

Effective Exhibit Design

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

A first impression is largely made up of a combination of an experience and the environment in which it happens. How important is a good first impression? Very. According to some psychology reports, it's almost impossible to overcome a bad first impression.

The exhibit design should reflect your company's goals and objectives for the show, while also making an unforgettable positive first impression.

OPEN SPACE

Having an open, inviting space makes your exhibit, company and brand stand out from the crowd. Eliminating barriers that stop people from coming in or leaving is a great way to attract potential customers. Attendees want to feel free to walk in and out of the exhibit, not be trapped.

STAND OUT FROM THE CROWD

You are competing with hundreds of other companies selling the same types of products and services on the show floor. Your design should showcase your company's products in an appealing way. With only a few seconds to sell your brand, clear and concise graphics that are not overwhelming are a must if you want to appeal to potential prospects.

Make sure all of your reps are present to make eye contact and invite visitors into the exhibit to discuss their goals. Be attentive and let them feel that they are not only welcome, but important. Above all, listen carefully to what they have to say and repeat their goals to ensure they know you're listening. Good customer service gets remembered.

EXPERIENTIAL MARKETING

Experiential marketing is the art and science of forming memorable experiences and emotional connections with your audience; it generates excitement and brand loyalty which can influence purchase decisions. The idea is to immerse a potential client in the benefits of the goods or services a company provides while offering positive stimuli. Experiential marketing can include:

Visual cues: include graphics, lighting and animation. This can refer to the spatial and physical design of a room or location, such as in a trade show display or museum exhibit.

Audial cues: include sounds that can cause positive or negative reactions; think of waking up to gentle bird song versus a siren.

Tactile cues: include touch and haptic (vibration) responses.

Olfactive cue: example could be the smell of warm cookies and the positive reaction elicited by it, or the negative reaction someone might have, say, to burnt popcorn.

Gustative cues: include the positive reaction to a sweet or savory taste, versus a negative reaction to a sour or bitter taste.

CASE STUDY FOR A FICTITIOUS BREAD COMPANY: THE SAN FRANCISCO BREAD & GRAIN COMPANY

This case study demonstrates the "If, Then, What" cause and effect, where there is a stimulus and a payoff.

The San Francisco Bread & Grain Company wants to introduce its new line of homestyle sourdough bread at a food show for prospective distributors and customers. Their display is designed to mimic a cozy, Italian family bakery store. The shelves and counters are lined with packaged products on display and "fresh" loaves are laid out on cooling racks behind the counter. Visitors are offered free samples of warm, "fresh from the oven" sourdough bread. A toasting device (disguised as a brick oven) warms the bread and emits the unmistakable aroma of baking bread. Visitors are provided with a pre-packaged mini sourdough loaf to leave with.

Attractive, inviting and simple booths are more effective at drawing attention to your exhibit. Keep your goals and objectives in mind when designing the exhibit because no matter what show you are exhibiting in, your booth should help your company achieve the desired goals.