



Trade Show Marketing and Communications

A Step-by-Step Guide to Successful Trade Show Execution

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1. Marketing Strategy

Your brand is your most important asset. Once you have decided to participate and exhibit at a trade show, it is very important to create a marketing strategy to promote your brand both leading up to and during the event. Having a marketing strategy in place will allow you to take steps to increase your profile at an earlier stage and differentiate yourself from competitors. You want to give attendees a reason to visit your booth and do business with you at the event.

Fact	Attendees are more receptive and engaged with marketing messages at special events, increasing the likelihood of short term marketing at trade shows successfully converting to sustained brand recognition and value. <i>Source: CEIR</i>
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1. What are your objectives? Who is your target audience?

Common objectives include increasing brand and product awareness, expanding market presence, meeting new clients, researching industry trends, launching or testing a new product, and maintaining relationships with existing clients and partners. Defining your target audience will ensure a more tailored and efficient strategy.

2. What is your budget?

Marketing is just as important as participating at the event and should be included as part of the overall budget. If exhibiting internationally, be mindful that some marketing costs may be incurred overseas and will be affected by foreign exchange rates.

3. How will you execute the strategy? Who is responsible for leading and following up on the strategy?

The strategy must then be continually monitored and each marketing activity recorded and evaluated on outcomes achieved and lessons learned. Establishing a timeline for execution is critical to stay on track.

4. What marketing tools will you use?

COMMON MARKETING METHODS

- *Direct marketing to consumers*
- *Individual appointments and meetings*
- *Advertising and listing in event directories*
- *Media and public relations packages*
- *Marketing and sponsorship of events and functions at the trade show.*

2. Canada Brand

Canada Brand is an AAFC branding initiative designed to leverage Canada's international image to increase the sales of Canadian food and agricultural products and services. Qualified exporters can take advantage of free branding tools and market research.



3. Social Media Tools

Effective use of social media can boost your trade show strategy by providing real-time client interaction and tailored content for your target audience. It can provide attendees with new channels to learn about, communicate and recommend your company and products.

Businesses and consumers are increasingly incorporating social media as part of their marketing strategy to communicate, share and promote their brand, services and products. Popular tools include Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, FourSquare, Flickr, QR codes, YouTube and the up-and-coming Google Plus.

Fact

“Net promoters”, those who are likely to recommend a product or brand to others, make up approximately one third of trade show attendees. *Source: CEIR, 2007*

4. Resources

[Marketing Basics](#) - Canada Business

[Canada Brand](#) – AAFC

[Centre for Exhibition Industry Research \(CEIR\)](#)

LEVERAGING SOCIAL MEDIA



- *Decide on the best social media tools to reach your target audience. Find out what social media tools and online forums they are using.*
- *Look into what social media tools trade show organizers are using and connect with them*
- *Develop engaging and innovative content to differentiate yourself from the crowd.*
- *Ensure that the social media tools for sharing and embedding your content are displayed prominently, strategically located, and easy to access whether it is on promotional material or on your Web site.*
- *Regularly track and monitor the content viewed and feedback received through social media. Your clients are your extended sales force and acknowledging their feedback can help further develop and improve your business.*
- *Use social media tools to interact with existing and prospective clients. Engage clients to help share your story about who you are as a business and a brand. Remember, social media is supposed to be social!*