

Tradeshow Tips ~ Don't tell them, show them!

If you want people to know you're funny, the saying goes, you don't tell them that you're hysterical. You tell them a joke.

There's some wisdom in that, wisdom that could come in handy when you're planning your next tradeshow exhibit. We spend a lot of time focusing on what we should tell attendees: how to point out the many benefits of our goods and services, what differentiates us from the other companies in the same market.

What we fail to do, often is SHOW them. One of the real beauties of the tradeshow environment is it's the only place to do direct face-to-face marketing. Your customers don't have to take your word on the fact that your product is amazing, more efficient, stronger, or better in any number of ways. You can show them.

Three of the best ways to showcase your products:

- **Hands-on demonstrations:** Especially popular as the demographic of attendees skews younger, hands-on demonstrations allow attendees to try out products for themselves. Making a tangible connection with your product is an integral part of the buying process for more than a few people.
- **Samples:** Too often we see inch-sized squares of fabric or miniscule paint chips given away as samples at shows. If you're going to give away a sample, make it large enough that people can interact with it and make a valid judgment based upon it. Be realistic: having two sizes (one larger, one traditional) can allow you to offer the larger sized samples only to those prospects who truly seem interested in your products.
- **Spontaneous demos:** Every member of your booth staff should be able to spontaneously present your products to the attendees. There's nothing worse than telling an interested buyer to come back "later this afternoon" if they want to see the product in action.

Many thanks to Susan Friedmann, CSP, The Tradeshow Coach, Lake Placid, NY, speaker, author and consultant with exhibitors, show organizers, and meeting planners, who contributed the creative ideas.

