity. If you want to ensure a successful event, be sure your online marketing strategies are up to par by following these tips.



1) LIST YOUR SHOW ON YOUR WEBSITE HOMEPAGE

This means you'll need a place for dynamic content somewhere on your homepage; ideal locations are on a banner, badge or sidebar and always above the fold (in the area visible when you open a page without having to scroll down). Prominently displaying your attendance at an upcoming show captures customers and prospects who may have missed your direct marketing message and may capture prospects that you weren't even aware of.

2) ENSURE YOUR SITE SPEED IS ADEQUATE

This is important any time of year; not just before an event. Think about this: Google can return 500,000 search results in under half a second. Today's internet users expect speed. In fact, according to Kissmetrics, 40% of users abandon a website that takes longer than 3 seconds to load.

3) PROMOTE YOUR EVENT ON A LANDING PAGE OR YOUR BLOG

Consider a blog when you simply want to inform your customers about the basics of the event: when, where, how to find you, what to expect when they stop by. If you want to kick it up a notch, consider creating a dedicated landing page for the event or trade show with multimedia and maybe even an on-page form as part of a pre-show contest.

If you want to kick it up a notch, consider creating a dedicated landing page for the event or trade show...

4) INVITE CURRENT AND PROSPECTIVE CLIENTS

Use a different message! Set up two campaigns in your email marketing software and send different messages to current and prospective customers. In your message, be sure to include all the basics of the event, plus a teaser about some sort of incentive or giveaway you have planned.

5) AS PART OF #3 OR #4, CONSIDER INCLUDING A PRE-QUALIFYING QUESTIONNAIRE WITH AN INCENTIVE TO ANSWER IT

This allows you to segment clients and prospects so that you are prepared with "what pitch" to use when you meet them at the show. This also saves you valuable time pre-qualifying visitors at the show.



6) HAVE PDF/DIGITAL VERSIONS OF YOUR MARKETING MATERIAL AVAILABLE

Back to preferences in our digital age, some show-goers get downright mad if you try to offer them (gasp!) printed material. While it's true that plenty of people still prefer printed collateral, and the industry tends to influence this as well, having high-quality digital versions ensures everyone is happy. QR codes are an easy way to send prospects directly to your marketing material; you can even have multiple codes that go to specific documents to satisfy different types of inquiries. You can have large codes printed as part of your booth display or print them on anything from a business card to a stress ball.

7) SEND A PERSONAL THANK YOU EMAIL POST-SHOW

This doesn't require a lot of explanation other than the personal part. Take the time to recall your conversation with the customer or prospect and write a follow-up email that both thanks them and sets the stage for additional sales dialogue.



8) VIRTUAL POST-SHOW PRESENCE

During the show, you can Tweet or even Livestream from Facebook. Using social media is a valuable tool for alerting show attendees to what's going on in your booth right then, and the media can be used to

Using social media is a valuable tool for alerting show attendees to what's going on in your booth...

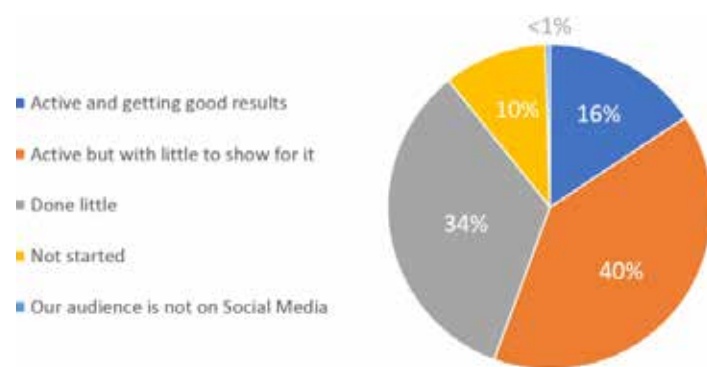
create a virtual post-show presence to post on your site or blog for people who missed the show. Additional media from your staff, such as them walking the show and interacting with visitors, can also be included in the round up.

A trade show marketing firm can give you more tips for online marketing and can help you come up with specific strategies for pre- and post-show digital communication to customers and prospects.

IS SOCIAL MEDIA WORKING FOR YOUR TRADE SHOW MARKETING EFFORTS?

— Matt Bohar

During our recently held “Social Media for Trade Show Promotions” webinar, we asked a polling question to attendees on whether (or not) they were using social media to promote their company’s presence at the events where they exhibit. The results were a little surprising to me:



Of the 223 attendees that answered the poll, only 35 (16%) said that they were active and getting good results for their efforts, and 89 attendees (or 40% of those that voted) said that they had “little to show for it.” Then I thought: what constitutes “good” results? How are they measuring their results? Is it by the number of leads and sales you collected at the trade show (conversion or revenue metrics)? Or, is it the number of likes, shares, comments or new followers (engagement metrics)? Maybe it’s as simple as views or impressions you get for your campaign (amplification metrics)?

If you are measuring tangible statistics, what are you comparing your results to? Is there a benchmark? Are you measuring it against other social media campaigns? Does your company attend multiple trade shows and you measure your results show by show? Are you only considering the results “good” if you see a windfall of positive feedback once and anything less than that one big campaign is a failure?

Tracking results these days can be as simple as using your Google Analytics account or a social media scheduling software that includes analytics. At Skyline, we use both successfully. Here is how we do it:

GOOGLE ANALYTICS

When we set-up most of our social media campaigns, we want the redirect links in our posts or tweets to go to our website or microsite, which have our Google Analytics tracker code embedded in them so we can measure behavior of our visitors (number of page views, average time on the page, entrances, bounce rates and page value based on any conversions), our audience (including demographics, their location and devices they use to access our site), and acquisition data (including whether the traffic came through an organic search, pay per click ads or social media channels).

We usually set up a special webpage or microsite with the tracking code...

We usually set up a special webpage or microsite with the tracking code embedded and redirect all associated social media traffic on our posts to that source. This way we can see traffic that ONLY comes from these sources. If there is any traffic from other sources, we can see that data in Google Analytics. Because we have been using this method for the last 5 years, we have great benchmarks to compare current campaigns to and determine whether or not they are effective (or “good”).

SOCIAL MEDIA SCHEDULING/ANALYTICAL TOOLS

Skyline uses a couple of great tools to help measure our social media efforts. For Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and Pinterest we use Hootsuite. We also use this software to



pre-schedule our trade show related campaigns. These are based on pre-show planning and creating the content weeks before the event has even started. The analytics on this site are great and give us up-to-date statistics on how our posts fared. The reports are easy to generate, and you can choose your date range. They also have an easy to use dashboard that allows you to view any associated posts, likes, retweets, or comments about your presence at an event, especially if you have a unique hashtag for your campaign (e.g. we will be attending the **EXHIBITORLIVE** show in Las Vegas and are promoting our specific hashtag #TradeShowJungle).

We also use Later.com for our Instagram social media efforts. You can also use this for Facebook, Twitter and Pinterest. Besides being able to pre-schedule your Insta posts and stories, they have outstanding analytics that allow you to see how many followers you’ve gained, impressions, reaches, profile views, website clicks, best performing posts, and my favorite: Linkin.bio clicks. This is

a redirect link in your Instagram bio that goes to a page set up by Later.com and allows visitors to view your website, microsite or a blog post...anything you reference as “click link in bio” in your post descriptions. This is especially important to companies that don’t have the required 10,000 followers on Instagram that allows you to “swipe up” for quick redirects.

And do not forget that most of these social media channels have their...

Do not forget that most of these social media channels have their own analytical tools that allow you to export statistics right from your profile. Facebook has a great analytics page and Twitter analytics go back for only six months, so that can be a problem for benchmarking long term. LinkedIn analytics for your company’s page can be exported easily and includes visitor demographics, as well as the usual statistics like engagement by post, likes, comments and followers. Don’t forget YouTube! This analytics page features views, subscriber updates, watch times (averages, top videos, etc.), impressions (remember, YouTube is the second largest search engine in the world), traffic source types (which is great if you have a YouTube video on your trade show microsite). You can search all the way back to when you first set-up your YouTube account.

The data is there! Your main objective should be clear: get your promotional posts in front of your followers, get them interested enough to click a redirect link and drive those followers to your campaign’s website or microsite. Then, once you get them there, have them complete an online form to win a prize, meet with your staff for a one-on-one consultation or watch a free demonstration of your product in the booth.

GETTING STARTED WITH VIDEO MARKETING – WHAT, WHY AND HOW

– Sofia Troutman

We hear it all the time: video marketing is the way to go to help your business grow. Millennials want video. Video is sticky and keeps visitors on your website, helps lower your bounce rate and increases your SEO. So, the question is; how do we get and use video in our marketing programs & trade shows?

Video is sticky and keeps visitors on your website...

One way to afford creating videos for your marketing content is to find as many uses for them as possible. You can create a video for your website and then do minor modifications to it so it can also be used in your trade show exhibit or include a link in your email marketing campaigns.

I interviewed Cathan Murray, formerly from our Skyline 360 Group, to better understand how and when to use video, when to use Virtual Reality (VR), and key tips on hiring a video professional.

WHY USE VIDEO IN THE FIRST PLACE?

Video is a relatively inexpensive way to show something that may be impossible to demonstrate using a static image or even in person. It can enable you to illustrate complex ideas without a big investment. It is also easy to edit, repurpose and share in a variety of ways.

VIDEO USE AT TRADE SHOWS

Video is not always the best solution for your trade show. Sometimes you may be better off with an interactive display in your booth. An interactive display such as a quiz or self-guided photo tour will enable you



to gather and distribute a more customized experience for each user. This type of experience may be more difficult to repurpose than a video but could be used in a lobby if the content is not specific to the show.

WHAT IS THE BEST LENGTH FOR A VIDEO?

It really depends. There are situations for everything.

Yet some good rules of thumb are:

- Shorter is better. Two minutes max for a website video.
- A looping video that you will be showing at a trade show can be up to 9 minutes but only in the right situation, usually we recommend around two minutes.
- Promotional video length depends on the topic.
- It takes about 3 seconds to capture someone's attention in a focused piece, so getting to the point is important.
- For a Virtual Reality (VR) video you can create an experience in about 3-4 minutes.

HOW ARE VIDEOS FOR TRADE SHOWS OR SOCIAL MEDIA DIFFERENT?

At a trade show, it is harder to do a video with a voice-over due to the noise level. You can email a link to video with voice-over before the show and then use a shorter version with motion graphic text at the show. It can be an effective way to reinforce the message. Then you can even have a longer version with sound that integrates more detail and lives on your website.

Using video on social media can be tricky, as you must catch people's attention almost immediately before the viewer scrolls to something else. Videos should be short, or better yet use a GIF that links to a video on your website or blog. Also, depending on the platform, subtitles or a no-sound option can be helpful as many watch without volume.

WHAT ARE SOME GOOD EXAMPLES FOR WHEN TO USE VIRTUAL REALITY?

VR is great when you are trying to put someone in a unique setting that is not easily re-creatable on the trade show floor. A good example is if you are wanting someone to explore an environment or large machinery you can create a VR video experience that they can explore in the show.

WHAT ARE THE ADVANTAGES OF VR AT THE TRADE SHOW?

You can create a unique experience for the participant and show your company as cutting edge. It can be an attractive experience that gets more people to come to your booth. It can virtually transport your visitor to a location that helps you communicate your brand message or event theme.



WHAT ARE SOME DISADVANTAGES OF USING VR IN YOUR BOOTH?

You can attract people who are not really interested in your company but just want to try VR. It can be difficult to get people through the experience without others having to wait in line.

WHAT ARE SOME EFFECTIVE TIPS TO START USING VIDEO MARKETING?

One of the best places to use your videos is on your website. Make sure you place them in a prominent location so they are easy to find and keep people on your website.

If you are going to place your videos on your website make sure that you hire a professional to shoot your video and even more importantly to edit your video. A good editor can overcome badly shot video, if necessary.

Make the video concise and to the point. Focus on the highlights and leave out the details. The viewer can always reach out to you with specific questions.

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Continued from page 41

If you are planning to hire a professional, it is helpful to review YouTube and Vimeo examples so you can reference them and share them with potential vendors to help them understand what style you want. If you can send them this information before you even meet it can help them prepare for your meeting.

If you are planning to hire a professional, it is helpful to review YouTube and Vimeo examples...

WHAT SKILLS SHOULD I LOOK FOR IN A VIDEOGRAPHER?

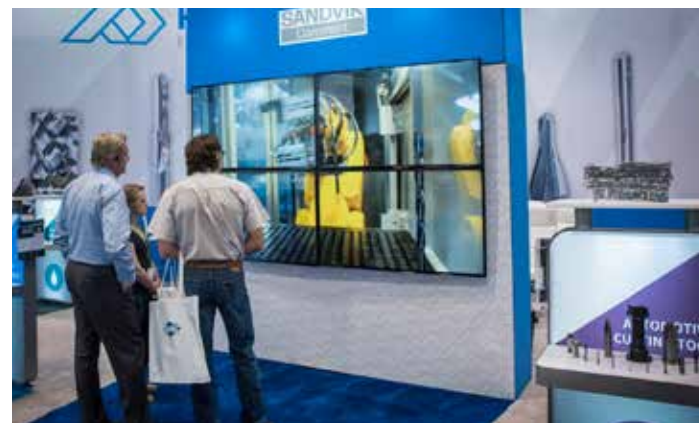
- Standard shooting experience
- Ability to pilot drones
- 360 degree shooting experience
- Ownership of key equipment for the style you want
 - Software: Adobe, Final Cut Pro
 - Camera stabilizers
 - Drones
 - Industry standard software

WHAT ARE SOME IDEAS FOR USING VIDEO IN PROMOTIONS?

- Create a microsite or web landing page for your email links with select videos about your products or services. You can also use this for pay-per-click promotions.
- Embed specific graphics in your exhibit that can be used with AR to trigger videos using iPads.
- Use a Google cardboard player to create content and send to high end clients.
- Send a video postcard via standard mail or FedEx as invitations to a key event.
- At an event or trade show have your staffers share relevant videos to visitors using iPads.

HOW SHOULD YOU DECIDE WHETHER TO USE VIDEO?

At a Trade Show: Video is a great way to attract and occupy visitors while staffers are busy. It can also be a great way to showcase products or services you can't display at the show. Video should not be relied on to be the only way to engage clients and find out what they need. It is primarily an attention grabber or can be used to communicate specific messaging once staffers have identified a need.



On your website: You can use video to show your employee's and brands' personality, showcase a client testimonial to increase credibility or show a setting or a product at work. Yet, be careful of long videos as some people will not have the time or interest to watch. Key information should be communicated outside the video as well.

On Social Media: You can use prerecorded or live video to communicate more complex messages and to gain attention for longer periods of time. Live video can be especially helpful to create a sense of urgency when broadcasting a limited time event or introducing a new product or service. These videos will also be available on social media after the live event and add interest to your social pages.

INCORPORATING ON-SITE SOCIAL MEDIA

— Jennifer Snyder

Are you looking for ways to improve your on-site strategy at your next trade show? Even if you have an outstanding exhibit, with innovative products, and giveaways, you may not get the most out of the show unless booth staffers are prepared to do a good job of selling for your company.

PREPARING YOUR BOOTH STAFFERS

Anyone who works at shows should be aware of the trade show goals. They should participate in pre-show training, know the products on display, and be prepared to answer questions about them. Most importantly, they should exhibit behavior that makes attendees always feel welcome in the booth.

What is proper booth etiquette? There are many lists on this topic about not eating, drinking, sitting, and using technology devices. Any of these behaviors can make attendees keep walking past your trade show exhibit.

Perhaps the hardest rule to manage is using cell phones or other personal electronic devices while in your booth, as these devices have such an abundant presence in the workplace. It is all too common for people to check their phone during a business conversation for new emails or text messages. On the show floor, this behavior is irritating and unacceptable...unless it is used correctly.

MANAGING SOCIAL MEDIA AT TRADE SHOWS

For many companies, social media is part of bringing people to the booth. Someone who is on the floor, or in the booth might be tweeting, posting on Facebook or sending out an Instagram picture of the booth. Capturing the moment is important, but how will an attendee know if someone in the booth is chatting or texting with a friend or conducting business?

It is difficult to distinguish why staffers are buried in their phones. If on-floor social media is an important

part of your trade show presence, you must take steps to make sure you're not sending the wrong signal or pushing your attendees away.

MAKING SOCIAL MEDIA PART OF YOUR EXHIBIT

Having enough people to staff your booth is crucial. One of those people can be designated as the social media person, this way you will get more attention from attendees.

Make the social media posting an obvious part of your in-booth marketing. Designate a special part of the booth as a social media center. Pose with customers and prospects and ask them if you can post the picture online. Ask customers their opinions about your company's products and post their comments. If you're doing a demo, ask people what they think and use those comments as testimonials. Post a video of your demo with comments of people's reactions. You might want to have a sign with your Facebook page, Twitter handle, and any other social media outlets you're using. This allows people to engage with you by incorporating your company's social tags.

Social media posts that come from the show should be in line with your marketing strategy. Whoever is posting should have materials prepared to post that incorporate the official hashtags for the show. Everything that is posted should be professional and correctly spelled.

Don't be afraid to post about your exhibit at the show either. Post your booth number, what's happening in the booth, and get people to stop by for a visit.

Personal cell phones and other electronic devices should never be used while staffing your booth, but careful planning can make them a perfect fit for on-site social media integration.

TRADE SHOW MARKETING: WHAT'S SHOWING ON YOUR BOOTH MONITOR?

— Doug Noftall

Today's trade show booths are so much more than a couple tables, a stack of brochures, and some spiffy sales people. Modern trade show displays entice passersby into the booth; not necessarily to talk to someone, but to interact with a product or technology, view a video, or rest their feet at a comfortable charging station.

Whatever your goal, video content is almost always an integral part of your trade show marketing strategy, and what you show on your booth monitor can continue to be repurposed and impactful far beyond the show.

WHAT ARE YOU SHOWING ON YOUR MONITOR?

When you're brainstorming the best video to play on loop at the show, you have several options to choose from:

- **Product Demo** – Whether professionally shot or animated, a video can help put a more technical or complex product in context by showing real life examples of its use.
- **Virtual Office Tour** – If you have a lot of customer traffic in your office – and you've put significant effort into creating an impressive space – a virtual office space might entice more local visitors when you get home.
- **Product Life Cycle** – It's always interesting to see how new products come to fruition. From R&D and beta testing to manufacturing and logistics, marketing and advertising, and finally to the sales process that gets the product into your customers' hands.
- **3D Animation Videos** – Impressive 3D animated videos showcase your product from every angle, using fluid motion and dynamic graphics to highlight your product's key features and benefits.

A few things to keep in mind when selecting and developing video content:

- Trade shows are loud. Unless you have a large



booth with the monitor somewhat insulated toward the middle, visitors may not be able to hear it.

- **Make captions large and easy to read.** This is where animated videos really come in handy, as they can highlight features using short phrases and bullet points, versus trying to read full conversations of people speaking very quickly in an interview.
- **Choose colors carefully.** With an animated video, you can choose a color scheme that complements, not clashes, with your trade show display.
- **Hire a professional.** Even if you're going the virtual office tour route, a professional video production firm that specializes in trade show videos can help you make a piece that stands out.

KEEPING UP WITH THE JONES'

The marketing world and consumer electronics are converging today like never before. Marketers are leveraging all the latest gadgets in order to lure people in. The use of video walls, projection mapping, and virtual reality, while being significantly more expensive than a traditional monitor, can be the difference maker in



capturing the visitor's attention. The aforementioned virtual tour can now be filmed in 360 degrees and showcased in virtual reality. The experience is truly immersive like you are actually there, and you can add narration with earphones for the captive visitor. Additionally, you can also consider interactive touch screens, augmented reality, holographic and/or 3D TV without the use of glasses. People love things out of the ordinary and love to experience information versus it being fed to them.

REPURPOSING YOUR VIDEO CONTENT

If you invest in professional video content for your trade show monitor, why not repurpose it after the show?

First, ask your creative firm to break the video into shorter segments. Think ahead about how you will share them and try to create a theme. For example, if you sell a software product, highlight a different feature each week using the corresponding short video segment combined with some more in-depth written content. If you did a virtual office tour, start at the front entrance the first



week, move to the reception area, then the onsite restaurant, state-of-the-art meeting spaces, etc.

For many companies, a video is a natural addition to their social strategy and is easily shared...

When it comes to sharing, you should use the strategy that works best for you and that your clients are the most receptive to. For many companies, a video is a natural addition to their social strategy and is easily shared via Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Snapchat. If you have a customer base that responds better to email, you can always upload the videos to your YouTube channel and share the link in your email campaigns.

A video can be a great addition to your trade show display when done right. To get the biggest bang for your buck, work with a creative firm that can develop a professional video, then repurpose and share it after the show to gain additional exposure.

GENERAL MARKETING TIPS



THE #1 WAY TO IMPROVE TRADE SHOW EFFECTIVENESS

— *Mary Rita Crowe*

Skyline Exhibits and Access Intelligence Research & Consulting have produced two separate studies on what is working best in event and exhibit marketing. Of the exhibitor and event marketers surveyed, 47% worked for companies with under \$10 million in gross revenue, a total of 33% had total sales between \$10 and \$100 million, and 19% worked for groups with over \$100 million in revenue. A total of 90% of the survey respondents are either the primary event marketing budget decision-makers or they influence the process.

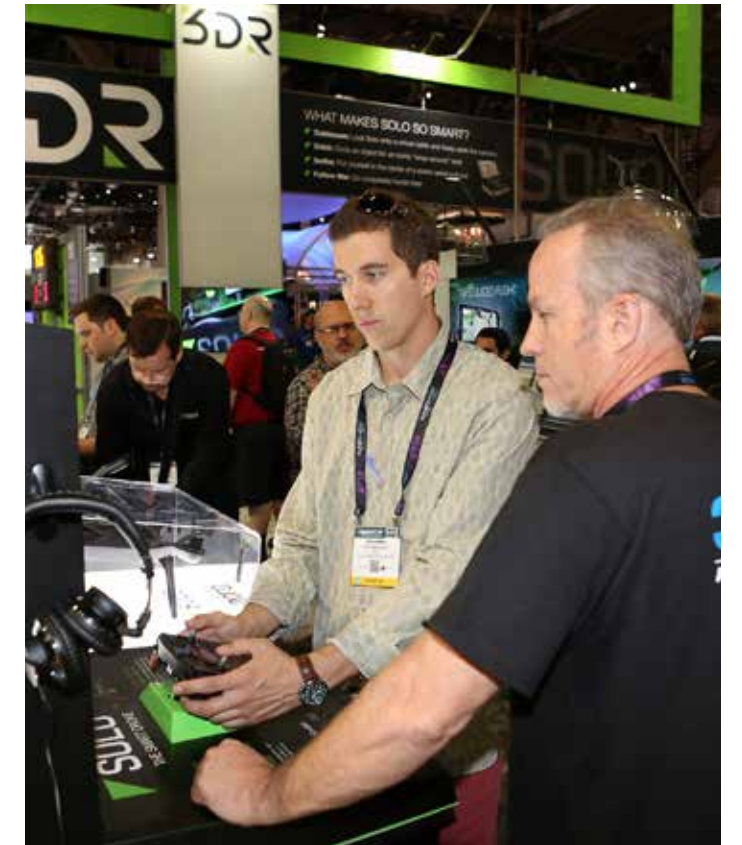
In both studies, exhibitors and event marketers were asked how they improved trade show results over the past two years. In both surveys, the top answer was the same: Better pre-show marketing.

The channels that marketers routinely used to achieve better pre-show marketing, in order of importance, were:

1. Emails to clients and prospects
2. Social media
3. Emails to event management lists
4. Phone calls to key clients
5. Ads in magazines or websites
6. Mailers post-cards

How can your organization capitalize on their success? Best practices for pre-show marketing typically include:

- Sending personal invites to top clients and prospects, via personal mailers, emails or calls, or a combination.
- Inviting key prospects to breakfast, lunch or dinner meetings to have more in-depth conversations.
- Taking advantage of event management programs to market to both your clients and prospects and to the show's database when available.
- Making it easy for salespeople and other key staffers to send out invites to their customers, and ensure



they have the right information and messages.

- Using themes and messages that match event objectives and use these in all pre-show, on-site and post-show communications.
- Besides a call to action, benefits and other key information, all pre-show communications should have the booth number and other important scheduling information and contacts.
- Offering quality gifts, giveaways, promotions and drawings, or unique information, reports and demonstrations to drive traffic.
- Using social media to promote your exhibit and participation at the event (typically be designating an official social media channel manager from within your company).

DOES EMAIL MARKETING STILL WORK?

— Matt Bohar

With email open rates plummeting and with more and more people increasingly relying on chat apps, social media direct messaging, and other forms of communication, you may be wondering whether email marketing is even effective anymore. This is coming from someone that has sent over 30 million emails in the last 10 years... no joke, I looked it up.

But the truth is that marketers have been consistently INCREASING their email marketing budgets...

The truth is that marketers have been consistently INCREASING their email marketing budgets over the past five years. The reason? Email marketing continues to have a return on investment that is four times higher than social media, direct mail, or pay-per-click advertising.

The key is to ensure that your messaging and targeting are getting you in front of people who are genuinely



interested in your content. That's best achieved by observing the following four steps:

GET GDPR COMPLIANT

You've no doubt been using an opt-in/opt-out solution to ensure you don't SPAM your list members. If so, keep up the good work! In May 2018, the plot thickened! That's when the European Union passed the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), which affects how business worldwide collects and stores data from residents of the EU. If you are automatically adding someone to your mailing list whenever they register to download a PDF from your landing pages – then you are not GDPR compliant and could face stiff fines. You must “unbundle” the consent options for your two types of content (i.e, the downloadable document and your future emails) that the individual will be receiving.

SEGMENT YOUR LIST

If you're sending the same content to your entire email database, then you've probably seen your open rates drop over time. There are dozens of different ways to segment your database to ensure you're targeting the right messages to the right people. One of the best ways to let subscribers self-segment themselves is to give them options when they sign-up for what type of emails (news, offers, events, etc.) they want to receive. If you're segmenting subscribers manually, then you're limited only by the type of information you collect about them (age, gender, geography, industry, etc.). Plan out your email content, and then stratify your list accordingly.

NURTURE TO INCREASE ENGAGEMENT

Chances are good that you know how many people receive your emails, how many opened them, and how many clicked the links to visit your landing pages. But what did they do once they reached your site? The content to which you take your visitors should be a



funnel designed to get them closer to your end goal, whether that goal is making an online purchase or contacting you for an estimate. Not including your existing clients, most of the people on your list are soft

The content to which you take your visitors should be a funnel designed to get them closer to your end goal...

prospects that may be interested in your company, but have some unknown reservation about converting into a buyer. Try segmenting your list by these suspected “pain points,” and then send them to helpful landing pages that lessen their concerns. Monitor their behavior in your CRM software to see if your combined email/content marketing is getting these prospects closer to “yes.” We have found this to be very helpful (and fun).

EMAIL RETARGETING & CUSTOM AUDIENCE TARGETING

You've probably tried site retargeting, in which visitors to your website later see your ads when surfing the web. But did you know that you can also retarget to your email list, as well as upload your list to numerous social media platforms, which then match your addresses to known social media users, and then show your ads ONLY to them. This can help you get visibility for those list members who may not be seeing your e-newsletters due to their email filter settings (which is a problem we have had in the past).

It's true that you are competing against lots of other e-marketers – and that competition is causing recipients to be more selective about which emails they open. By observing the above five best practices, you can ensure that more of the emails you send today will result in tomorrow's sales!

10 FREE TRADE SHOW MARKETING RESOURCES

— Amy Armstrong

In the world of focused business objectives and tight budgets, companies are always looking for free or low-cost tools to help maximize their trade show ROI and meet their event planning benchmarks. To help the event marketing professional, we've compiled this list of ten absolutely free and effective resources.

...companies are always looking for free or low-cost tools to help maximize their trade show ROI...

BOOKS, MAGAZINES & WHITE PAPERS

Skyline's own free archive of white papers, workbooks, magazines and eBooks contain invaluable advice on everything from booth staffing to social media marketing to help make the most of your exhibit hall location and investment.

EMAIL MARKETING

MailChimp makes it easy to find your audience, engage with your customers, and build your brand through automated marketing tools. This is especially helpful if you're new to email marketing and haven't set up your own list yet. This saves time; and time is money.

GLOSSARY OF TRADE SHOW TERMS

Confused about industry terms? The Exhibit Services and Contractors Association maintains this glossary of common phrases and acronyms.

LINKEDIN TRADE SHOW DISCUSSION GROUPS

Besides the benefits that a LinkedIn profile affords you in general, with the more than 200 trade show discussion groups, there is a fantastic opportunity to network with and learn from your peers. Among the highlights



are the Trade Show Marketing Group, created by Scott Young to help trade show managers and exhibitors maximize the exposure and business opportunities created by events and trade shows. LinkedIn also offers several membership tiers based on your goals and objectives.

MARKETING TEMPLATES

Social media calendars, email, and marketing template generators are among the many useful and 100% free tools offered by inbound marketing gurus at HubSpot. We also have some free trade show templates available at Skyline.

SOCIAL MEDIA MANAGEMENT

Visually appealing social posts tend to generate more engagement, but they can be time consuming to conceptualize and create. The free software from Pablo



makes the process easier, with more than 600,000 images and two dozen fonts you can use to create social media graphics.

TIME-TRACKING AT TRADE SHOWS

TSheets is a free time-tracking tool that helps marketers properly budget time and increase productivity. It even has built-in mobile and GPS capabilities for tracking time when you're tending to your exhibit. Skyline can help you plan your trade show timeline by using the Skyline Trade Show Planning Timeline.

TRADE SHOW CALENDARS

Numerous online calendars exist to help you plan your annual exhibit schedule. From Skyline's own Trade Show Selector Tool to various industry-specific trade associations, many websites can help you find both large and specialty events worthy of your time.

TRADE SHOW WEBINARS

From mastering digital marketing to understanding industry regulations, Skyline's free webinars and seminars are an opportune place to learn from industry experts.

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WEBSITE OPTIMIZATION

Hotjar, a website analytics tool can map out the traffic of your website visitors, offering insightful information about how people are, or aren't, scrolling through your website. It can also make you aware of dead links or flaws in website design. Like most software programs, it comes with a risk-free, 30-day trial.

EXPERIENTIAL MARKETING AT TRADE SHOWS

— Greg Johnson

Experiential marketing allows your customers to develop an emotional investment in your products or services, literally helping them shape your brand's evolution. But if it leads to such memorable, cost-effective, testimonial-worthy experiences, why aren't more trade show marketers using it?

In many respects, exhibitors were the originators of experiential marketing. From product demos to booth games, exhibition halls have long been the testing grounds for interactivity and engagement. But there's a big difference between introducing an amusing booth gimmick versus creating an experience that leaves a lasting impression on attendees. The latter is more likely to occur if you remember these simple guidelines:

- Let trade show attendees interact with your brand in a way that doesn't necessarily involve using your products. Is there an aspirational goal that your audience members have, and that your product or service was designed to help them reach? If so, center your event on that, rather than your offerings themselves. This is much more engaging than interrupting attendees with an intrusive sales pitch or product demo.
- Consider hiring professional speakers or brand ambassadors. While you or your staff may be the most knowledgeable about your products or services, you may or may not be the most charismatic presenters. Brand ambassadors have a knack for drawing and interacting with a crowd.
- Make sure audience participation is a video or picture-worthy moment. By visually representing the impact of participating in your experience, you create a story that can be captured in a single photograph or video, and that is thus more likely to be shared on attendee's social media accounts.



- Capitalize on traditional media, too. While your trade show presence itself may not be particularly news-worthy, innovative booth events might be interesting enough to attract the attention of trade or local media.

Traditional marketing techniques will never go away, but you can't rely exclusively on those intrusive techniques if you want to be noticed. When done effectively, experiential marketing can increase voluntary customer interaction and increase word-of-mouth about your business before and after the trade show.



EVENT & EXPERIENTIAL MARKETING TRENDS

— Kayla Goeman

I took a look at one of the world's most comprehensive annual research studies on event & experiential marketing to breakdown industry trends for you. You can use this data to help justify your trade show or event budget and presence to leadership. Here is what I found.

KEEP THE GOAL IN MIND

As with most marketing projects, the end goal has to be kept in mind when making tactical decisions.

What is the goal or strategy for events and experiential marketing? Unsurprisingly, the top two goals for investing in events or experiential marketing are to increase brand awareness and drive sales. You can also expect to see significantly more events and experiences hosted by companies than in the past, with a whopping 79% of respondents planning to execute more event and experiential programs.

MEASUREMENT

The criteria for measurement has changed in the past two years, with total attendance or participation as the highest form of measurement, followed by Facebook likes or social media activity, with leads in third. The second and third place measurement of social media activity and leads is intriguing due to the complexity of tracking ROI using these metrics. In a perfect world, a lead gathered includes detailed information about a prospect that includes a timeframe for purchase. These types of details are harder to flesh out when someone is retweeting a post or sharing an exciting Facebook status from your company. A lead will often automatically be entered into your company's marketing automation or CRM platform, whereas tracking someone through social media into your CRM system can take multiple steps. What you measure should be dictated by your end goal for hosting an event or trade

show. If brand awareness is the end goal, social media buzz will be a relatively easy measure to track and give you the most reach, whereas if driving sales is a key goal, detailed lead information will set your company on track.

BUDGETING

So, we know we will be seeing more events and more experiential marketing taking place over in the future year. With more events to host and theoretically more competition for attendance and "buzz" at these events, a sizable budget to help companies stand out has become important to respondents. Budgets are expected to increase by 6%. In 2015, average growth rate of budgets was nearly three times the level of recent U.S. GDP growth.

THE VALUE OF EVENTS

The goal is to increase brand awareness and generate sales, which will be done by measuring the total attendance, social media presence, and the number of leads with an increased company budget. But why? Why are events worthwhile?

We live in a consumer-driven world, where the customer is expecting much more from a company than ever before. The consumer values events. A significant 98% of survey respondents said that participating at the event or experience made them more inclined to purchase. Is there anything else your marketing department is doing right now that leads to a 98% more inclination to buy? If not, consider hosting an event. It may even be a good idea to host an event for your best clients if you are exhibiting at a trade show.

If you are attempting to justify an investment in an event or trade show to your boss, know that these consumer and event trends are increasing and shows the pulse of what's to come.

DISRUPTIVE MARKETING

— Steve Hoffman

Mrs. Costello, my 7th grade English teacher's favorite line (at least what she frequently repeated to me) was "don't disrupt the class." I generally implore my clients to do the opposite: "stand out and get noticed!" In business, as in trade shows, blending in diminishes impact, memorability and potential 'buzz' about your product or brand. Besides, it is hard to be seen as being outstanding if you don't first "stand out."

In business, as in trade shows, blending in diminishes impact, memorability and potential 'buzz'...

Disruptive marketing is a term that can apply to a brand, a product or service, to advertising and/or to other forms of prospect engagement. Timely examples of 'disruptive marketing' are found throughout our daily news and/or pop-culture. For instance:

SPORTING EVENTS

The Super Bowl (with its incredibly unfortunate outcome says this Carolina Panthers season ticket holder) was won by Peyton Manning's team. Arguably one of the greatest quarterbacks in the games' history. But what won the Super Bowl? Defense. Defense wins championships and defense is a disruptive tactic that keeps your competition from achieving their goal.

COMPANY GROWTH

Brands and companies grow through innovation. Innovation is supplying something new to a market. The "new" often replaces the tried and true. When the world's leading hamburger chain needed to grow, McDonalds introduced breakfast service. When the world's leading soda company needed to grow, Coca-Cola turned to juice, sports drinks and most recently coffee to propel revenue. Product line exten-



sions are internal disruptions to how a company has previously done things. Recent Christmas Holiday seasons saw "on-line" purchases surge into double digits disrupting how people shop. Amazon, Zappos, E-Bay and others offer alternatives to Main Street or 'the mall.' Successful alternatives, by definition, are market disrupters.

ENTERTAINMENT

On television, despite huge production and special effects budgets, it is the rare car commercial that really stands out. Automobiles, and certainly most ads for pharmaceuticals, generally try to use lifestyle imagery. It all becomes a blur and do you really remember which product is which?

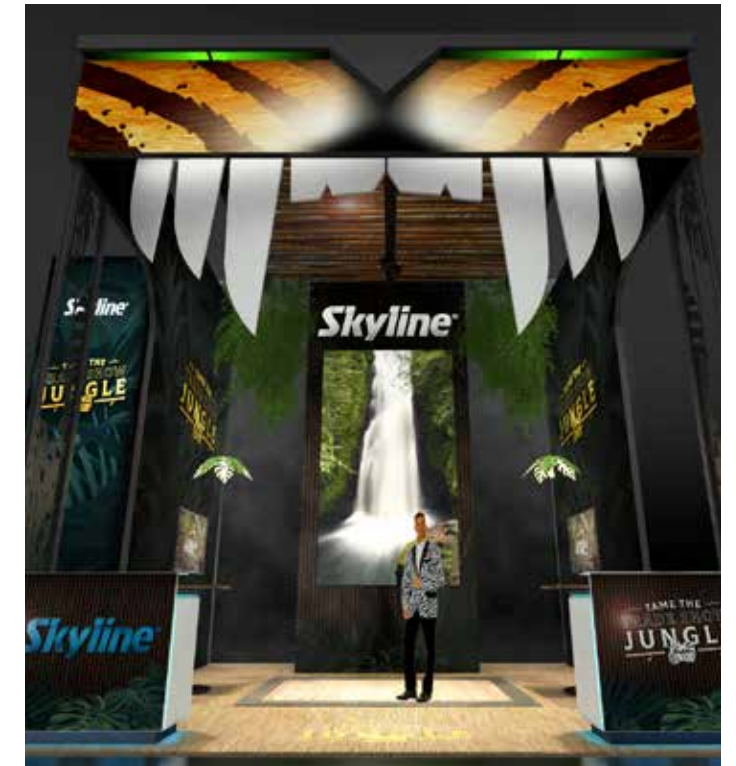
In other "marketing" every week lately I receive at least a dozen e-mails from companies claiming to be experts at lead generation. Most don't even get skimmed. The ones that do are sharing something (in the subject line) that is disrupting my natural tendency to delete junk correspondence that makes it through our servers' filter.

HOW CAN YOU DISRUPT?

In the world of tradeshow marketing "disruption" can and should take many forms. Perhaps starting before a show, can your "pre-show" contact be something other than a bland e-mail invite or forgettable postcard? At a trade show, can your Exhibit Environment visually jump out thus disrupting the 'sameness' of the exhibition floor? Can your booth staffers engage attendees in a manner that is meaningful, memorable and changes the way they think of your firm or its products and services? Can your prospect's experience in your booth space be something other than 'let me scan your badge?' Could your post-show follow up benefit from disrupting the way you've done it in the past (think timeliness, sincerity, lead specificity and tying the at-show information obtained to the post-event discussion)?

Now go out and be disruptive! (Sorry, Mrs. Costello.)

At a trade show, can your Exhibit Environment visually jump out thus disrupting the 'sameness' of the exhibition floor?



Getting Booth Visitors Via Online & Social Promotions

