

Must-Do Tips No 25: Stand...and Deliver?

"More often than not, however, the only person on the stand was the Business Development Executive, sitting forlornly in the main hall while the lawyers enjoyed coffee meetings and lunches in the sunshine"

"The Lawyer", 26 June 2006

Whatever branch of the professions that you are in, this scenario may well strike a chord. That exhibition or conference stand for which you paid thousands of pounds...not to mention the other expenditure and hours of professional time that is invested...and often wasted by the 'delivery' team: the professionals themselves. Yet these events can be a very fruitful source of visibility and future business for the firm.

So what are the secrets to populating your stand presence with keen, motivated and successful people? This month we offer three ideas from experience of what works.

Tip 1 - So Why ARE We Here?

This is not as dumb a question as it seems. What you think you are there for and what the professionals think can be often, well, different. Sticking our neck out here, we would say that the vast majority of main conference or exhibition aims for professional firms (i.e. from the marketers or other 'investors' in it) consists of making contact with and developing new clients. Many professionals can see the thing only as a chance to hook up with old friends or contacts in that coffee meeting or over lunch. Or worse, as a chance to get all the things done with colleagues that they just didn't have time for in the office. So do not assume, SPELL IT OUT, and then set them objectives that are specifically related to why they are really there.

Tip 2 - Drilled To Thrill

Some professionals believe that simply turning up means that they have done their job at the conference. This goes a long way to explaining the appalling performance that they can give when representing the firm - as a vital first (and usually last) impression for prospective clients! Being a good professional business developer or sales person at an exhibition requires specific training, so invest in your people BEFORE the appalling happens to you (N.B. this goes for professionals who may have already received 'general' sales training).

Tip 3 - Little Is Large

This one is about making it as easy as possible for your professionals to perform. Well briefed and well trained as they will be, we would much rather see stand-attendance duties spread between team members in relatively short slots (ideally less than an hour at a time). This saves us and your prospective clients having to witness the highly motivating sight of BORED, YAWNING or SLOUCHING professionals, who appear like they don't want to be there. Or we see just the Business Development Executive.....because the professionals voted with their feet after the second hour of their marathon stint.



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Best regards.

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