

# What Attendees Tell Us About Best Practices

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An Exclusive Industry Analysis  
by marketech360

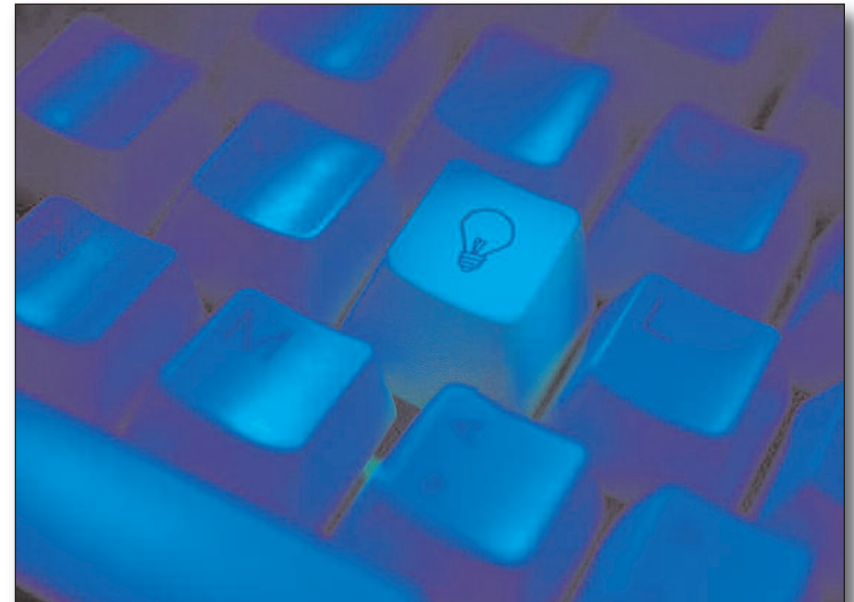
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# INTRODUCTION

Based on proprietary research conducted by marketech360, this report shares important revelations about our ever-changing environment and is a valuable tool for trade show managers to successfully navigate the future of exhibiting.

During 2010, marketech360 conducted intercept interviews with 3,341 attendees at 30 events in pharmaceutical and device health care, animal health, defense, consumer and technology segments.



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# KEY FINDINGS

## What Prompted Visitation to the Exhibit

Table 1 details what prompted visitation to specific exhibits. There are several elements to take note from this study.

### Learning about Products

The number one reason attendees visited exhibits was to “obtain product information” (32%), followed by “name recognition” (20%).

When combining the results of: (1) “obtaining product information” (32%), (2) “product demo” (11%), and (3) “seeing a rep” (10%), we find that 53% come to learn about what the exhibitor has that is new. They want to see what the exhibitor has to offer that can help them solve their issues. They achieve this by seeing the product, hearing about products & services, and talking with a representative.

We know from CEIR studies that almost 89% of visitors to domestic exhibits have not been seen by a rep from the exhibitor’s company in the last 12 months face-to-face, so the trade show remains an important venue where attendees can learn about products offered in the marketplace.

Name recognition is very important in driving traffic, therefore pre- and at-event promotions that raise awareness will get your exhibit on the “must see” list of an attendee.

Table 1

WHAT PROMPTED BOOTH VISITATION ALL INDUSTRY SEGMENTS - COMBINED n = XXX	
Reasons for Visiting	Percent
Obtain product information	32%
Name recognition	20%
Happenstance	20%
Giveaway	17%
Greeter	13%
In booth activity	11%
Product demo	11%
See a rep	10%
Booth appeal	6%
Refreshments / hospitality	8%
Ad / promotion	5%
Invitation	1%

Source: ©Marketch, Inc. 2010

53% come to your booth to find out what’s new.

Name recognition is very important in driving traffic to your exhibit.



Sponsorships raise brand awareness more than drive traffic to you.

Visitors preselect two-thirds of the exhibits they visit.

## Ads and Promotions

Many exhibitors invest in sponsorships in the hope they will drive traffic to the exhibit. But studies focused on sponsorship have proven that they raise brand awareness more than drive traffic. With only 5% of the audiences interviewed indicating that ads and promotions prompted their visit, exhibitors need to rethink their motivation in investing in such promotions.

To demonstrate this point further, in 2010, we took a deeper look at the impact ads and sponsorships had on booth visitation. Only 2% reported ads or sponsorships prompted their visitation; however, 51% reported noticing a sponsorship. Of those who noticed a sponsorship, 16% could not recall specifically what they saw, and 71% did not remember any messaging or content from what they saw.

Using ads and promotions to increase brand awareness appears to be a reasonable investment, but these activities are not necessarily effective in driving traffic to the exhibit.



## Planned vs. Unplanned Visits

Happenstance, at 20%, indicates that exhibitors are not on the “must see” agendas of attendees. CEIR reports that 76% of visitors come to shows with an agenda and two-thirds of the exhibits they visit are preselected. This points to the value of pre-show promotion. In order to know what will work, you might survey your target audience to see what communication vehicles they prefer and will prompt responses.

When “happenstance” is as high as it is, then booth appeal is especially critical because the visual attraction of the exhibit is what mostly generates “happenstance” visitation. However, in this study, “booth appeal” was not a key driver.



Booth appeal includes size, clear messaging, cleanliness, ease of navigation and appealing booth design. Booth size and location do matter when considering visitation without an agenda.

## Giveaways

Giveaways are still very high in general industry, even though they have been somewhat curtailed in the healthcare segments. However, if they prompt visitation to this level, exhibitors need to assure that they are used appropriately to generate the return desired. Points to consider:

- Use giveaways to communicate a message, reinforce a communicated message, reward visitors for participation or just recognize them for taking time with you.
- They should be given selectively, not allowed to just be taken.
- They should have high perceived value to assure they will be saved and generate memorability.

## Greeters

It is interesting to note that having a greeter prompted 13% of the attendees to visit. Why? Trade show visitors want nothing more than to be noticed and acknowledged. Someone whose total focus is welcoming and transitioning visitors overcomes one of the biggest challenges in exhibiting – reluctant engagement by sales staff who are uncomfortable in the medium.

## Meaningful Discussion

It is very encouraging that in looking at responses from 979 attendees at a cross-section of events, 80% had a meaningful discussion with a rep when visiting the exhibit.

When looking at specific segments: the highest was animal health at 93%, followed by pharma at 87%, tech at 72%, and device at 66%.



Having a greeter prompted 13% of attendees to visit.

A meaningful dialogue satisfies the agendas of both the exhibitor and the visitor.

Table 2

MEANINGFUL DISCUSSION ALL INDUSTRY SEGMENTS - COMBINED n = 979	
Response	Percent
Yes	89%
No	21%

Source: ©Marketch, Inc. 2010

Part of having a meaningful experience is being engaged. We found that overall, 89% of visitors (1,579) were engaged by booth staff. A total of 2% found the experience mutual, where both they and the staff engaged one another. A total of 6% indicated they were noticed, but not engaged. A total of 3% were ignored.

In terms of ignore rates; anything above "0" is

Exhibits that used e-detailing did not have either a higher or lower percentage of meaningful discussions. The difference was the quality of the staff to engage, qualify and determine what was on the attendee's agenda before launching into a product/service presentation. When a dialogue ensued, both the exhibitor and attendee's agendas were satisfied.

Table 3

MEANINGFUL DISCUSSION BY SEGMENT n = 60 / 536 / 143 / 240				
Response	Animal Health	Pharma	Tech	Device
Yes	93%	87%	72%	66%
No	7%	13%	28%	34%

Source: ©Marketch, Inc. 2010

Table 4

ENGAGEMENT BY BOOTH STAFF n = 1579 / 822 / 60 / 440 / 257					
Response	Combined	Pharma	Device	Animal Health	Tech, Defense & other
Engaged by a rep	89%	92%	65%	95%	76%
Noticed, but not engaged	6%	6%	25%	1%	11%
Ignored	3%	1%	0%	0%	13%
Mutual engagement	2%	0%	10%	5%	0%

Source: ©Marketch, Inc. 2010

too high. Ignoring visitors communicates you weren't interested in the attendee. Once ignored, they, most likely will not come back. This impacts the image of the exhibitor's brand - detracting from it.

## Learning

We have noticed in all of our studies over the past six years that there is a correlation between learning and inclination to buy, prescribe, recommend or influence after visiting an exhibit where there was new learning.

Table 5

NEW LEARNING n = 1997 / 804 / 487 / 440 / 264					
Response	Overall	Pharma	Device	Animal Health	Tech, Defense & other
Yes	63%	62%	62%	74%	48%
No	37%	38%	38%	26%	52%

Source: ©Marketch, Inc. 2010

Since this is the case, everything an exhibitor does should focus on attendee learning. When asked why they come to the exhibits at a trade show, attendees indicate it is to learn. So when a visitor reports having a meaningful discussion, it means the rep has discovered what is on the agenda of the attendee and addressed it, thereby "teaching" them something new or renewing already learned information.

Overall, nearly two-thirds (63%) of attendees responded they learned something new, which means that more than one-third (37%) walked away without learning. This showcases the need for exhibitors to train their staff to qualify better to assess the agenda of the visitors so they will learn. When nearly four in 10 visitors are not learning, then the result will be fewer visitors leaving having an actionable response to visiting. The exhibitor is not getting one step closer to close.

## Behavior Change

What we want when we exhibit is to change the perception of the attendee, change their behavior, or get a commitment to recommend, purchase or prescribe. What we have found

Your focus should be on attendee learning.

Visitors need enough information to make an actionable response.

When we exhibit,  
we want to change  
the perception of  
the attendee.

in study after study – regardless of the industry segment – is that when learning takes place, the inclination for behavior change occurs. When learning occurs, visitors are more inclined to seek the exhibitor out for a solution.

In our 2010 study, 27% of the attendees that learned something new were more inclined to buy, recommend or prescribe. 41% of the respondents who learned something new were inclined about the same and less than one percent were less inclined. On the other side, if no learning took place, only 6% were more inclined to seek out the exhibitor.

Identifying the visitor’s agenda and speaking to it must be one of the most important elements in preparing a staff to work an event. Otherwise the exhibit staff is merely delivering an information dump that does not achieve either party’s objectives and is a waste of time.

Table 6

LINK BETWEEN LEARNING AND INCLINATION n = 3478 / 877 / 355 / 2022 / 224					
Response	Combined	Pharma	Device	Animal Health	Tech, Defense & other
Learned / More Inclined	27%	32%	38%	23%	31%
Not Learned/ More Inclined	6%	7%	13%	3%	20%
Learned / Same Inclination	41%	31%	23%	51%	21%
Not Learned / Same Inclination	25%	29%	24%	23%	26%
Learned / Less Inclined	<1%	<1%	1%	<1%	1%
Not Learned/ Less Inclined	<1%	<1%	1%	<0%	1%

Source: ©Marketch, Inc. 2010

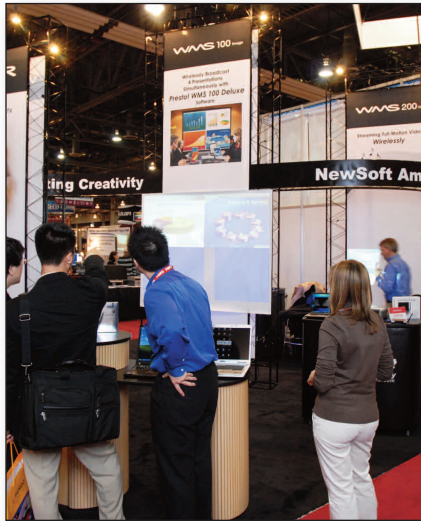


# BEST PRACTICES TO TAKE AWAY FROM THIS RESEARCH

- Create a reason for attendees to put you on their “must see” agenda when visiting a trade show. This means pre-show communications. It also means at-show promotions, such as room drops and registration bag inserts, both proven elements that may draw traffic to “check-in” with the brand.
- Encourage sales reps to personally invite their customers and prospects to specific shows and give the invited person a valid reason to stop by—learn what’s new, hear industry experts on topics of interest, see a demo of a new product. Get your field sales force to be an integral part of promoting the show.
  - The exhibit staff is the key ingredient to every exhibit. It is an opportunity to detail attendees in an entirely different environment, where you have the visitor’s attention and interest without distractions and time limits. Remember that time is still both your and your attendee’s competition, since there are so many opportunities for involvement at a convention. You also have the best-of-the-best show-and-tell materials on hand in this environment. Be sure the staff is well trained to deliver information to visitors in the best manner by being totally familiar with the exhibit and the exhibit elements.



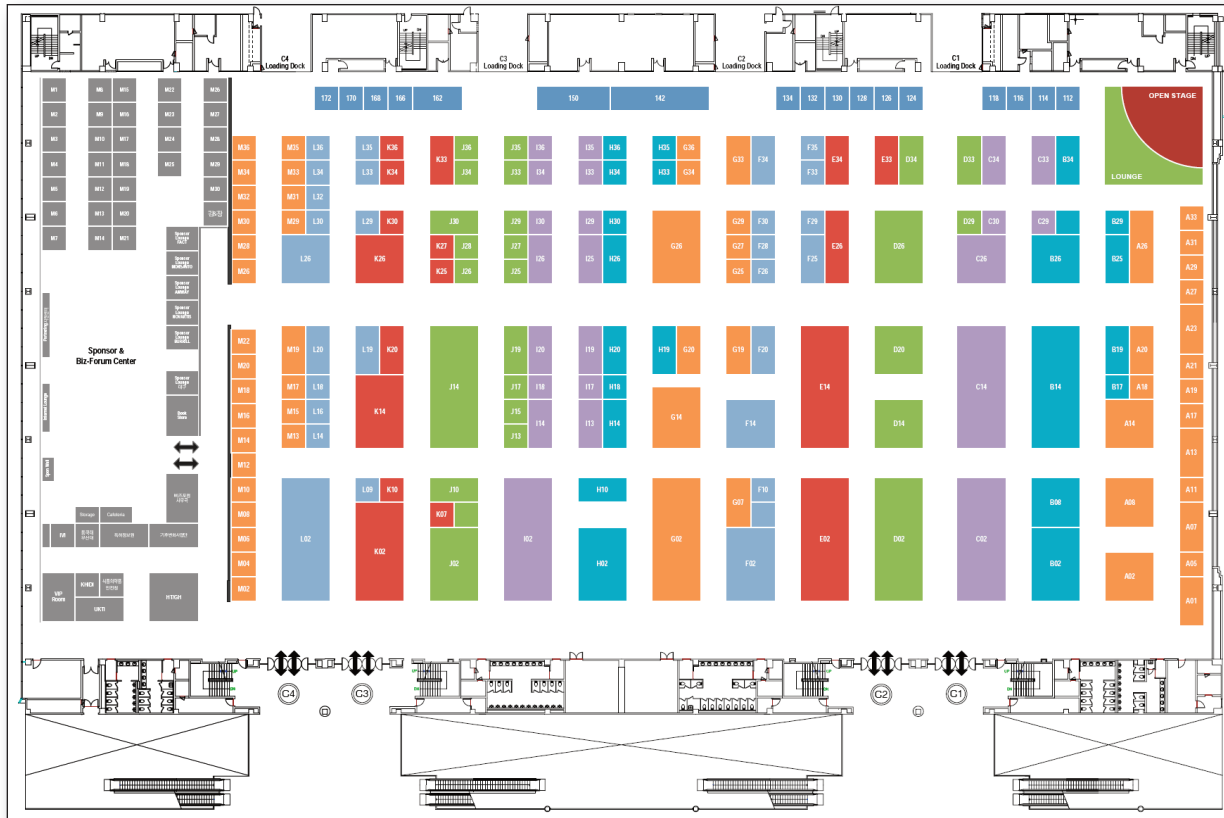
Your exhibit staff  
is the key ingredient  
to a successful show.



Focus on new buyers or competitors' customers.

- Create a learning environment. There is a direct link between learning and inclination to buy or recommend:
  - One-on-one conversations
  - e-details
  - Product demonstrations (individual or on-demand)
  - Expert live theatre
  - Video
  - Live presentations (Xpert Centers)
  - Case studies (using AV interactives)
  - Interactive AV
  - Product theatres
  - Quizzes
  - Challenges
  - Pre-arranged meetings/demonstrations
  - Lunch and Learn
  - Client led discussions or presentations
  - Separate areas for attendee networking
  
- Teach technicians who demonstrate your products to mention the brand names while demoing to increase memorability. The attendees will then use the brand name as a reference. For example, “we use “Brand X” imaging equipment; we plan to install a “Brand Y” diagnostic test equipment; our monitoring equipment is made by “Brand C.” It indicates to your attendees customers that their buy the best.
  
- Don't ignore non-customer attendees who attend shows. They come to specific exhibits and are there to learn more about your company and products. Impress them. Viral marketing is alive and working—that means they'll tell others.
  
- Focus on new buyers or competitor's customers. They may be your next high level buyer if they can be converted.
  
- Remember recommenders and influencers are as important as final decision makers in today's extremely competitive environment.

- Be creative in transforming “known information” into something new. Is there a new use or application for the product or service offered? With equipment or products, create a hands-on experience that will increase the visitors’ skill level and give them greater confidence to try the products.
- Remember, the more interaction and hands-on activity, the greater the memorability.



Suggest new or different uses for your product or service.

Each exit interview project averaged 100 responses per question.

## METHODOLOGY

This study follows two prior white papers - "Why Physicians Come to Your Exhibit" and "Dynamics of Healthcare Marketing for Healthcare Professionals" - published in 2005 and 2008, respectively. Our newest white paper, "The Future of Healthcare Exhibiting is Learning", is focused on the healthcare segment and was published in September 2011.

For this study, we used cumulative quantitative findings from intercept interviews performed at 30 trade shows and conventions held during 2010. The individual studies were conducted for 15 companies who were exhibiting at these events. Interviews were conducted with 3,341 visitors at the events as they exited the client exhibit. Only those questions that were asked in the same way were used for this white paper. Not all companies were studied at all shows. Each exit interview project averaged 100 responses per question.

Charts for each statistical finding indicate the number of respondents included. Respondents were selected at random, and were qualified based on each sponsoring company's specific requirements.

Events used in this study include the following. Specific company names have not been revealed in accordance with non-disclosure agreements in place with these organizations.

### Device

Three well-known medical device companies who provide such things as surgical instruments, imaging, diagnostics and centrifugation, and hospital bedding were studied at six different shows held during 2010.

AACC	AAO	ACC
ASTRO	SAWC	SNM

### Pharma

Seven large pharmaceutical companies were studied at 11 different shows held during 2010. Examples of medications manufactured are for (but not limited to) heart, diabetes, GERD, PNP, and ophthalmic use.

AACE	AAFP	ACC	ADA
AHA	ASCO	ASH	DDW
IDSA	ONS	PMW	

## Tech

One large international company was studied at 2 events held during 2010.

PGI                      WEC

## Animal Health

One large animal health company was studied at 6 events held during 2010.

AAHA                      ACVIM  
AVMA                      CVC-C  
NAVC                      WVC

## Defense

One large defense exhibitor was studied at 1 event during 2010.

AUSA





## ABOUT MARKETECH360



The leader in exhibit and event performance improvement for more than 25 years, marketech360 offers a full range of customized, timely and affordable trade show staff training, performance measurement, event staffing and program planning services and products that improve the results exhibitors achieve through their trade show marketing activities.

Based in West Dennis, Mass., marketech360 clients range from Fortune 100 companies to small start ups and their offerings are appropriate for all industries. The staff comes from multi-disciplinary backgrounds, providing depth of expertise to all clients. All programs are marketing oriented in support of a deep belief that exhibiting is a marketing communications tool utilized to achieve higher organizational objectives.

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