

# Measurement of Engagement in B2B Trade Show Exhibits



Action Items for Exhibitors

Experiential Marketing Council  
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## Action Items for Exhibitors

- ***Quantifying size and value of target audience among total audience is essential to show selection and investment decisions.*** If a large enough target audience exists, effective exhibit engagement can accelerate the sales process significantly to optimize return on investment.
- ***Determine where exhibitions versus other types of corporate proprietary events fit into the overall event marketing-mix strategy.*** Trade shows deliver both customers and new prospects, and exhibit engagement can accelerate the sales process among both. If gaining new customers is a primary corporate initiative, exhibitions should be an important element of the event mix.

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- ***There is both a cognitive and an emotional component of exhibit engagement that drives results, and both are more powerful when combined.*** Creating an “experience” for the visitors that is relevant to and reflective of positive brand attributes is as important as the cognitive-related tactics typically associated with exhibiting such as demonstrations, presentations, sampling, graphics, availability of collateral, knowledgeable exhibit staff, etc.
- ***Active engagement (face-to-face interaction) is critical in driving Purchase Intent and ultimately sales.*** Bringing a sufficient number of knowledgeable and engaged staff to the exhibition can significantly increase return on the total show investment.

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- ***Merely being noticed by attendees at the show can contribute to engagement.*** Exhibits should visually communicate brand messages without direct staff interaction. However, Active engagement should be the ultimate objective.
- ***Involve sales management.*** Because exhibit engagement accelerates the sales process and feeds the sales pipeline, active involvement and buy-in by sales management in show selection decisions, planning (setting objectives and strategy) and tactical execution is likely to improve sales conversion results significantly.

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- ***An integrated approach to exhibition participation is valuable in driving results.***

Trade show specific advertising, promotion and sponsorships, as well as ancillary activities (e.g., speakers at sessions, off-the-exhibit floor meeting/demo rooms, special pavilions, hospitality, etc.) create increased reach and/or lift in results. However, both can experience diminishing returns if over-used in any one particular event.

- ***Similarly, corporate web sites and micro-sites should be integrated into the exhibit's strategy, particularly for post-show***

***fulfillment.*** They have become the main source of attendee follow-up. However, sales support collateral/literature is still rated highly important in making purchase decisions.

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- ***Cost effective measurement systems enhance management's ability to make evidence-based marketing decisions. The recommended measurement method for exhibits includes:***
  - A post-event survey construct adhering to the principles of good sampling, questionnaire design and analysis can be employed very effectively in most situations. Pre-post methods, with their additional costs, are not always necessary.
  - Purchase Intent metrics are generally valid indicators of future sales. Sales conversion studies can isolate their value for a particular brand, but they are not always necessary or practical.

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- ***Cost effective measurement methodology for exhibits (cont'd):***
  - Measure traditional brand metrics (e.g., awareness, familiarity, brand image) but introduce new metrics as well to get at the show's contribution to the emotional connection/brand engagement.
    - Determine specific brand metrics that drive Purchase Intent (can vary by brand and event).
    - Measure specific exhibit objectives (e.g., build awareness)
    - Compare exhibit results to other marketing channels
  - Assess tactical and experiential elements of exhibit to identify strengths and weaknesses that drive results.
  - Measure Word of Mouth impact of exhibition participation. Based on this study, the viral effect of exhibitions is strong and increases the reach calculations of exhibits.

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- ***Finally, use research to help justify exhibit budgets*** by demonstrating the impact of exhibit engagement in driving brand metrics that accelerate the sales process and ultimately conversion to sales.