

Whether your organization is planning for a 10' by 10' booth or a large 40' by 50' trade show exhibit space, training the staff who will be manning the booth during the show itself is of the utmost importance. While the importance of the booth itself is important in attracting customers and prospects, your presence and demeanor can make or break that new prospective business. You have the unique opportunity to enhance your organization's return on investment by following 7 trade show staff etiquette tips.



01 Greetings and Open Body Language

Attendees are looking at the exhibit staff for a reason to spend time at your booth. After being initially drawn in by the booth or brand itself, your staff is the reason they will stay or go. The following body language tips will help convey a professional and approachable demeanor:

- Stand up and greet attendees in front of the booth
- If seats are needed, use tall stools that create contact at standing eye level
- Smile and make eye contact with attendees from all directions
- Speak with trade show attendees, not colleagues
- Sit down only if you are with a client who also wants to sit
- Do not cross arms or legs, keep hands out of pockets
- Avoid fidgeting and leaning against booth walls and furniture
- Be mindful of other people in the booth and near your space
- Do not enter the space of another exhibitor
- Be enthusiastic, confident, and polite
- Thank attendees for spending time at your booth when they arrive and leave



Though simple, these basic body language tips offer an approachable and professional atmosphere that will encourage prospects to visit—and stay in—your booth.

02 Staff Roles and Sales Script



Trade show booth staff should have the expertise to convey important company information to attendees. Some companies even provide staff with a customizable greeting and sales script, so each member of the team is prepared to deliver a consistent, polished, and effective message to attendees.

Beyond the sales script or elevator pitch, company representatives in a trade show booth should be prepared to answer basic questions or know where to obtain more information. The booth should also always be managed by at least one person who has that expertise and/or authority, and that person should be accessible to supporting staff and attendees at all time.

03 Attendee Engagement

People attend trade shows for a reason, so it is important for booth staff to quickly introduce themselves and ask attendees questions quickly to find out if they can help them in any way. This is where a greeting or introduction script can come in handy, but such a script is only effective if booth staff use it to engage attendees.

Most of the people attending a trade show have some relevant reason to learn more about your products and services, so make sure that your staff offers them a brief overview from the script and has the skills to continue the conversation and engaging the prospect from there. Staff should be prepared to ask open-ended questions to build a rapport with attendees and determine needs.



04 No Staff Food or Beverages



This etiquette rule should simply be a part of greetings and body language, but unfortunately, because of its abundance at trade shows, it deserves its own category. One of the most common trade show booth etiquette violations occurs when food and drink are kept in the booth for the staff's personal consumption. Trade show days are long; certainly, your staff should have access to snacks and water. But those snacks and drinks should not be consumed in the booth or left visible to trade show attendees.

It is easy to spot napkins, wrappers, plastic bottles and other items that are not part of the booth. It may sound elementary, but reminding booth staff to avoid eating, drinking, and chewing gum within the booth can be the difference between looking professional or appearing like slob. To avoid this, some trade show exhibitors choose to issue their staff branded refillable water bottles, which can be a great option for ensuring well-hydrated and professional looking staff.

05 Provide Adequate Staffing



Trade show staff is usually responsible for booth setup or at least putting the final touches on a larger, constructed booth, and they should arrive early enough to make sure that all materials are properly displayed and ready for show attendees as soon as the exhibits open. Managers should staff the booth adequately to permit attendees easy access to staff and to consider needs for lunch and/or other breaks without overwhelming the booth space with company employees.

It is also extremely important to highlight the show hours and to make sure that company representation remains in the booth through the completion of the scheduled hours. It is amazing the number of booths where staff will disappear 15, 30, even 45 minutes before the end of a show missing the opportunity to interact with prospects and giving off an unprofessional image.

06 Adhere to Staff Dress Code

Attire is something that differs from organization to organization. Some companies require corporate or business casual apparel (e.g., polo shirts, sports coats, dress shirts, etc.) while others provide staff with branded apparel or a uniform. Even others simply give employees some direction on personal attire with colors and appropriate clothing style.

Professional and uniform attire helps to reinforce trade show booth themes and should also be perceived as respectful of the organizers and attendees of the show itself. The dress code should also easily distinguish booth staff from attendees and include name tags.



07 Booth Setup and Maintenance



Event managers typically direct trade show booth staff to store the unattractive boxes and supplies in hidden spots such as behind a trade show wall, under a fully skirted table, or in a location outside the exhibit area where additional supplies are stored.

It is important that the booth space always appears well maintained (including the floor) and trash should not be anywhere within view. Trade show etiquette calls for booth staff to be mindful of this rule throughout the entire day.

Why Your Trade Show Could Fail

We hope these suggestions will help you to enjoy tremendous success at the Senior Expo!

A big "Thank you" to Bill Steiner, from Bug Tussle Wireless, for compiling this information for us!