



# How to get what you came for at a Trade Show

Tips for Attending Trade Shows  
in a Challenging Economy



Extending Brands  
into **experience**





**As businesses look to reduce costs, marketing budgets are often the first to be cut. This is especially true during a tight economy. According to a recent study conducted by MarketingProfs, 52% of the surveyed marketers have already started making changes to plans and budgets. But a downturn is no time to stop spending on marketing. The key is to adapt your strategies to the New Economy.**

**One such marketing opportunity is the trade show. A trade show is a great way to make contacts, increase your visibility and promote your company, find new products, build and solidify existing relationships, and educate yourself about the latest industry trends.**

**MC<sup>2</sup> has compiled key tips on attending trade shows to help you maximize your time at the show and gain the best return on your investment.**

## **Before the Show**

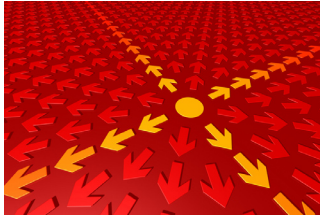
Identify, Determine, Establish, Research, Book, Pre-register, Plan, Register.

## **At the show**

Review and Revise, Network, Bring, Gather.

## **After the show**

Organize, Follow-up, Reach Out, Contact, Evaluate and Prepare.



## **Before the Show**

**Spend time in advance of a trade show to plan your trip.  
This will help you use your time and resources more  
effectively and justify expenditures.**

**Here's what you can do before you go to a show.**

Plan to justify your spend.

**Identify** the business challenge are you looking to solve. Clearly define your goals and objectives for attending the trade show.

**Determine** the number of employees who will attend the trade show. To create a buying team and minimize the buying cycle, it may be more cost-effective to send more than one employee.

**Establish** a process for comparing and evaluating vendor products and services based on your business needs. Knowing this in advance will help you accurately evaluate vendors after the show.

**Research** the trade show's web site to learn about exhibiting companies, educational program tracks and schedule, networking opportunities, as well as data from previous years.

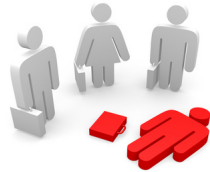
**Book** your travel and lodging accommodations as far in advance as you can to take advantage of discounts.

**Pre-register** for the show, which will not only save your company money, but will also save time onsite. Pre-registered attendees also receive emails from the show management about events, new products and other informative news happening at the show. This will help you better plan your time at the show.

**Plan** your schedule and set appointments in advance to make sure you get quality time with the people you want to see. Divide your list into must see and want to see booths to help prioritize your time. Map out your route to avoid crisscrossing the exhibit floor.

**Register** to attend seminars and conferences that address topics and issues that affect your business. It's a cost-effective way to benchmark what your company is doing, gain third-party insight and discover ways to overcome specific challenges.

Remember to "I.D.E.R.B.P.P.R."



## **At the show**

**Keep in mind that trade show days are long  
and require a lot of walking and talking.**

**Besides wearing comfortable shoes, here's what  
you can do to make the most of your time at the show:**

**Wear comfortable shoes.**

**Review and revise** your plan, as necessary. Try to stick to your schedule, but allow for last minutes changes made to the show directory and schedule of events. If you have done a good job of prioritizing your time, you can be more flexible on the back end.

**Network, network, network.** Take advantage of the opportunity to meet industry peers and uncover hidden business opportunities at receptions, hospitality suites and other on-site events. After all, trade shows are about people connecting with people, brands, information and business solutions—all under one roof.

**Bring plenty of business cards** and information about your company. Make notes on the back on business cards you collect to remind yourself of next steps post-show or important points discussed.

**Gather literature** and take copious notes to get a current pulse on the industry. Look for new buzz words and latest trends and practices.

Bring a pocket-sized notebook and pen.



## **After the show**

**The constant stimulation from exhibiting companies, attendees and events helps create a buzz during a trade show.**

**Keep the momentum going post-show to ensure a better return on your time and monetary investment. Here's how:**

**It's not over til it's over.**

**Organize information** collected at the show and update files. Build a show folder or envelope to share with other business associates. Update your bidders list with the information you have now put together.

**Follow-up** with companies you requested additional information from.

**Reach out** to any companies you may have missed on site. Monitor post-show media coverage, which typically highlights the most important news and trends featured at the show, to see if you may have missed any potential partners that can help resolve a problem.

**Contact show management** to secure copies of presentations given at conference sessions or seminars you attended. This will supplement the notes you took during the session.

**Evaluate and prepare** a thorough report for upper management that summarizes your experience. Highlight successes and opportunities discovered based on the guidelines set before the show to determine if your trip was worth your time and the investment.

Leverage show conversations in post-show discussions.





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**MC<sup>2</sup> specializes in design, production and management of integrated marketing programs including events, exhibits, permanent and mobile environments and executive briefing centers. MC<sup>2</sup> has 10 locations throughout the United States and alliances around the world. We can help you with your collateral-to-digital transformation.**

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