

SELECTING THE RIGHT SHOWS

Excerpt from *The Exhibit User's Handbook: Fried Goose Eggs*

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Why do some companies have tremendous success marketing and selling their products and services at tradeshow and events while others have limited or no success?

While there may not be one specific answer, a part of the answer would be that the successful companies exhibit at the right shows. Sound pretty simple, but is it?

Let's explore a few things to consider that will help define the right shows for you. First, as with any marketing activity, you need to define your target audience. This pertains not only to the target companies but the correct person or job titles within a company as well. The job titles are very important.

Job Titles

Job titles provide some insight as to what a person's primary concerns will be. For instance, someone from upper management will have net profits as a primary concern, while a sales manager will have increased sales as their primary concern. What are the primary concerns of your audience?

Next, which shows does your target audience attend? To find out, you need to ask. Assumption can be very costly when dealing with tradeshow and events.

Susan Friedmann, a leading tradeshow and event consultant, states the following: "Selecting the right shows means matching your exhibiting objectives with the right target audiences, the right timing to meet your buyer's purchasing patterns, and the ability to show and demonstrate your products and services."

The Tradeshowcalendar.com

To identify shows that are available to you, visit www.thetradeshowcalendar.com for listings of shows pertaining to specific industries. After selecting shows that may pertain to you, contact the show management and request a listing of past participants, both attendees and exhibitors. Review the audience demographics and statistics from previous shows. Speak to past exhibiting participant and attendees.

Are any of your existing customers or prospects listed? If not, then you might want to ask them why not. If a substantial number of your customers or prospects are listed, then that show will most likely be a good place for you to be an exhibitor, because this show draws your potential audience. And as they say, "Birds of a feather flock together."

It would be a good idea for you to attend a selected show as an attendee one year prior to exhibiting. This will provide you first-hand knowledge and help you gain answers to many of your questions.

The Show Attendees

Lastly, does the show location fit with your distribution plan? Research indicates that the majority of show attendees attending a "National Show" will come from an area *outside* of a 200-mile radius of the show site. For "Local Shows," the majority will come from within a 50-mile radius of the show site, while a "Regional Show" attracts its primary audience from *within* a 200-mile radius.□