

HMA VIEWPOINT

Successful trade show etiquette.



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You've spent a lot of time and money creating your trade booth, transporting it to a show and staffing it. You can ensure your hard work hasn't gone to waste by following these basic ABCs of Trade Show Etiquette.

A is for Attitude, Answers and Appearance

You may have gotten an attendee to enter your booth, but your attitude will make sure they want to spend time there. Your attitude should be one of a gracious host who is happy to have guests. You are there to personally engage with attendees, not to constantly check your phone or chat with your fellow employees. Greet the 1st and 100th visitor with the same enthusiasm. Sincerely thank attendees for spending time at your booth when they leave. Basic politeness should also extend to how you interact with your coworkers. Even, or maybe especially, in the age of social media, quality face-to-face time still makes the biggest impression.

You should be prepared to answer basic questions or know where to get more information if needed. Go over a brief "script" to make sure everyone is on the same page, especially about new items you want to highlight. There should always be someone present who has the authority to handle special requests and the expertise to handle more in-depth questions.

Having a professional appearance applies both to you and to the booth. Names on IDs must be visible. A sloppy array of food wrappers, empty coffee cups, napkins and other trash will only distract from your products. The easiest way to avoid this is to avoid eating and drinking within the booth or to at least clean up right away should there not be enough time to eat in the food court.

B is for Body Language, Branding and (Going) Beyond

Body language is just as important as verbal language. Smile and make eye contact. Avoid fidgeting, looking bored or leaning against furniture. Stand up when someone enters your space. If you sit down with someone, stay at eye level. You should always look approachable.

Make sure your company branding stays with any visitors once they leave your booth and exit the show. You should have enough promotional material to provide to everyone who visits your booth. Remember that any negative impressions you leave with attendees will extend to your entire brand.

While it is important to strike all these basic notes, this should not prevent you from going above and beyond these etiquette necessities. After the first day, everyone should have a brief discussion about what went wrong, what went well, and how you can make a booth visit an even better experience the next day.

C is for Conversation, Confidence, and Company Representation

Robots may take jobs in the future, but you shouldn't sound like a robot today. Try to have mindful conversations with attendees that focus on their specific needs.

You should show complete confidence when discussing products. If you have any questions about features, prices or delivery dates, these questions should be answered before the show.

Before and after the show, you should remember you are always a company representative. There is a good chance that attendees could be on the same flights as you to and from the show. You never know who will be listening to your conversations.

By following these ABCs, you can guarantee that your trade show presentation will pay off in terms of your financial investment, effort and time. **HM**



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