

# 13 Tips for How to Work a Trade Show Booth

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There are many moving parts that go into understanding how to work a trade show booth effectively. Face-to-face access to many potential new customers and partners is one of the many reasons [why renting a booth at a trade show is great for business](#). It's critical that your team knows how to make the most of this unique opportunity.

The work doesn't stop once the exhibit is set up and the crowds are passing through. There is important work to be done before, during, and after the show in order to [maximize your ROI](#). As a trade show and exhibit service provider that has helped hundreds of clients and attended thousands of shows over multiple decades, we know how to work a trade show before, during, and after to get the best possible results. Check out our top 13 tips for how to work a trade show booth below or [contact us for a free quote](#) about our exhibit rentals and show services.

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## Preparing for How to Work at a Trade Show Before the Event

Knowing how to work in a trade show booth isn't just about show day. A significant amount of preparation has to be done beforehand in order to set yourself up for success on the big day. There is plenty your team can do in the time leading up to the event to help ensure that you hit your goals during the trade show.

### 1. Using Social Media

Having a strong social media presence leading up to the show can have noticeable impacts on your team's ability to work a trade show booth during the event. Make sure to post about the event, where you'll be located on the trade show floor, and the times of the show online before the actual event to help get the word out to your followers.

Use your social media to drum up excitement about the trade show and your part in it as well. Post about new products you're showcasing, demos you'll be performing, or any [entertainment](#), contests, [giveaways](#), or prizes you're offering at your booth. This gives current customers and prospects a good reason to plan on stopping by.

[Read our post about generating leads through social media](#) to learn more tips and tricks.

### 2. Doing Your Research



Just as with any speech or presentation, preparation is one of the biggest keys to success at a trade show. Learning ahead of time who will be attending the event, making a list of prospective targets, and scheduling as many meetings as possible are all ways to get ahead of the game.

If you've attended the show previously, review your performance so you can learn from it:

- What was your main objective?
- What results did you achieve?
- What went well that you should be sure to do again?
- Were there any missteps that you can correct?
- Were there any missed opportunities that you should take advantage of this time around?

If you haven't attended the show before, research what it's like. Many conferences, trade shows, and expos will publish or share information about their previous attendance numbers and demographics, how many qualified buyers they had, what attendees are looking for most, how much revenue was generated by exhibitors, and more.

Do competitor research as well to see what your competition will be doing and how you can stand out from the crowd.

### 3. Making Appointments

To ensure that you have traffic to your booth, leads in the pipeline, and make the most of your staff's attendance at the show, try to set up meetings and appointments before the show even

starts. Reach out to known prospective and existing customers and invite them to stop by to chat.

This can also help ensure some [important face-to-face interaction](#) with prospects and customers. Many professionals believe this is an essential element to forming and maintaining business connections, and it's a great tip on how to work a trade show booth efficiently.

## 4. Organizing and Training Your Staff

Part of preparing for how to work at a trade show is making sure any staff who work the booth are properly trained. This includes subject matter expertise about your products, services, and industry as well as [trade show etiquette](#) and customer service skills.

Your team will also need to organize any shifts and breaks to keep things running smoothly. You don't want staff working the trade show booth to be eating, playing on their phones, or sitting down too much during the show. But naturally, people will need "off" time so that they can be "on" with prospective clients. It can be difficult to predict every trade show environment, which is why it's important to create a plan for staff members to take breaks and be able to trade off with others.

If you have enough people available, it also helps to have team members who enjoy talking to people and active sales staff on the trade show floor with you. Their positive attitudes and conversational skills will make it easier for clients to feel comfortable and at ease at your booth.

## 5. Making Your Booth Stand Out



It almost goes without saying that your trade show booth is an essential part of [catching the eyes of passersby](#). Recognizable branding, attractive design, and attention-grabbing graphics are all important for bringing traffic to your booth.

Not only does your booth need to bring people in, but it needs to keep them there. Your exhibit should be planned with traffic flow and visitor pathways in mind, ensuring that attendees are strategically funneled through your booth and can easily find everything they need. The layout of your booth should also accommodate any features or activities that you need, such as

product displays, A/V equipment, demo space, [entertainment](#), storage space, and meeting space.

At Cardinal Expo, we work with you to determine the best layout and design for your booth, with 2D and 3D renders along the way so you can make sure you have everything you need to succeed. Our experts will make sure your exhibit is attractive, functional, and eye-catching so you're prepared to make the most of your show.

## How to Work a Trade Show Booth During the Event

In order to make sure all of your hard work leading up to the event pays off, your team will need to bring their A-game on show day. Keep these tips in mind for how to work a trade show booth during the event.

### 6. Using Your Senses



A great way to attract customers on the day of the event is to use your senses—literally. Use eye-catching visuals, exciting sounds (such as revving engines at a car show), and enticing smells (such as freshly made popcorn) to draw visitors to your booth.

[Effective and creative scent marketing](#) can help clients literally follow their noses to your booth and make your business memorable long after the trade show is over. You can also spray a little bit of the scent on your business cards to help jog the person's memory later.

Once people enter your booth, providing a tasty treat like popcorn, cookies, or ice cream can engage their taste buds and keep them in your booth longer. In addition to creating positive sensory experiences for visitors, it's important to avoid any negative ones. Make sure your staff

have opportunities to freshen up throughout the day, including bathroom breaks, mouthwash, and gum.

## 7. Packing Smart

When working the floor, it's important to dress professionally while also looking friendly and approachable. Also, remember that while having all the necessary materials such as business cards, demo items, and literature is part of packing smart, taking too much along to a trade show can be a burden.

If your staff feels refreshed and confident about how to work in a trade show booth, their performance will be better. There are several ways to ensure that you and your team members are putting your best foot forward on the day of the trade show:

- Pack an eye mask if needed and get plenty of sleep the night before.
- Eat a good breakfast and pack a few snacks. It's hard to stay positive when you're hungry!
- Make sure to have gum, mouthwash, and deodorant on hand at the show, just in case.
- Pack clean and appropriate clothing, including options for whether you're too hot or too cold.
- Bring shampoo and conditioner or make sure your hotel provides this if you need to wash your hair.
- Pack comfortable shoes—you don't want to be sitting down too often.

It can also help to preemptively come up with a way to store phones, such as a safe lock box. This can help deter individuals from getting sucked into their cell phones while they're supposed to be working the show floor.

## 8. Mastering the Area



Treat the area around your exhibit like a neighborhood. Get to know the other exhibitors nearby, actively engage with passersby, and keep a tidy area to ensure positive first impressions. Avoid letting the booth get messy, eating on the job, or getting distracted by phones or busy work.

## 9. Knowing How to Disengage

Part of knowing how to work a trade show booth efficiently is knowing when enough is enough. Your time is limited, and there are a lot of opportunities that you need to take advantage of. Some individuals will be happy to just check out your business without conversation or even take a business card or brochure for later. However, it's always possible that you will have some visitors who are exceptionally chatty.

On the day of the show, be sure to keep an eye out for your fellow team members who may get stuck talking to one person for too long. You can always come into the conversation and call them away for something else, or ask if the customer needs anything else to keep things moving but also avoid looking rude.

## 10. Making an Impression



If you and your team have done the necessary pre-work before the show, it should be a snap identifying the key players at other booths and in the crowd. Remember who the decision-makers are when visiting other areas on the show floor and inviting potential customers and partners to stop by.

There are many different ways to make a good impression on a potential customer—and most of them are free! Your business cards can help individuals remember what goods or services you're offering, but there's a reason that trade shows aren't just a lineup of cards with websites on them. It's the people that make it personal and leave a lasting impression.

Some ways you can make a positive impression include:

- Introducing yourself by name
- Using a firm but friendly handshake
- Remembering their name and using it in your conversation
- Being an active and engaged listener
- Making eye contact
- Complimenting something specific about them, such as their shoes
- Having a handful of pens to pass out, and offering one to them immediately as a way to start a conversation and give them something to remember you by
- Using a strategic mix of personal and professional conversation topics, tailoring the ratio to their preferences

# Knowing How to Work a Trade Show After the Event

The work of a trade show doesn't end just because the event is over. There's still more to do after you're all packed up.

It would be a shame to waste any of the potential you've created with your hard work leading up to and during the show. Make sure your team knows how to work a trade show after the event to make the most of your results.

## 11. Connecting Beyond the Show

Social media platforms are perfect for staying in touch with new contacts beyond the trade show. Exchange Twitter handles and connect on LinkedIn, then follow up as soon as possible to engender lasting relationships. You can also post on your company social media accounts about the success of the event and provide a roundup of any company news, product launches, show photos, and contest winners from the show to keep the engagement going.

## 12. Following Up on Leads



After the event, it should be clear to everyone on your team who is following up with what leads. Sending emails, making calls, and scheduling meetings right away with any leads generated during the show will help to actually close those deals.

## 13. Measuring Your Results and ROI

Your team should also do the important work of measuring your results and return on investment after every show. Come up with a plan beforehand to make sure everyone is

measuring your objectives, whether it's sales closed, leads generated, promotional items given away, or other actions taken during the show. Then afterward, follow up with your team to see how you performed so you can make data-driven decisions for the next event.

[Read our post on how to measure trade show effectiveness](#) for more details.

## How to Work a Trade Show Booth Better with Cardinal Expo



Your team is busy, and our experts can take on a significant amount of exhibiting work while also showing you how to work a trade show booth more efficiently for your goals. We design exhibits of any size for rental or purchase, and we also provide end-to-end show services, including fabrication, shipping, logistics, paperwork assistance, third-party coordination, installation, deconstruction, warehousing, and more.