

ON THE STAND STAFF TRAINING

Selecting Your Staff

Each member of your team should have:

- Enthusiasm
- Positive attitude
- Professionalism
- Eagerness
- Energy
- Determination
- Resilience



These personal qualities are the most important but are the most difficult to train people to have if they are missing. However you can provide staff with information and upgrade their knowledge, skills and techniques in your training before the show. In addition you can ensure there are experts on hand to give more detailed or technical advice to visitors

The obvious choice might be to select just your sales people to man your stand, however there may be others in your company who could also do a great job for you. You are looking for people who:

- Have the appropriate personal attributes
- Will be able to accept rejection
- Can quickly engage people in conversation
- Want to be at the show

Consider your receptionists, customer service staff and telesales people, even your credit controllers. They are experienced at speaking to customers and they often have to deal with less co-operative people.

- Make it known throughout your organisation that an opportunity exists for non-sales people to be selected to represent the company at the show.
- Make it known that being selected for the stand team is highly valued by the organisation and is a form of recognition for the employee's contribution to the company
- Ensure that selection is likely to be seen more as a reward rather than as a duty
- Monitor which staff get the most leads and which get the least leads at each show
- Identify the reasons for the high/low performance
- Focus on the areas that are most challenging in the training

Training

You will want to include:

- Positive thinking
- Resilience
- Proactivity

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The power of positive thinking is proven. Some people always see the glass half empty and some always see it half full. You have to engender the half full approach in those who are on your stand.

The ability to deal with rejection and bounce back is crucial. Introduce them to reverse psychology whereby you use the ratio of rejection to success as a positive. Encourage them to count the rejections knowing that they contribute towards success.

It is not enough for your staff to be on the stand. They have to be proactive. They must approach the visitors.

The Successful Encounter

There are four stages to a successful encounter:

1. Approach
2. Engage
3. Secure
4. Follow up

Each of the stages has to be successfully executed in its own right and should lead smoothly to the next stage. If any one stage is poorly executed, it will negatively impact on the outcome. The whole encounter should be seamless as far as the visitor is concerned.

Visitors fall broadly into three main categories:

1. The Really Interested

They approach your stand. They stop at your stand. They have come to find you because they are interested in your products or services. They might even already be one of your customers.

2. The Curious

They pause a moment and look as they walk past. It may be that the stand or something on it that has caught their eye. They are open and interested to find out more.

3. The Don't Want to Knows

They walk past without breaking their pace or turning their heads. They often avert their eyes; look down or even away from the stand staff. They make every effort to avoid any contact with you. However, they are at the show, therefore, must be a potential customer.

Approach

Your staff has to be able to approach all three groups. Most people are comfortable with approaching the Really Interested and the Curious and are wary of the Don't Want to Knows. A very simple good morning, good afternoon or hello invariably gets a courteous response and can lead swiftly to a question.

Some examples of conversation starters are:

- Do you use (product/service)?
- What do you know about (product/service)?

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- What type of (product/service) are you using at the moment?
- Have you seen our new (product/service)?
- When do you use (product/service)?
- Are you planning to use a (product/service) in the future?
- When are you next planning to use (product/service)?

Do not use conversations starters that could provoke a negative reaction:

- Can I help you?
- What are you here for?
- Who are you?

It is the Don't Want to Knows who represent great opportunity and potentially, a huge loss if you don't get to talk to them. Emphasise to your staff:

- They must not make assumptions
- People who hurry past may still be interested in your product or service
- If they are visitors to the show they are potential customers
- They have to gain their attention in a couple of seconds

If you can build into your offering a 'hook' of some kind, you can use it in the approach. The more unusual the 'hook' the better it is. Your hook is your WIIFM (What's in it for me)

- Giveaways
 - "You look as if you could use a"
 - "Can I give you something absolutely free?"
- Competitions/Prize draws
 - "How would you like a ... well all you have to do is enter this competition"
 - "An investment of barely a minute could win you a....."
 - "If you give me a few details I'll give you a chance of winning"
- Demonstrations
 - "We have something fantastic to show you"
 - "Would you like to see...?"
- Refreshment on the Stand
 - "Would you like a glass of water?"
 - "Can I tempt you to a....?"
 - "You look as if you might like a"

If you are going to have a prize of any kind, make sure it is attractive and will be seen as an incentive for the visitor to stop and engage in conversation

Over time, you can build up and refine your own list of approaches that work, both by identifying the ones you have used and also the ones that have worked on you.

Examples of some slightly 'wackier' opening lines that have been successful:

- Prize in Draw - Driving a Ferrari
"You look like a man/woman who would like to drive a Ferrari" or "You look like a man/woman who should be driving a Ferrari"

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- Prize in Draw – Hotel break for two
“How would you like a weekend away in a luxury hotel – not with me of course, but I am sure there’s someone you’d like to take”
- Giveaway
“This is the that will undoubtedly change your life”
“This is the that you can never find when you need one”

Engage

Once the hook has worked, you must engage in conversation and determine their needs by effective questioning.

If the visitor is not the person to talk to about your product or service, it is vital that the opportunity is not lost. Your staff must be alert and find out who would be the right person to talk to in their organisation. People will frequently give you a contact name.

At this stage open questions should be used to extract information but the depth of probing will depend upon your objectives and the type of information you require.

- Be succinct, energetic and enthusiastic. There is nothing more engaging than someone who really believes in their product/service
- Focus on the features and benefits of the product/service
- You could use demonstration, illustrate using graphics, dismantle and reassemble a product
- Utilise technical support to explain the intricacies
- If they ask for more information respond with a question, “What else would you like to know?” Invariably they will ask about only one facet, which enables you to move quickly to the secure stage

Secure

Having already established a rapport, identified needs and collected some of the information required it is essential to:

- Capture all the necessary details
- Record information correctly and legibly
- Secure agreement to a follow up action

Securing means the action is confirmed, understood and agreed by both parties and that there is a commitment to a time frame for:

- Visit (you to them)
- Visit (them to you)
- Telephone contact
- Email contact
- Send literature/quote/sample/testimonials etc.

It is important that the commitment is met so be sure to under promise and over deliver.

Finally, your staff should always thank the visitor for taking the time to talk to them.

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The most common failings:

1. No approach made.
2. Engaged in conversation but;
 - The visitor details are not taken
 - The visitor is given a business card or a brochure but their details are still not taken
 - The visitor is not asked if they know of anyone else who may be interested
3. The 'hook' worked but you get nothing in return i.e. the visitor was attracted to your stand or took your giveaway but you didn't get their details in return.