

Twenty-one Ways to Attract and Serve Serious Buyers at Your Exhibit

by Kare Anderson

1. Draft and memorize a one-to-two sentence top "differentiating benefit" statement, relative to your two closest competitors and without denigrating the competition.
2. The specific detail ("This is the product with the fewest parts to ever need replacement") proves the general benefit. The general statement ("We are the people who care") is less credible and less memorable. When you start with the specific benefit instead of building up to it with general background, attendees will listen sooner and longer.
3. Multiply attendees' number of positive exposures to your benefit in everything you say, display, point at, mail, stand near, or offer.
4. Be able to reduce that benefit to its essence in one vivid phrase or sentence.
5. Make your phrase sufficiently interesting and brief so attendees feel they're in charge. They'll be more likely to stay and ask enough questions so you can recognize their main interests, level of knowledge, hot buttons and how they are making their decisions.
6. Offer "real life" situational examples. Cite diverse customers' experiences – what your customers actually said.
7. Give no more than three supportive benefits.
8. Express each supportive benefit like a headline, a "billboard message" of no more than five to eight words.
9. Use everyday, non-jargon and non-industry-specific language, even if the attendees might know the jargon.
10. The most credible proof of your benefits are the third-party endorsements of three diverse customers who have little else in common other than their adoration of your product and their similarity with your prospect.
11. Display a satisfied client's quotes under each benefit on the booth and in promotional material – preferably in a different color and typeface. Their endorsements are most credible and their words more memorable when they relate to a specific situation, change, vivid contrast, or improvement.
12. Yes! Remove all graphics and words in the booth and materials that do not relate to either the main benefit and (not more than three) supportive benefits, so attendees will be able to take in the information within 12-15 seconds (their average "pause-to-scan" time in such conditions).
13. Display your main point and supportive points on the booth above the tops of the heads of the booth staff and attendees, so views are not blocked.
14. Booth visuals and words should guide attendees' eyes down a "path" from one message to the next.
15. Avoid opening references to weather, "Having fun?," freebies, drawings, or other topics not benefit-related.
16. Verbally and visually make a "Conference Offer" of more information, a time-limited or bundled product order price, a consultation, or other vivid benefit to move them closer to a sale.

17. Attendees' attention span is shortened if you wear patterned or very detailed clothing or accessories (pin, necklace, tie, earrings) or other busy "body signage," especially on the upper half of your body.
18. When an attendee knows your product (and you know they are familiar with it):
 - a. 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?"
 - b. Then ask, "What do you like best about our product or (service)?" Whatever is said aloud is then believed more deeply by the speaker.
 - c. Be a complete and supportive listener as they explain. Give uninterrupted eye contact, nod, and offer other responsive gestures that are natural for you.
 - d. 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.
19. When you first meet a prospect, find the quality in them you can most like and admire. Then keep that quality uppermost in your mind as you talk with them. You are more likely to bring out that aspect of their personality when they are around you and less likely to react to their behaviors that irritate or otherwise bother you.
20. When you stand opposite someone, you are more likely to literally oppose them. Instead, "sidle" whenever possible. When standing side-by-side, people tend to feel more comfortable with each other, themselves and their surroundings. They listen sooner and longer and are more inclined to agree with each other.
21. Learn how get people to remember what you say, even if they are not trying to.

Closing Summary Tip:

Continuously nurture your best prospects, seeding in their minds your main and vividly stated differentiating benefit . Make every aspect of your behavior, booth, and material repeat, reflect, and reinforce that benefit before, during, and – most important – right after the conference, and then later, again and again to your hottest prospects.