

TEN EASY WAYS TO CREATE A BUZZ

What can you do to get attendees to talk about and notice you on the trade show floor? How can you get them thinking about you before they even see your booth? What's the next step after the great pre-show mailer or industry magazine ad? Here are some ideas to get you thinking of how you can be the talk of the show.

1. Have the coolest giveaway on the floor. This means the latest and greatest promo item in the book – better yet, before it hits the catalog! Ask your premium vendor what is coming down the pike or what will make a big splash at your next event. Be sure to print your company or product name, a toll-free number, and your website on it. And when the masses show up to get one, have a few questions ready for them and find out if they 1) Have a need, 2) Have the authority to buy, and 3) Can afford you or your product!
2. Give away something BIG. A Cruise, Airfare, one-year car lease, dinner certificate, hotel voucher, free product, or other big prize. Promote it before the show and get the word out at the show. You will be flooded with visitors – now you can qualify them and find out who needs and can afford your products and services.
3. Put a celebrity in your booth. Pay a sports, TV, movie, or industry star to sit in your booth and talk to attendees, sign books or photos, and talk about your company and products. Some will even do this for a donation to their favorite charity so you get a double bang for your company's bucks!
4. Have the best party or reception at the show. If you have the best party or attendee reception, the word will spread. This can take a few years to settle in people's mind but they will get used to hunting your booth down and begging for a ticket. Be sure to make them work for the tickets and DON'T give them to exhibitors and show staff unless they are customers! Now you have to train your staff to concentrate on relationship building and effective networking before the event!
5. Put a teaser on the floor. Use floor stickers (typically a paid sponsorship to Show Management) to lead people to your booth. Tell them a little about your company, your product, or your people. Footprints, product-related icons, or simple words on arrows. Everyone looks down once in a while – don't miss this opportunity!
6. Put protesters outside. Dress local talent as hippies, union protesters, or company staff and have them parade signs with company information on them near the hall (you must be on public property – clear this with the local police before attempting). "COMPANY NAME Too Fair to Clients", "COMPANY NAME Prices Too Low", "COMPANY NAME unfair to Competition"
7. Launch a new product. But it better be a good one! Don't simply put a new and improved sticker on your old product – people come to trade shows to see the new, innovative, and different. If you have it, show it off. Demo it, have techs working on it, or have Juice Newton sing about it. But please, have it there – not a photo,

drawing, or “coming soon” announcement. If it’s too big, stream a movie of it from back in the office via internet connection and have staff there to talk to potential customers about it.

8. Bring your CEO to the show. And make him accessible to attendees for questions, answers, and explanations about your products and services. And keep him busy while he’s there. Pack his day with client meetings, dinners, and lunches so his time is well spent and he gets a feel for what you hear at every show – and how he needs to change the company!
9. Wear the funkiest uniform on the show floor. Bright colored shoes that match your company logo, hand painted ties, fun hats, boutonnieres that squirt water – whatever is appropriate (read that word again) for your industry, show, and (most importantly) your company. Image is everything but people respond to fun.
10. Take over the shuttle busses. Logo the busses, put staff on them, provide bottled water, snack bars, or music on them to make the attendees’ commute to and from the show more enjoyable. But be sure to tell them to stop by the booth to say hello and see the latest and greatest stuff in the industry.

These are simple ideas that should get you thinking of ways to beat your competition to the punch, top your previous year’s effort, and put your name and products in front of more people than ever. Bags carry your logo around the show but anyone can do that. Make yours the best and brightest bag in the show!

Bob Thomas, CME is Founder and President of Exhibit and Event Management – an exhibit management and consulting company based in Columbus Ohio. He is also Past Chairman of the Board of Directors for the Trade Show Exhibitors Association and has been managing trade show and marketing exhibits for more than 25 years.

Bob Thomas, CME
Exhibit and Event Management
3227 Mountview Road
Columbus OH 43221
614.395.3341
BobThomas@exhibitmanagement.com