

Effective Show Presentations

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The world's top chefs all know the real secret of a successful dish is in its presentation. The same holds true for marketers, salespeople and consultants. Balancing all the show logistics often means that the preparation of a good booth presentation gets left to chance. The result- they are either too long or too short, they are either too comprehensive or provide scarcely enough information for the prospect to make a decision.

Once you have effectively approached a visitor and gathered information that will tell you who they are and how you should spend your time with them, it's time to make a decision. If they are qualified for further information



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about your products or services then you go on to make a presentation. If they are not, disengage. This sounds cold and heartless, but at a show you have to be extremely careful how you spend your time.

Maintain Your Focus

Making presentations to people who have no use for your product or service is a waste of time. Making presentations to people without having enough information to know how to make that presentation is also a waste of your valuable time.

If you decide to disengage then reread *The Art of Engaging and Disengaging Prospects at a Show*, CEIR report MC35. If you are ready to make the presentation – read on.

In your initial planning you established an objective for your exhibit. Your objective is a guide that keeps you focused throughout every stage of your show participation. Moreover, it will dictate the look of the booth presentation. You have to be prepared to be flexible and discuss other products or benefits as dictated by your prospects needs, but a well planned presentation helps you focus on your reason for exhibiting in the first place.

Good Time Management Practices

The key to an effective booth presentation is to remember that a show is a show. It's big, it's noisy, it's exciting – a place to capture a visitor's interest, but generally not the best place for a detailed discussion. For that, you will need the peace and quiet of a follow-up visit.

Because time is at a premium your presentation should be only long enough to achieve your objectives. You should attempt to work out a presentation which works into your time constraints. A presentation which attempts to tell the prospect the whole story is overdoing it. You don't have to cover everything – merely whet the prospect's appetite. A good presentation should take an average of 5-7 minutes. It doesn't sound like much time but a well-structured presentation can cover a lot of ground in a short time.

Put too much information into your presentation and it only confuses your prospect. Psychologists tell us the human brain can remember seven pieces of information at one time. Tell them too much, and, their chances of remembering it all are slim. Tell them the key elements and leave them wanting more in a follow up visit, and you have done your job.

Preparing Your Presentation

Remember the old newspaper formula "tell them what you are going to tell them, tell them and tell them what you have just told them." It's the key function of the three parts to an effective presentation – the opening, the body and the close.

1. The Opening- "Tell Them What You Are Going To Tell Them"

The opening will be a graceful bridge from qualifying into the actual presentation. It also focuses the visitor on the need your product or service can meet. The bridge is important because you want to keep the prospect moving along with you. The bridge could be as simple as "Let me take a moment to show how our widget will help you accomplish the economies you are looking for."

During the qualifying process, you will have established the visitor's need – so restate it. The more you can organize information for them the better.

Visiting a show is difficult and visitors often suffer from information overload. Don't add to the overload. Recognize it and help them by putting things into neat packages. You might say "I would also like to show you how our widget will take care of your other concerns which are product compatibility and ongoing maintenance."

The last part of the opening is to let them know the next steps. This ensures that you are on a level playing field and there are no misunderstandings. A statement like, "I hope that once you see a few of the advantages of our widgets we will be able to get together after the show for a more detailed presentation" will keep you both on track.

You have just told the prospect what you are going to tell them. You have also created the outline for the body of your presentation.

2. The Body - "Tell Them"

The body of your presentation is made up of the individual concerns that your product or service can solve for this prospect. You will be dealing with one concern at a time because it's easier for your prospect to focus, it doesn't jump around and it has a logical flow. Remember, your prospect doesn't have the advantage of an instant replay.

Each concern is dealt with by stating the feature first followed quickly by the benefit (what the feature will do for the prospect). Then the benefit is followed by a quick proof statement. It goes something like this, "Our kryptonite based (feature) widget will help you achieve the economies you are looking for (benefit). We have had considerable success with other manufacturers in your industry and have been able to show them as much as a 53% decrease in costs (proof)."

Then confirm that you have made the point by asking the prospect, "How does that sound?"

By constantly looking for reinforcement and asking questions like this you keep the prospect involved and ensure the proofs were meaningful.

If the customer agrees, bridge to the next area of their concern with a simple statement like, "Now let me deal with the compatibility issue."

By handling one concern at a time you avoid the danger of having your prospect becoming bogged down in detail. If you have done your job well, a post show meeting can be arranged where you will spend the proper amount of time needed to review all the details.

3. The Close - "Tell Them What You Have Just Told Them"

If you handle it properly, your closing will setup a number of important steps. It confirms that the prospect is interested, it sets the tone for some follow-up activities and helps you disengage.

The close starts with a quick review of the prospect's concerns and the features and benefits of your products and services. The proofs are not necessary. Repetition is a key learning principle so don't worry about the prospect objecting. In fact it will probably be quite the opposite. Your summary puts your whole discussion into a nice package and makes it easy for the prospect to make a decision. For example, "I've shown you how our new widget effectively handles the problem of compatibility and we have discussed the requirements for on-going maintenance." The next step - ask for a commitment. The prospect is prepared because you took the time to prepare them. Asking for a commitment is a great way to ease into an effective disengagement with the prospect by saying, "The next step is for us to schedule a time to get together to re-examine the whole picture. When would be a good time to do that?"

And the final move is leave the prospect with a good feeling about you and the relationship you have just initiated like, "I am looking forward to meeting you on the 15th. It has been great meeting you and I hope you enjoy the rest of the show." You are now free to look for another prospect.

An effective show presentation is the heart of the sales interaction at a show. Good planning, effective time management and your flexibility will make your presentations direct, meaningful and most of all, profitable.

Effective Show Presentations – Summary of the Steps

The Opening – Tell Them What You Are Going To Tell Them

- Bridge
- Address their concerns
- The next steps

The Body – Tell Them

- For each concern
 - The feature
 - The benefit
 - The proof
 - Confirm
 - Bridge to next concern

The Close – Tell Them What You Have Just Told Them

- Summarize
- The next steps
- Disengage

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