

## ENGAGING THE 5 SENSES

How many times have you walked through an exhibition and thought nothing has really captivated you? For me that is quite often and with a change in mind-set and a few simple changes to your current set up you can make a huge difference.

If you really want to captivate your tradeshow attendees, you need to think like your audience. What is in it for them? The more you can do to create an *experience* for your audience, the more memorable you'll be.

We experience life through our 5 senses. Life is full of sights, smells, touch, tastes and sounds that we unconsciously connect with emotion. If an experience touches multiple senses, the stronger the memory that is created and the more likely we are to recall that which gave us the experience (positive or negative).

If you want your audience to remember their positive experience with your brand for years to come, you will want to think about all 5 senses and how you can leave a pleasurable memory (not a painful one).

### Sight

Exhibitions and trade shows in nature are highly visual events. Taking potential customers out of the common work or hobby space and engulfing them in a new dimension of the commonality they may be bored with is a large part of what experiential marketing is about. Hence, sight (or the visual element) of trade shows should be a primary concern.

- **Height** - If your budget will allow it, choose the tallest display permitted by exhibit organisers. If the top of your display is visible from any location within the exhibit hall, you will maximize your company's presence.
- **Flooring** - Select a flooring option & color that will make your products "pop". If your products are all black in color, you may wish to use white or light colored flooring. Plush carpeting or hard flooring will also help make your booth stand out from the thinly carpeted floors found in most expo halls.
- **Audio Visual** - Include flat screen monitors set above the 2m mark to feature products or services in your booth. Monitors can also be an effective demonstration tool when spatial constraints of the booth prevent the inclusion of certain items.
- **Graphics** – Use graphics to easily showcase what your product is. Avoid too much writing and think carefully about what colours your graphics are.
- **Lighting** - Utilise lighting to draw attention to anything you want to stand out. Lighting can give life and luster to an otherwise drab display. If used strategically, it will direct attention to key products. More times than none, the brighter the better.

## **Sound**

Sound is perhaps the second most powerful sense to appeal to but also hard to manage dependent on the event. Do you watch TV on mute? Neither do we. Sight without sound is only partially effective at home or at the show. Don't believe us? Walk around the show floor just after the doors close.

- Music or audio options should be culturally sensitive and appropriately played if the convention draws a multi-cultural crowd. If it is a music or entertainment based , pretty much anything goes (within reason...). The inclusion of music and audio materials can be effective if they are relevant and not overpowering.
- Use an emcee, DJ or announcer to draw in anyone that can't see your booth. Like a siren drawing in its prey, a vocal demonstration of your offering will draw in attendees that could have missed you by one isle.

## **Touch**

- People often step into a booth not only to check it out but also to get away from the shoulder-to-shoulder crowds. Configure your booth to permit entry from every possible angle and avoid bottleneck designs. People should be in and out of your booth (with a purchase in hand) as fast as possible.
- If interaction is your and hands-on demos are your goal, avoid the placement of tables around the perimeter of your booth space, as they can create a barrier between attendees and booth staff.
- Include comfortable seating to encourage product interaction and purchases. Plush seating can entice leg weary customers, high-profile clientele, and VIPs into sitting down in your booth and experiencing more of your products and socializing.
- Place catalogs and literature toward the center of your booth to encourage entry. This will help prevent people from grabbing swag as they pass by your booth instead of actually entering your booth space.

## **Smell/Taste**

Certain events will have a huge need to attract to the smell or taste sense for obvious reasons. Most times it will be unavoidable to not have a smell associated with a food or smoke show but for taste some careful considerations should take place.

- Ensure that any food or promotional materials are culturally appropriate. This is especially important if you are exhibiting your products overseas or have foreign companies exhibiting domestically. If you think your product may be offensive place in a low traffic area and rely on booth staff to make it apparent to anyone that may be interested.
- Specialized product displays for food or beverage shows are required so that attendees are attracted to your product without being nervous of contaminants but can still experience the product.



Take a small lesson from this. A booth designed to appeal to everyone possible will most likely be successful but unique, memorable, epic? Probably not.

Standing out from the crowd is just that. Observe the competition. What are they missing, what isn't working? What failed you last year? Can you do without it this year? Make your booth unique by taking everything into consideration including all five senses us humans have been blessed with.

Finally incorporating all these aspects here are 5 things that will really help you engage with your audience.

1. **Give demonstrations.** Hopefully you have already planned to do this. There are ways you can make a demonstration even more engaging. While you're giving demonstrations, quiz the audience. Keep them thinking about your industry and your next steps. You can toss out promotional gifts as prizes when people answer correctly. If possible, have them touch or handle your products. If an audience member can safely participate in the demo, ask for an assistant. If you can't provide an onsite demonstration, use a video. Make sure the video does more than blandly list features and steps, though. Treat it like a real time demonstration. You can still incorporate a quiz with handouts – ask viewers to answer a few questions about the video for a chance to win a prize.
2. **Use a video.** Even if you can demonstrate your service or product, it is helpful to have a video running during the tradeshow, too. Again, make it informative, but not boring. Brainstorm ways to transition from the end of the video to some sort of participation. However you use the video, remember: it captures attention from afar, and it addresses your audience while your employees are tending to other people.
3. **Incorporate technology.** There are plenty of digital ways to interact with your audience other than just video. By using tablets and the Internet, you can allow people to drive their own experience with your product or service. Websites, videos, sign-up forms, surveys, and games are great ways to digitally interact with your potential clients.
4. **Use games.** This doesn't mean you have to provide Jenga for the audience. Is there some way you can have participants interact with products or information? Something as simple as having people trigger a motion sensor counts as a "game." It's interactive and playful. You want people to "play" at your booth; the "game" can be anything fun and interactive.
5. **Make it a show.** Do you have an employee who can entertain? Use that person to give presentations, gather an audience around, or make jokes as people stand by.

Remember you have invested a considerable amount of money in your stand presence so make sure you do everything you can to make the event worthwhile for you and more importantly your customers.



If you would like to discuss options and how we can make your stand more effective feel free to contact Matt Reilly at  
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