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EXHIBITIPS OCTOBER 2013

Have you set the right measure?

The first question exhibitors generally ask me when looking at the results of an event is, “*how many people attended?*” Over the years for companies who attend events, the measure has been to hand out as many brochures and meet as many people as possible.

What I’m not often asked is, “*what is the quality of the visitors?*” And what influence do they have over purchasing decisions?”

I recently experienced another perspective on this from a media outlet who wanted me to comment on a recent show’s attendance. My answer made them sit back and think about the question. I said, “Do you think the general floor traffic looked good and in line with the previous event?” The answer was yes. I added, “so whether we increased attendance by a couple of thousand people or dropped a couple of hundred, do you think the focus should be on quantity, as in the perception of floor traffic or on the quality – why they come and are they buying?” Visitor numbers going up or down shouldn’t really form the basis of an exhibitor’s success as you can only effectively talk to one person at a time.

Promote your Presence

Make sure you tag all your advertisements and communication in the lead-up to an event with the name of the event you will be attending and your *stand number*. If you have things going out to the marketplace, it doesn’t cost you any more to include these details and it helps to reinforce your presence and profile in the visitors’ minds.

To put it into perspective, if you take five minutes to talk to a buyer, you can talk to 12 in one hour back-to-back. On the basis the event is open for eight hours, allow for slow periods and breaks, and we adjust that to six hours a day, that’s a maximum of 72 people per day, irrespective of the floor traffic!

I have seen a show that is jam packed and some exhibitors still don’t get the return on their investment. This may be because of their stand set-up, their product, staff or the fact that buyers of their product simply weren’t there!

Another interesting observation is that a drop in attendance can sometimes signal a better result for exhibitors. Because what’s important is that the visitors who come have been even more pre-qualified. They are truly interested, have a need for the products or services at the event and have already made the decision to source from the event.



It should be remembered that current research shows three out of four visitors come with a pre-determined agenda. This includes seeing and talking to expert personnel on the stands, seeking new products and demos and attending educational sessions.

When you put *quantity* before *quality*, the focus is on the wrong key output. The measure you need to be more focused on is QUALITY.

This leads us back to what your stand needs to focus on and how it will benefit the visitor who is looking for solutions.

In the lead-up, ensure you are proactive – attract the qualified buyer with pre-promotion, ensuring you become a ‘must-attend’ destination in the minds of visitors.

Another thought to bear in mind is, ‘it’s not over till it’s over’!

At a recent event an exhibitor told me at the beginning of the final day that they had a so-so result.

Then they called me after the event to tell me in a somewhat surprised voice that they had a great event – one of the best ever! They went on to tell me that in the last two hours they confirmed a large number of orders resulting from enquiries and discussions over the previous show days.

What we can take from this is the need to remain focused right to the end of the event. Remember that while the doors are open, visitors walking the floor in the last few hours are still qualified visitors, as much as those from any other day or time of the show. In fact quite often they are mentally summing up how responsive and enthusiastic exhibitors are and this reflects on the company’s measure of professionalism, their products and so on.

So remember, you can only talk effectively to one person at any given time and quality always wins over quantity!

See you on the floor,

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