

Dirty Little Trade Show Secrets

5 Things Trade Show Attendees Don't Want You to Know

Look out there at the trade show floor. Check out the attendees. They look ordinary enough - but they have secrets. Dirty little secrets that they'd never tell anyone, not even under duress.

Successful selling at trade shows depends upon two things. One is your products and personnel: How good are your products and services, and how well do your people represent them. The second has nothing to do with you at all. It has everything to do with secrets.

Not all attendees are the same, and not every buyer on the floor shares these secrets. But most do, whether they'd like to admit it or not. These secrets are strong unifying factors that influence their buying decisions. If you, as a smart and savvy trade show exhibitor, know what these secrets are and tailor your trade show exhibit appropriately, you'll come away with higher sales numbers every time.

If you could hear your attendee's deepest, most secret thoughts, they might go something like this:

Trade Show Secret #1: We're impatient.

Let's be real here. The boss just shipped me to Orlando from the middle of a Buffalo blizzard. The last thing I want to do is spend the entire day putzing around looking at new attachments for our Widget making machine. If you show me what I want, at a reasonable price, I'm gonna close the deal in a hurry and go hit the beach.

What this means to you: Understanding your buyer is crucial. When you know what your target audience needs, wants, and expects, it's easier to provide it for them. Added incentives and special savings only sweetens the pot, especially for the attendee who wants to get the business part of the business trip out of the way.

Trade Show Secret #2: We're lazy.

Sure, it sounds like a great deal. But to get that price, I've got to go log onto the web, go to the website, enter a code, fill out a questionnaire, and then go through the purchasing process? Forget that! I'll go over here to Vendor Z. I might pay a few dollars more, but I won't have to jump through any hoops.

What this means to you: If you're going to offer a show special or promotion, focus on making it user-friendly. Buyers are willing to pay more to avoid what they perceive as 'too much' work. Each market has a different threshold point, and this varies with how much potential savings you're offering. Customers are willing to give more when they are getting more in return.

Trade Show Secret #3: We're egotistical.

You might not realize this, but I'm the smartest person here. And the tallest. And the best looking. I'm so gosh-darned amazing, actually, that you'll find yourself compelled to give me awesome deals.

What this means to you: It's important to give your buyers recognition. "Bonus Buys" - windfall items 'spontaneously' thrown in when a purchase is made - is a fantastic way to do this. Offer discounted prices on the floor model, for the 'serious buyers only'. Exclusivity sells.

Don't start the recognition at the trade show. Reach out to your clients before hand via e-mail and direct mail marketing, letting them know what special deals can be had at your booth. A little extra effort goes a long way.

Trade Show Secret #4: We hate math.

Okay, I don't want to look like an idiot here. But there's \$25 off of Widget A, 15% off Widget A-1, and a \$500 rebate if I buy now. Exactly how much is that? Is that a good deal? I hate percentages...

What this means for you: Remember the KISS acronym, especially when promoting discounts and sale prices at a trade show. You want to Keep It Super Simple! Rather than listing a complex set of discounts, focus on the total savings. Have printed price sheets where your trade show booth staffers can highlight appropriate discounted prices and write in the total savings.

Trade Show Secret #5: We like to be pushed.

I see that this price is only good for a limited time. I've read it on the sign. You've told me during the sales presentation. I know and understand that there's a deadline.

And you know what? Chances are I'm going to forget. And when I discover that I missed out on saving hundreds of dollars, I am going to be miffed.

What this means for you: People have to experience a piece of information six times before they remember it - and that's in normal, everyday circumstances, not the hustle and bustle of a trade show floor. Remind your booth staffers to mention the deadline often. Make note of it on any follow-up correspondence, and send a reminder notice to likely prospects. The reminder nudge will spur sales.

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