



Backgrounder

Trade shows and conventions present tremendous opportunities for face-to-face interaction between a company and its clients and prospects. When used as part of an integrated marketing strategy, trade show and convention exhibiting can effectively communicate a company's value proposition, promote specific products and services, build the brand, and drive sales.

There are many facts that support the benefits of exhibiting. According to the Center for Exhibition Industry Research (CEIR), more than half of all attendees arrive at exhibitions with a buying plan. Exhibit-generated leads cost 38 percent less than leads generated through other means and also cost significantly less to close. And memorability for a particular company, product or service can increase up to 77 percent for as long as 10 weeks after an exhibition.

It seems clear that trade show and convention exhibiting can offer many advantages to those who participate, but developing and sustaining a successful exhibiting program requires a significant investment. Balancing the costs and benefits of this essential marketing vehicle is not an easy task. In recent months the challenge has been exacerbated by changes in the economic climate, and exhibitors are struggling with smaller audiences, fewer exhibiting hours, reduced budgets and other pressures.

Now, more than ever, exhibitors have to get the most from their exhibiting efforts. Marketing and trade show budgets are coming under greater scrutiny than ever before, and trade show and event managers are under greater pressure to demonstrate results that justify their budgets.

To succeed in today's environment and meet the challenge head on, exhibitors must consider their program from every angle. They must plan and prepare effectively to lay the groundwork necessary for success. They must also evaluate performance and outcomes, and strive toward continuous improvement. The question is where to start.

It has been said that 85 percent of an exhibitor's success lies in the performance of the staff. But exhibit staffers don't always have what they need to perform well in a trade show environment, so it is absolutely critical that exhibitors prepare their staff before they hit the trade show floor. Effective staff preparation is the cornerstone of any successful exhibiting program.

Once staffers are ready and are on site, the next step is to measure and manage results. With so much to win and lose, exhibitors simply can't afford to base decisions about their program on subjective opinions rather than on what is known. By focusing on results, exhibit managers can begin to experience the performance improvement they need and want.

Effective staff preparation and results tracking are tasks that are often easier said than done. Exhibit managers don't always have the knowledge or resources they need to drive these types of activities. And exhibit managers don't always have the time because responsibility for the exhibit program is often just one area for which they are accountable.

Given these challenges and what's at stake if they don't hit the mark, exhibitors can benefit from looking outside for help. Working with a specialist in exhibit-based marketing – someone with the experience and expertise necessary to succeed – can help exhibitors move toward the goal.

Marketech: Leading the Way to Performance Improvement

Marketech is a specialist in exhibit-based marketing, and they know exhibitors need a systematic, disciplined approach to exhibiting that includes effective planning, training and measurement. This type of approach lays the groundwork for success and guides fact-based decisions that lead to continuous performance improvement across all areas of the exhibiting program.

As the leader in exhibit staff training, strategic planning and measurement, Marketech offers a range of customized, timely and affordable solutions that improve exhibiting performance and results. Marketech's offerings fall into two distinct areas and provide exhibitors with the expertise and experience they need to get the job done.

StaffPrep: Training Solutions

Marketech's StaffPrep training solutions provide an ideal way to train and orient exhibit staff prior to any show or event. Programs are available in a variety of formats to help ensure staffers are ready to meet their audience.

Many of Marketech's StaffPrep offerings are designed to enhance the skills of the sales staff. This is important because selling in a trade show or convention environment is much different than selling in other situations and skills that work well on a daily basis don't work the same way at a trade show. Even the most seasoned staffers can benefit from training focused on effective techniques that can help them succeed on the trade show floor.

StaffPrep also includes a range of offerings that help exhibit managers plan and execute effective pre-show briefings. Briefings are important to help staffers better understand the goals and objectives of the program, as well as staff roles and responsibilities. Staffers who know why they are at a show and what is expected from them are much more likely to perform well.

Live – On-Site Training

Designed to build skills essential to success on the trade show floor, live training can be conducted at the show or event site or at a regional or annual meeting. Available as a two-hour or four-hour session, the training is customized to meet each client's specific needs. Sessions include lecture and hands-on segments with role-playing, small group and interactive exercises. An enhanced offering includes on-site staff observation and coaching, a debrief with staff at the end of the first show day, and a post-show written report with observations and recommendations.

Distance – Online Training

As with live training, distance training builds skills essential to success on the trade show floor, but is more appropriate for exhibitors with a geographically dispersed staff. Each 45-minute program is conducted live online, and the number of participants is unlimited. The training is designed to be interactive through the use of Q&A and polling. This option is available as a basic or advanced program, or as a specialized skills-based program customized to meet the client's specific training needs.

Self-Paced / Computer-Based Training

In addition to live and distance training, Marketech also offers a self-paced training option designed to build skills essential to success on the trade show floor. Titled "You Can Make a Difference", this computer-based offering is presented in a long program (45-minute) or short program (25-minute) format. The training is organized into individual modules and video vignettes / role plays. Each version includes a mini-quiz at the end of every module, as well as a final quiz designed to ensure that program goals are accomplished. This offering is available in a generic or customized version. It either resides on the client's intranet or can be hosted by Marketech.

Exhibit Manager's Companion Collection

The Exhibit Manager's Companion Collection is a series of CD and DVD-based tools that are ideal for exhibit managers who want to experience performance improvement but have a limited budget. With varying lengths and areas of focus, these programs are easy to use and address a wide range of training goals and objectives.

Take 10 - the most recent addition to the series, “Take 10” is a 10-minute DVD that helps refocus staffer’s selling skills to function in today’s changed and very demanding environment. The program is easy to insert into any pre-show briefing and can be used to prepare staff at multiple events.

Are You Ready – designed specifically for pharmaceutical industry exhibitors and introduced earlier this year, “Are You Ready” helps staffers adjust to recent changes in the PhRMA marketing code. The program is easy to insert into any pre-show briefing and can be used to prepare staff at multiple events.

ez-briefing – a CD-based pre-show briefing toolkit with various components that help exhibit managers select and prepare staff and evaluate performance after the event.

Creating ex-ceptional Demos – a CD-based tool that helps exhibitors design and execute effective at-show demonstrations that effectively communicate to the trade show audience.

Are You Game – a CD that includes five staff skill-building games that are easy to insert into any pre-show briefing.

FutureResults: Measurement Solutions

Measuring and reporting meaningful results has become one of the hottest topics in the industry today. The topic is hot because the only way to improve results is to measure performance and use the findings to guide changes that lead to better outcomes.

Marketch’s FutureResults measurement solutions include a range of offerings that give exhibitors the information they need to make critical, fact-based decisions about their program.

Measurement Workshops

Measurement Planning – a customized session conducted at a client’s office, regional or national meeting, or other venue. Designed to help clients learn how to merge their trade show and event objectives with appropriate metrics, and generate consensus among all internal stakeholders.

Measurement Training – a customized session conducted at a client’s office, regional or national meeting, or other venue. The session uses client data and is designed to help exhibit, marketing, product and other personnel better understand the what, why and how of measurement. This training prepares exhibitors to better manage measurement activities using in-house or outsourced resources.

Event Evaluation and Analysis

With event evaluation analysis, Marketech experts review a client’s complete show schedule against pre-established criterion to ensure that each event is aligned with internal goals and objectives and has been allocated the appropriate budget, exhibit size, staffing, lead generation targets and ROI forecast. The deliverable is a “show book” with recommendations about which shows to keep or discontinue, as well as specific changes (more/less space, more/less staff, etc.) that may be needed to maximize returns across the entire program.

On-Site Measurement

Visual Competitive Audits – conducted on-site at a trade show, convention or other event, competitive audits provide unbiased, third-party observations about the client’s exhibit including exhibit design, flow and focus, collateral and giveaways, and staff performance. The audit also includes the same observations for up to three of the client’s competitors. Delivered as a written report post show, the competitive audit includes important recommendations that can be used to make valuable corrections during the current show season.

Exit Interviews – trained experts intercept and interview visitors as they leave a client’s exhibit to assess the effectiveness of the exhibit. These interviews measure various factors such as audience perception, brand awareness, perceived brand value, and visitor satisfaction. Each survey is completely customized for each client and each event. Findings are delivered as a written report post show and include key data, interpretations of the results, and recommendations for improvement.

Quantitative Analysis – trained experts gather and analyze important quantitative data about a client’s exhibit and other components of the trade show program to assess the value of at-show marketing activities as well as the exhibit’s effectiveness in attracting visitors and moving them around the space. Findings are delivered as a written report post show. Findings help clients attach a dollar value to the results achieved, and offer recommendations for improvement.

Customer Journey Analysis – trained experts watch and record the various “touch points” that visitors experience in an exhibit. Delivered in a written report post show, the customer journey analysis includes information about where visitors went, what they did, how much time they spent, etc. and gives exhibitors important insight about which exhibit components are most interesting and compelling.

Post-Show / Event Surveys – similar to the exit interview, post-show / event surveys provide valuable information about the effectiveness of an exhibit, but are administered after the event, usually through an email- or web-based tool. Findings are provided in a written report format and include recommendations for performance improvement.

Focus Groups and Facilitated Meetings – customized for each client, focus groups and facilitated meetings provide important insights from specific audience targets that can be used to guide a variety of marketing decisions.

Computer-Based Tools

Measurement Made Easy – a downloadable collection of software tools that enable clients to easily plan and measure results of any trade show program. The software is designed to compare results from show to show and from year to year to allow clients to identify and react to important performance trends.

The Future: The Need to Strive for Performance Improvement

Over the next few years, exhibitors are likely to continue to experience increasing pressure through a more challenging environment. Balancing the costs and benefits of trade show exhibiting may become increasingly difficult, and exhibitors may be forced to make hard choices about their exhibit program.

In times when budgets may become increasingly tight, exhibitors will need to work even harder to ensure they get everything they can from every dollar they spend. Exhibitors run the risk of making the situation worse if they stand by and do nothing to enhance performance and results in a more demanding atmosphere.

Although staff preparation and measurement will continue to require a commitment of budget dollars, the value that these kinds of activities can deliver will be higher than ever. Marketech will continue to be on the leading edge of performance improvement by offering customized, timely and affordable solutions to the marketplace.

Media Contacts:

Gayle Griffithe
Griffithe Marketing
gayle@griffithe.com
o/ 949.713.6211
c/ 949.697.6538

Dawn Swett
Griffithe Marketing
dawn@griffithe.com
o/ 949.713.6211
c/ 951.609.6039