



TRADE SHOWS

MAKING THE MOST OUT OF YOUR VENDOR EVENTS

Trade shows can help you reach out into your community, meet people you may not have met otherwise and obtain additional sales, bookings and leads.

While exciting, trade shows can seem overwhelming. I have put together this guide to help you in every aspect from selecting a vendor event to following up with leads.

How to Select Vendor Events

There is no secret formula to selecting the perfect vendor event. However, there are a few key tips to consider when selecting events:

- **Don't overspend.** Don't pour a fortune into your events. Surprisingly enough, I have found that smaller, less expensive events tend to provide a bigger return on your investment. Smaller events tend to give you the opportunity to have meaningful relationships with the guests and give you the chance to discuss your business or product in detail. A smaller budget also means less risk for you, especially when starting out. However, if you are interested in a larger, more expensive event, be sure to partner up with other members of your team, to split the costs as well as leads.



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- **Scope out the event in advance.** Don't book a booth at an event without any information or experience with the event. When booking your vendor events and trade shows, always think a year in advance. If you are interested in a particular show, go to the event to see how it runs, how it looks and whether or not it will be a good fit for you. If you enjoy the event and decide it's something you want to be a part of, put your name on the list for the next year.

- **Talk to previous vendors.** While attending potential vendor events, be sure to ask vendors whether or not they are enjoying being a vendor at the show and if it is an event they would commit to again. This is an important step when deciding if you think a trade show will be right for you. Also, chances are, when speaking to these vendors, they will ask what you do, and you will have the opportunity to talk about your business as well. So be sure to always have business material, such as catalogs and host brochures, on hand.

- **Stay away from food shows.** Vendor events that focus on food are extremely competitive. Guests love these types of shows because they gravitate towards the booths that are offering free food and drink. This means that it will be more difficult for you to gain interest and attention.



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Even if you are a food or beverage company, steer clear from these events and opt for ones where you will be one of the few businesses who offer samples.

Getting Ready: 3-6 Months Before the Event

Trade shows and vendor events require a good amount of time for preparation. The 3-6 months before every event is crucial for creating and obtaining the supplies that you need.

The first thing you will want to do to help you begin to prepare a checklist is to set a goal.

Do you want to obtain sales? How many? How many products will you need to order and have on hand to achieve those goals?

Do you want to book parties? How many? How many catalogs, host brochures and host gifts will you need to have on hand to achieve those goals?



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Do you want to find new team members? How many? How many opportunity packets and signing gifts will you need to have on hand to achieve those goals?

Once you have set a goal, you will be able to start making a list of all the things you need to order, the materials you need to put together and the promotional and marketing items you will need to get ready.

Your goal will also help you in determining your elevator pitch for the event. Most times, you only have a few seconds to capture someone's interest into learning more about your business.

The second thing you will want to do, is reach out to any potential team members that will help you with the event. You may decide to do the event alone if it is a smaller event. If you are enlisting the help of others on your team, be sure to assign tasks to help complete your to-do list.

The third thing you will want to do is to order any logo wear that you need. It is important that at all times, attendees at the event know who you are and what company you represent.



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This way, no matter if you are standing at your booth or walking back from the bathroom, people will be able to distinguish who you are and what you offer.

How to Promote the Show: 1 Month Before the Event

Even though the trade show/vendor event is doing their part to advertise the event, you will still want to put an effort to let your customers, hosts and social media contacts know that you will be featuring your products and business at a local trade show.

You can create postcards to hand out, e-vites and graphics to post to your social media accounts.

You will also want to make sure you mention the event at every home party or Facebook party you run. If you have a Facebook VIP Group and/or newsletter subscribers, you will want to let them know about the event as well.

Another thing you will want to do is set up meetings for the day of. Who else is attending the event? Is there anyone that you think would be beneficial to connect with?



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Are there any bloggers going to the event that you would like to cover and promote your business?

If you have team members helping you at the event, have them man the booth while you go and meet with other vendors and attendees. It's important to set these meetings in advance so you don't miss the opportunity to chat with the people you want to talk to most.

You will also want to decide what you are going to wear for the event. Select an outfit and shoes and test them out. Are they comfortable? Do you look professional? Will you be able to stand for long periods of time in the outfit you have chosen? Test it out! There is nothing worse than showing up to an event and realizing your shoes hurt your feet, your top hangs too low, or you keep tripping over your pants.

And lastly, you will want to get prepared. Begin boxing up everything you need for the day of the event and some of the extras, like pens, paper, rubber bands, staplers, hot glue guns, scissors, paper clips, medicine, even sewing kits! You would be surprised at the many little problems that can pop up during the event. Do not be unprepared!



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Your Booth Display

It's now the day of the event, and you arrive early to set up your display. The main thing to remember here is to keep it simple! Being at a trade show with hundreds of vendors is chaotic enough. Keep your booth clean, simple, but eye catching. How will yours stand out among the rest?

You also want to make sure your company name is clearly displayed. You will want to make sure people can see your booth from across down the aisle and find you easily.

How to Start Conversations

The worst place to have a conversation is from behind your booth. It acts as a barrier between you and the attendees and makes it less likely for someone to stop and talk to you.

Standing behind the table also puts your table and booth as the main focus. If they don't see something in a few seconds that catches their eye, they will move on.



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However, if you are the first thing they see, with eye contact and a smile, they are more likely to engage as they walk by. That way, you can start a conversation with them and then lead them to your table once you have peaked their interest.

Once someone makes eye contact with you, they are someone who is willing to have a conversation with you. If someone is passing by your booth and hasn't looked over or is looking away, let them continue to walk past. Chances are they scanned your booth and it was something they weren't interested in. Don't chase people down!

Remember, you are looking for the right people, not the most people. The next part of this is very important. You will want to have an engaging question to ask them to get them talking. It's also important that their answer tells you something about them and their potential interest level with your product.

A conversation with a guest may go something like:

You: Hi there! Are you interested in learning about how to de-clutter and organize your home with ease?



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Guest: Oh my kitchen is a disaster! But I don't know where to start.

You: That is the response most of my clients give me when I meet with them! Luckily I have some solutions that are cost effective and easy for the whole family to get on board with. Have you ever heard of [company name] before?

Guest: No I haven't!

You: That's not a problem. Well I am an Independent Consultant with [company name] and I help busy women, like yourself, organize the cluttered spaces in their home. I know that you mentioned your kitchen is a room you would like to re-organize. What is your biggest problem in the kitchen?

Guest: Well, my husband and I have three kids under 10. So keeping their school work, lunches, paperwork and after school activities organized has been really difficult.

You: Okay great that is definitely something I can help you with. We offer an array of products that will assist you in keeping your kids organized. [Grab catalog and flip to page].



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Here are some examples of what we offer. I'm sorry I didn't catch your name?

Guest: Oh my name is Samantha. You: Great to meet you, I'm Belinda. Well Samantha, now that you've seen some of the products that I offer and how they can meet your needs, I bet you're thinking you could benefit from definitely a few of these products, what do you think?

Guest: Definitely!

You: Well Samantha, the easiest and best way to make sure you get everything you need is by hosting a party with us in your home. That way, I will be able to come see your kitchen and the problems you are facing and better help you select the products that you need. And by hosting a party, your friends will be able to enjoy a fun night out while shopping items they can use in their home as well. And as a thank you for hosting, you will be able to enjoy some free and discounted products to help you with your kitchen de-clutter. How does that sound?

Guest: It sounds great!



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You: Alright Samantha, it sounds like the only thing we need to do now is to schedule your party! I know you may not have your calendar or schedule on you right now, but we will go ahead and book a tentative date just to get you in the calendar. Then, within the next two days, I will call you to confirm the date with you so you can start inviting your friends. I know they will love you for offering this opportunity to them! Here is my calendar and anywhere you see a star is an option for a party. However, the red stars are bonus booking dates, so anyone who books with me on that date will receive an extra special gift from me the night of their party. Which date works best for you?

Guest: Saturday the 19th at 1pm would probably work best for my friends and me.

You: Great! Well Samantha, I am going to give you some information to take home tonight that you can begin sharing with your friends right away. Inside is also my business card. So I can contact you, would you mind jotting down your information here?

Guest: No problem!



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You: Great! Also Samantha, don't forget to fill out a ballot for a chance to win our most popular product _____. And like I mentioned, I will follow-up with you within the next day two days. How does that sound?

Guest: It sounds great thank you. You: Well Samantha, I am so excited to get together with you and your friends on the 19th. I know you and your kitchen will be happy! Enjoy the rest of the show!

Sales, Bookings OR Leads

In the script example above, you should notice on crucial point. That the Consultant only offered one service: the party.

Over the years, I have discovered there is a key ingredient to creating success, and that is deciding on your purpose/goal for that particular event.

If your goal is to get bookings, then don't focus on selling product.

Concentrate on engaging people so that you get bookings. That means you'd most likely have just display product and only a small amount of product to sell.



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Your focus will be on creating an urgency to book a party with you, perhaps with a Book Today special.

If your goal is to earn enough to pay for the booth as you expand your contacts, you'll want to focus on selling product. You'll experience the best results if instead of bringing along your catalog or a variety of items, you offer a specific Show Special.

A Show Special is a particular item or bundle of items that you're highlighting for that particular event. You'll have a supply of this to sell cash-and-carry to people who visit your booth.

If your goal is recruiting, make a gift basket that goes to a new team member and make sure all your conversations include the message: "I'm looking for people to join me."

Collecting Guest Information

The best and most effective way for you to collect attendee information is through door-prize slips. You will want to make sure at every event that you offer a drawing to win some free product.



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The way they enter that drawing is to fill out a door prize slip.

Be sure your slip requires their first and last name, their telephone number as well as their e-mail. It's also important to offer a checklist:

- I am interested in becoming a customer and purchasing the product
- I am interested in hosting a party and earning free and discounted products
- I am interested in starting a business and earning an income

This way, when you connect with your leads after the event, you will know what aspect of your business they are interested in learning more about.

Tip: When driving people to your draw prize slips, never say "Would you mind filling out this information sheet?" or "Would you like to give me your e-mail?" Instead say something like, "Would you like a chance to win a free gift?" The difference is, one question gives them the opportunity to say no, while the second one will provides you an automatic yes!



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Following Up With Guests

Following up with your leads from your door prize slips is one of the most important things you absolutely cannot miss.

As soon as you come home from the event, it's important to go through your door-prize slips and separate your leads by their interest.

You will then want to make contacting them in a timely manner a priority.

The first calls you should make are to prospective team members who are interested in the business, the second calls to people who are interested in booking a party and the last set of calls to the leads you collected who are interested in becoming your customers.

When speaking with them, remind them who you were, what company you represent and what they had mentioned they were interested in. Remember, they most likely spoke to a variety of vendors at the event and may have already started receiving calls or e-mails from them! This is another reason it is important to follow-up in a timely manner, before they become too overwhelmed.