

How to get the most out of the Home Show

BEFORE THE SHOW:

1. A Home & Garden Show requires considerable advance preparation. You must develop a solid plan and monitor your progress vigilantly. The Home Show is a major investment of time, money and resources.
2. Read the Exhibitor material. Make sure you've ordered electrical (if needed), table(s) and any other products you will need.
3. Make sure you have adequate staff to be at your booth at all times and that they understand the dress code you expect them to follow. You want a unique identity for your booth staff. Matching jackets or shirts will make your representatives easily identifiable. They represent your company and you want to make an outstanding impression. Enclosed are exhibitor wristbands for your staff. If you need more, make sure you order them.
4. Have name tags for your staff. Visitors to the Show like to know who they are talking to about your product or service.
5. Train your exhibit staff before the Home Show. Your staff needs to know what is expected of them.
6. Make sure the people staffing your booth know they are to park on the east side of the Lancaster Event Center. It may seem somewhat inconvenient, but the best parking is reserved for people who are paying to visit the Show and learn about your company.
7. Make sure you have adequate brochures and business cards for the Show. Design forms for filling out prospect information. Consider giveaways to generate attention and a sense of fun. These don't have to be expensive. Pencils, candy or other inexpensive items can do a lot for your booth.
8. Make sure your Show plan is in writing. Otherwise, Murphy's Law (whatever can go wrong, will go wrong) will prevail.
9. Develop a key message for your exhibit. If you are selling a specific product, make sure everyone knows the advantages to dealing with your company. If you have a "green" product, let them know it.
10. Design an open, inviting booth. An open booth design, with no tables obstructing access, invites attendees to come in. Have interesting graphics to draw people's attention.
11. Advertise your Show participation. In newspaper, radio or TV, use tag lines such as "See us at booth 15 at the Nebraska Builders Home & Garden Show."

DURING THE HOME SHOW:

1. Set up a rotating booth schedule for your staff. They need breaks for lunch and relaxing.
2. Studies show that of all the people who might stop and talk with you at your booth, 20% will not wait to talk to a company representative if they are busy, 15% will only wait 30 seconds, 40% will wait one minute and 25% will wait 3 minutes. What is their reasoning for not waiting? First, they may think they will come back and visit when it's not busy (which might not happen). Secondly, there may be similar products in the other aisle. Third, they want to do a quick walk-through and then come back. By the time they get through the entire Show, they may have forgotten or are too tired to return to your booth.
3. Remind staff to record all prospect information. Encourage staff to record everything they can learn about a prospect's needs. Stress the importance of getting phone numbers and email addresses. (Creating an information form as suggested above, will make it easier.)
4. Encourage staff to greet people warmly and smile! Amazingly, this is often forgotten. An inviting attitude can give a valuable first impression. The staff should avoid having their backs to the entrance or taking phone calls while on duty. A friendly greeting to passersby may encourage them to stop rather than simply walk away. Staff who are uniformly courteous and helpful, knowledgeable about all aspects of the industry, and respond to requests will make a very good impression.

AFTER THE HOME SHOW:

1. Send requested literature immediately, within 24 hours. A quick response is your second opportunity to make a favorable impression. (Your performance in the booth is the first.)
2. Help your prospects take the next step. Your literature should make responding easy for prospects by including your web address and other information.
3. Keep track of your prospects. If they don't respond from your first contact with them, follow-up at a later date.
4. Analyze what went right and what could have been improved upon. The "lessons learned" will help improve your efforts in future shows.

**HAVE FUN AND GOOD LUCK AT THE
NEBRASKA BUILDERS HOME & GARDEN SHOW!**