

Attract and Keep Your Hottest Prospects at Your Booth

By Kare Anderson

What are the biggest mistakes many exhibitors make?

- Attendees rarely see an exhibitor's main benefit as the most prominently displayed message on a booth or in promotional materials or hear it expressed by exhibit staff. Exhibitors inadvertently hide their biggest benefit.
- Exhibits are often designed to most prominently display the product or company name.
- Staff offers drawings or giveaways that don't relate to their main, differentiating benefit.
- Staff's icebreaker comments might be general and not relevant to the reason to buy: ("Having a good time?" "Want a free . . .?")
- Those who staff exhibits often do not get the opportunity to be involved in the wording or design of their exhibit or promotional materials. They must state the main benefits verbally to attendees in a brief, involving way that pulls attendees instead of turning them off. Benefits rarely "jump out" at attendees.
- When companies don't make their main benefit easy to see and hear quickly, attendees must be deeply motivated to look and ask for the essential information they want.
- Credible benefit statements initiate a sale. A credible brand name then reinforces the reason to buy, not the other way around. Good benefit statements are vivid and specific, by example and/or comparison.

Passersby are in one of three buying modes:

1. Seeking information to buy a certain kind of product for the first time and trying to select the best product
2. Considering changing vendors if they find a better product
3. "Trolling" – not buying now but seeing what is new for future reference

Or they don't have the budget or need and will never buy.

Serious buyers most want to see and hear information regarding:

1. The main reason to buy at all and, if they do buy,

2. The main reason they should buy from you over your closest competitors, as they see them.

Some techniques, once they're in the booth:

- Hand the person a gift (preferably one that does not prominently display your company or product name) while asking them: "May I give you this small gift for taking the time to answer questions for me?"
- Then ask, "What do you like best about our product or (service)?" Whatever is said aloud is then believed more deeply by the speaker.
- Be a complete and supportive listener as they explain. Give uninterrupted eye contact, nod, and offer other responsive gestures that are natural for you.
- When they have finished, ask, "Tell me more about that." As they elaborate, they move the topic closer to the top of their mind, and they also become more:

Articulate and vivid

Deeply believing in the reasons they've stated for liking your product

The result? You've moved them closer to being fervent and articulate fans. They are more likely to talk themselves closer to a sale and voluntarily tell others why they like your product.