



Thinking your career has stalled as the Corporate Trade Show and Exhibits Manager?

Think again!

The person in a corporation who has the job title of Corporate Trade Show Exhibits Manager is most likely viewed and hopefully appreciated by fellow workers and management as a Jack or Jill of all trades and a wearer of many hats. While under the pressure and critical deadlines of the trade show opening day comes through and gets the job done.

The Jacks and Jills who manage trade show exhibits are acutely aware of the skill and knowledge it takes to plan execute and manage a seamless trade show event. The position's potential is rich with many additional opportunities to prosper, advance and, if desired, climb the corporate ladder.

Only by carefully considering and appreciating the uniqueness of the trade show environment can one begin to realize the many fantastic opportunities the medium offers the astute, motivated and intelligent manager. Once realized, accepted and acted upon, today's trade show exhibits manager may simply have to better promote the medium to reach his/her financial and career goals.

Here is an in depth look at those who manage the corporate trade show exhibit function and might feel that they are in need of establishing a loftier vantage point from which to see their future and the future of trade shows in their corporation.

For instance, where else but on the trade show exhibit floor in only three days is it possible for you to:

1. Work side by side with your sales people.
2. Meet and help prospects.
3. Meet and help customers.
4. Work side by side with your top management.
5. Meet the press.
6. Learn more about your products first hand.
7. Witness the various selling techniques of your best sales people.
8. Work side by side with the technical support people.
9. Evaluate the competition.
10. Be accountable for the entire exhibit operation.
11. Be responsible for all details and logistics before, during and after the show.
12. Demonstrate your capabilities in a challenging environment.
13. Work the booth, manage resources and solve problems.
14. Keep the entire effort focused and moving ahead.
15. Build respect for your talents and accomplishments.

16. Stage and manage the pre-show and post show meetings.
17. Represent the corporation to vendors, suppliers and show services.
18. Spend quality time off show hours with top management.
19. Conduct product, people and/or exhibit research.
20. File a post show evaluation with recommendations for improvement.
21. Schedule and manage booth duty rosters.
22. Keep the exhibit clean, organized and fully operational at all times.
23. Build good relations with show management.
24. Develop good working relations with local trade unions.
25. Manage and be responsible for post-show sales lead processing and prospect follow-up.
26. Be exposed to competitors, industry experts and the media.
27. Become known as “The Trade Show Expert.”
28. Consult, manage and help support international trade show efforts.
29. Position the trade show function on the top of marketing and sales activities.
30. Function as the Vice President of Trade Show Marketing and Sales.

Unlike any other job in your corporation, the trade show exhibits manager’s position offers the opportunity to demonstrate advanced skill and management effectiveness. Your results directed decision making excellence, will always impress the toughest critic and help pave the way for advancement, better wages and more responsibilities.

Be both encouraged and motivated to lead the trade show exhibit management function in your company. Turn it into a spectator sport to be admired and respected by everyone who has the opportunity to work with you. When that is accomplished, the top management with who you’ve spent countless hours working side by side at the trade show exhibit will endeavor to find ways to reward, acknowledge and promote you. They’ll know that if you can make the trials and tribulations associated with trade show exhibits look easy and successful, there are many more tasks in the company that could benefit from your management abilities.

Unlike many other functions in the sales, marketing and advertising fields, the trade show is alive, living, flexible and dynamic so it can adjust immediately to the needs and wants of an entire industry. It’s not something like advertising that you design once, print or publish for better or worse as is. The trade show environment is as dynamic as the people who work the booth, attend the show and interact on human levels connecting the desire to learn with the opportunities to teach. And when the show is over, it’s over. The results are clear, justifiable and relative to the generation of leads and making sales, not other somewhat obscure measurement devices or studies that have little immediate influence on selling product today.

In the final analysis, being your company’s trade show manager is almost better than being its President or CEO (except for the big bucks). That’s because your reign authority is viewed for only three days of a trade show and you get to shape and witness how your company is perceived, respected and treated in an environment that represents an entire industry under one roof. And best of all, the event is over and done with and its results are immediate and clear for all to see. The show either reached its goals or failed in some fashion that with improved planning can be fixed the next time around.

There are very few people in your corporation who will not support your quest in making trade shows more accountable, successful and a better contributor to the bottom line. There are also very

few people in your corporation who want your job, (it is way too tough), so it's entirely up to you to take charge and make great things happen.

If you find the need to further justify the time and money invested in trade show exhibits, simply consult with your VP of Sales and compare the cost and effectiveness of a single sales call in the field against a sales call made at a trade show and you'll find more than enough data to support your position.

It is a major challenge for a corporation's marketing and sales managers to want to attack the many opportunities today's trade show offer. It takes a confident trade show exhibits manager to take that challenge and lead the charge towards more accountability, planning and improved results as it relates to selling product to better support the effort.

So before you tire of the travel, politics and hassles of being your corporation's trade show exhibit manager, consider the above for a moment and then ask the question: What other job in the world could I have that afforded me the opportunity to experience business in its purest form, under one roof of a convention center, for only three days while giving me daily access to top management, important prospects, key customers, sales, marketing and technical professionals alike?

Answer: The oldest form of selling the world has known since the ancient bazaar in the village square: Today's trade show.

Peter LoCascio

Trade Show Consultants

www.tradeshowconsultants.com