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Conversion-Driven Marketing

9 Ideas for Powerful Pre-Tradeshows Marketing

Trade shows can be a powerful part of your marketing mix. You can win new customers and solidify relationships with existing clients. Trade shows are great places to introduce branding shifts, new products, and expanded services.

You know this! You have your trade show booked, and you've thought about the booth, print collateral handouts, branded give-aways, and other standard trade show materials.

But have you carefully considered pre-trade show marketing?

If you haven't been thinking about ways to market your brand, product or service in advance of the next big trade show, you are missing a powerful piece of marketing.

The “*Build [a trade show booth] and they will come*” mentality will catch some people who already happen to be at the show, but will it bring people in to the show? Will they think, “I need to be sure to visit Company Q at this event -- they are going to be showcasing their new service!” Effective trade show marketing begins months before the actual event.

The following pages lay out several things to consider as you begin planning your pre-tradeshow marketing.

Before you begin preparation for pre-marketing a trade show, be sure and follow these next two important steps:

Lay out your business goals for the show.

You probably already have these in mind, and if you can put together some great pre-show marketing tactics, you are much more likely to meet and even exceed those goals.

Formulate a strategy for meeting your goals, incorporating pre-marketing into the plan.

By writing out a clear step-by-step strategy, you'll help everyone on your team to be pulling in the same direction. Your strategy will enable you to set "do by" dates, and delegate the many tasks to the team members or service partners best suited to carry them out.

9 Ideas for Pre-Tradeshaw Marketing

#1: Run a pre-trade show contest

This could be anything from a pre-show virtual scavenger hunt or call for submissions to an entire sponsored pre-show event like a 5K, cocktail hour, or golf tournament.

#2: Employ word-of-mouth

Ask all of the partners or clients you talk to in the course of the preceding months if they've heard about the show and are planning to attend. Drop the seeds of your upcoming contests or give-aways and let the buzz begin to build.

#3: Use Sneak Peeks

If you will be unveiling new product offerings or services, plan a series of Sneak Peeks at the new baby in the business family.

#4: Give discounts or special offers

Plan for discounts or special offers that can only be used by trade show attendees or exhibitors. Let everyone on your contact list know about them in advance.

#5: Send out a press release

This is often a standard move by most businesses, but you can make yours different by sharing sneak peeks at new products, discounts, and other information. You can also make your press release stand out by incorporating video. Be sure to construct the release so that parts of your story can be picked up and republished by related business groups.

#6: Get new business contact lists

You can purchase contact lists through a variety of agencies. Plan at least three pre-show contacts.

#7: Send out an email (or two)

An obvious idea, but it's rarely employed effectively. Don't just let your list know you'll be at the show, offer them something of value! Be sure to publicize your pre-show events or offers. You could send a second email out the day before the show to remind your target audience of what you have in store for them.

#8: Send out a snail mail

Direct marketing can be effective and powerful. The same rules apply here that go with your pre-show marketing emails: offer something of value to your clients. This can be information, services, discounts, prizes, or other items.

#9: Employ social media

Put your pre-marketing messages and offers online via LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter or other outlets that your business uses. Create pre-show videos and post them on a variety of related sites. Consider building and driving traffic to a special web page just to showcase your pre-trade show marketing offers.



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If you've done your planning well in advance and have a great team working with you, you'll get your message out before the show and greatly increase the chances of that message really sinking in at the big event. Pre-marketing can help make all your investments of time and money into a major trade show pay off in leads, brand awareness, and client expansion.

Need help with getting your pre-tradeshow marketing planned and/or implemented? Contact us today!

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