



Trade Shows 2021: Trends for This Year's Successful Exhibits





Your trade show booth delivers the opportunity to make a stunning first impression. A display that draws visitors in, engages people, and delivers what your potential customers want serves as a powerful marketing tool. To make the most of your trade show exhibit and show goals, it helps to both stay informed about emerging trade show trends, incorporate them into your exhibit and ensure your on-site staff is ready to showcase your solution to prospects successfully. We'll cover what to expect in a post-Covid face to face environment as well.

Consider these trade show trends and tips while planning for your exhibits in the coming year. Incorporating them just might help convert passersby to visitors, and visitors to customers.

Post-Covid Considerations

The pent up demand for returning to face to face events is tangible. It's important to have your exhibit and environment project a safe, comfortable and clean image.

Expect wider aisles (with no aisle carpet), socially distanced meeting areas. Consider open floor plans to allow adequate distancing and traffic flow.

Avoid handshakes and offer to wear a mask when meeting with prospects if they'd be more comfortable. Some shows may mandate masking during show hours.



2021 TIPS

Be sure to have Hand Sanitizer available throughout the booth. Disinfection protocols should also be employed to show that you are considerate of your visitors and staffers.

Avoid handing out give-aways or brochures. Fulfill collateral requests electronically via email. If you have a high-end give away simply mail it to your prospect after the event.

Consider appointing a particular person to drive Safety implementation and giving that person a specific title, e.g. Chief Hygiene Officer, etc. This helps create status, focus, and clarity and shows clients, visitors and other stakeholders the importance and emphasis you place on health safety efforts and attaining a 'controlled environment.'





Engagement is more important than ever

Engaging your returning audience should be the single-most important aspect of your live marketing program. With the lack of events for the past year or more, and the advent of virtual exhibiting, you now face an increased challenge to properly engage your audience, both on the show floor, and virtually.

Hybrid/Virtual is here to stay:

Your digital marketing strategy for events needs to evolve to capture the attention of both in-person attendees, as well as those engaged digitally.



2021 TIPS

Incorporate a virtual component to your exhibit to promote your presence to those not in attendance. The hybrid/virtual model is here to stay so embrace it and use it as a sales and marketing tool for pre-show promotions. A virtual showcase or environment can be a useful selling tool to use to keep prospects engaged about your products or services.

While attendance may be reduced in 2021 and early 2022, your audience may indeed actually be more qualified to make decisions and purchases. Most C-Level executives will be traveling earlier than others with less qualified decision making power. This is a time to leverage this when engaging your audience. The percentage of qualified decision makers will never be higher.

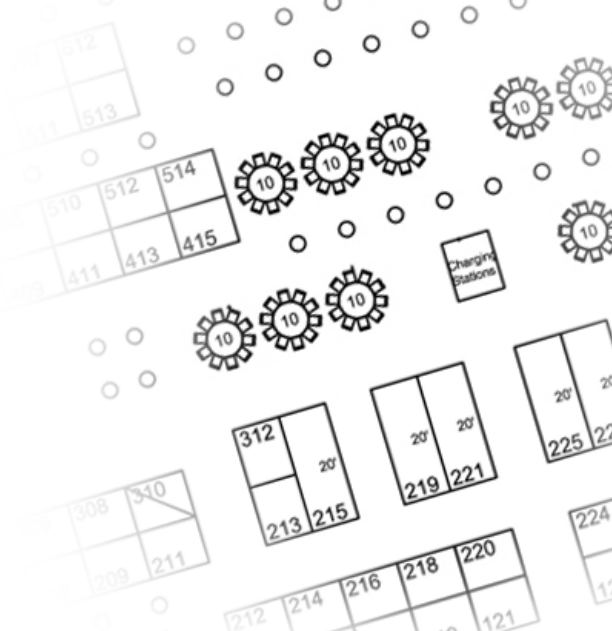
Consider adding an increased digital marketing effort to engage those attendees that may not be able to be in-person. Do this through online events such as webinars, contests, and increased digital advertising and promotion of your event.





Picking the Prime Place

While there are many prime locations on the trade show floor—each offering its own distinct advantage—the best space for your company is one that best aligns with your show goals and objectives. As you prepare for your 2021 shows, having a location strategy early will help you choose your spot as quickly as possible, likely beating out your competition and ensuring your exhibit delivers upon its goals.



2021 TIPS

If your goal is visibility. Select a location close to the show floor entrances, which provides great visibility and foot traffic with attendees entering and exiting a show. However, you should not position your exhibit too close the entrance as attendees tend to pass the first few exhibits in an effort to explore the show. Find the happy-medium close enough to the entrance to get noticed, but far enough away to capture the sustained attention of attendees.

If your goal is sales. To gain leads, you need a consistent flow of traffic into your exhibit. Think of the main aisles of a trade show as busy thoroughfares in a city; they are wider, busier and usually lead to key points of interest. Booths positioned along main aisles are more likely to pull in attendees making their way around the show floor, leading to a steady flow of traffic in and out of a booth. By having your booth positioned along a main aisle, attendees are more likely to make their way directly by your exhibit, increasing the number of prospects your staff are able to engage with.

If your goal is follow-up meetings with prospects. Trade shows provide an ideal opportunity for exhibitors to sit down and meet with prospects. However, to get the most out of your meetings, you will need to select a quiet and more intimate space on the show floor. Secondary aisles see less traffic and are quieter, so if you position your booth along one, you will block out the distractions of a busy trade show and allow prospects to better focus on speaking with your staff.





Lighting the Way

All the resources your company put into your beautifully designed and constructed trade show display are expended for nothing if no one can see the display. Increasingly, trade show booth planners are incorporating creative, smart lighting designs into their displays.

Great booth lighting accomplishes several things at once. It enables visitors to clearly see your carefully crafted brand messaging and displays. It also creates a mood—depending on your goals, it can energize and enliven, or soothe and relax. It can draw special attention to products and features you want to emphasize, especially with techniques like spotlights and backlighting.



2021 TIPS

Illuminating sustainability.

Above, we discussed incorporating environmental features into a booth to engage eco-conscious visitors. LED, LCD and other light technologies that consume less energy than other alternatives can support that messaging.

Colored lighting. Lighting with a hint of color can help your display create the effect you want to have on visitors. Adding orange for warmth, for example, helps make a product display more inviting. A tinge of blue can amplify your message that a product is especially cutting-edge.

Update existing features.

In addition to illuminating your display, lighting fixtures themselves add to the overall look—and, if outdated, they also can take away from the appearance. Consider replacing outdated fixtures with more stylish ones.



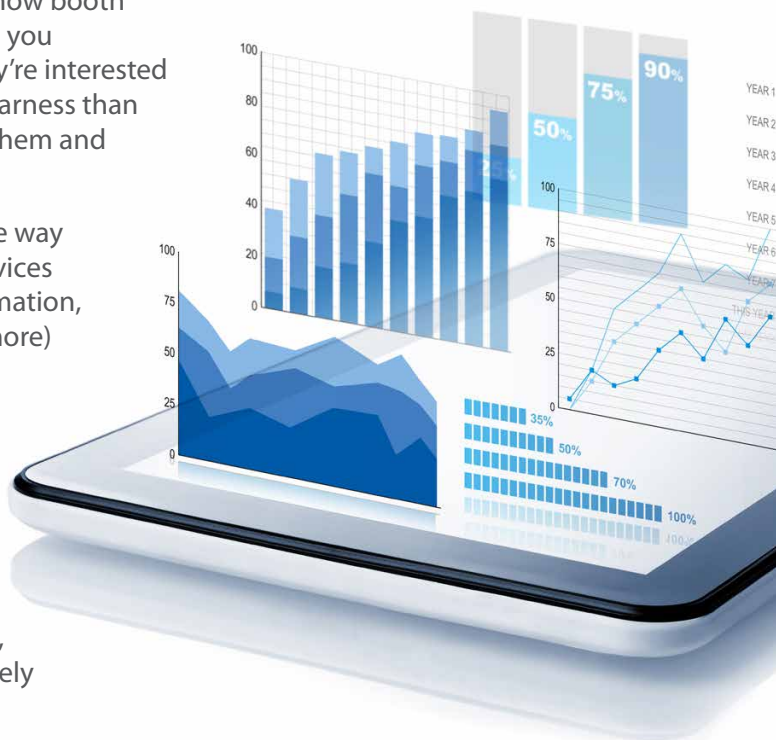


Intelligent Data Collection

The people that pass through your trade show booth are a powerful source of information. Once you determine what products and services they're interested in, what their business goals are, you can harness that information to determine how to convert them and other visitors into customers.

Artificial intelligence tools offer an effective way to collect and use data. What's more, AI devices can take the data (detailed company information, product information, client statistics and more) you've just gathered from a visitor, then rapidly turn around and help your booth staff tailor their presentation and chatter to fit their needs and interests.

It is important to point out that AI likely won't replace human beings in your booth anytime soon. Instead, AI and other high-tech data tools help you collect, process, and use information more effectively and efficiently.



2021 TIPS

Harness product insights.

When talking to attendees, ask them questions about your products, services, and their individual experiences with various issues your items are designed to address. You can use AI to track and analyze responses, then use that information to inform future business decisions.

Gauge booth effectiveness.

A quick exit survey can serve as an easy, effective way to determine if your booth is connecting with visitors the way you want it to. Digitally delivered surveys lead to easier collection for your company, and a less intrusive experience for attendees.

Power up your sales.

Used strategically, AI can help make your sales efforts more effective. It can help your sales staff use visitor information to pinpoint strong leads, better convert leads to actual sales, tailor follow-up messaging and more.





Pitch Perfect: Selling on the Floor and After the Show

The trade show floor is a salesperson's dream; prospective clients who are begging to be wowed. But while the bodies are warm, there's still work to be done. A smart sales strategy and a good sales pitch are needed to separate your brand from your competitor's.

Great sales people know that when it comes down to it, selling a product's features is a great way to get prospects interested, but what makes a prospect buy more often than not is the value of a product. Value is not only measured in dollars and cents. There are three key non-monetary values that can have just as much of an impact as the price tag.

Organizational value.

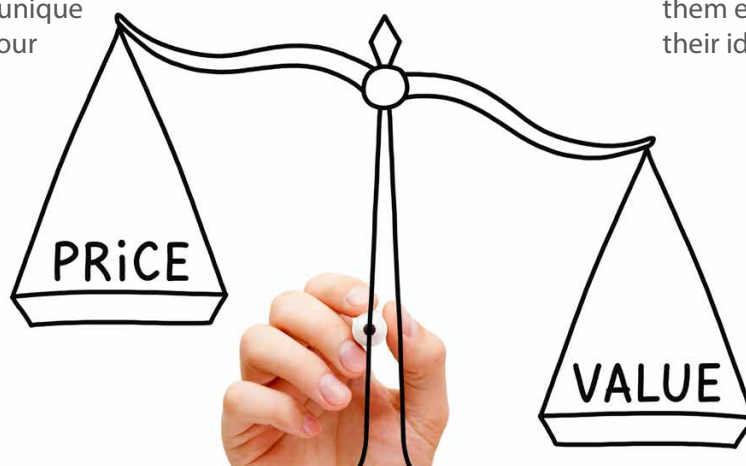
Your sales pitch should present the value your product or service can offer an organization as a whole. Company value represents the benefits a product or service can offer a company at the organizational level such as "easy-to-use interface", "development-friendly", "time-saving" etc. By pitching these values, you are connecting to a company's pain points and offering a unique solution that your company can provide.

Professional value.

Career development is important to your prospects. If you can show them how your product or service can help them grow professionally, they will be more willing to listen to your pitch. Professional value can be demonstrated with testimonials of other professionals who share the prospects job title, or by illustrating how your product will help their department excel, and by extension, how they will benefit as an individual.

Identity value.

Prospects are keenly aware of their company's identity in the marketplace and will make their purchasing decisions based on products that align with their brand's identity. Before jumping into a sales pitch, ask a prospect how their company views itself and how their customers view them as well. Take the answers they give you and rework your sales pitch to highlight how your product or service can help them enhance or maintain their identity.



2021 TIPS

Practice makes perfect.

Before an event, make sure your team has the time to visit with the product design team and ask them practical in-depth questions about the product or service. The team should also become experts on your competition's products to be able to quickly respond to questions about their offering, pick apart their limitations and highlighting how your product is a better fit.

Rejection vs. Objection.

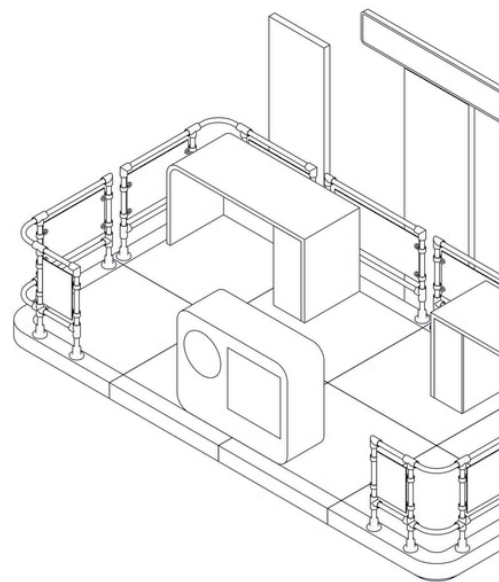
The best salespeople understand the difference between a "rejection" and an "objection." The person who rejects your pitch will be a very tough sale, perhaps not even worth the time for further engagement. The person who objects is likely a "maybe". Chances are the prospect is on the fence, and that means you have an opportunity. Overcoming objections is a skill every elite salesperson possesses, so make sure you keep yourself in the game and don't mistake a "maybe" for a "no".



Customized Booths

When hundreds of companies are exhibiting at the same trade show, they have to compete for the time and attention of event attendees. To maximize their chances of attracting visitors, more organizations are opting for a [customized trade show display](#).

Choose an Experiential Marketing Partner that not only can help implement effective face-to-face marketing strategy, but can also design, build, and manage your exhibits.



2021 TIPS

Make your brand the star.

While planning and designing your trade show display, keep your product and your goals for exhibiting at the core of discussions. Those factors will inform your booth plans and help ensure the design supports your aims.

Consider simplicity. Too often, booth designers are tempted to cover every surface with brand graphics and sales messages, leading to the “NASCAR effect.” A more streamlined, simple approach might be more effective in drawing and retaining visitors.

Keep comfort in mind. A trade show can be grueling for attendees. When customizing your booth, consider incorporating lounge areas, plush carpet, a refreshment bar and other elements that give visitors a respite from the hustle and bustle.

Making Tomorrow's Trends Work for You Today

Knowing what trade show trends are on the horizon is a great start toward building your exhibit. To effectively apply these trends, it is important to know your trade show goals, your target audience, industry and product. Armed with that knowledge, your company and your trade show partner can get to work on creating a display that attracts attention, engages visitors, and helps you achieve your goals.

To find out how Apogee Exhibits can help you create your 2021 exhibit, contact us today.

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