

TRADE SHOWS

Increase Booth Traffic With Promotional Products

With the increase of postal rates over the past several years and dwindling advertising and promotional budgets, many companies are tempted to reduce or eliminate investments into pre-show mailings with promotional products in trade show settings. Is this a wise choice? The results of a 2004 study by Georgia Southern University indicates the answer is NO.

The study was an experiment conducted using the pre-registration list of attendees for a trade show with 379 booths in the pharmaceutical and medical products supply business in Baltimore, Maryland. Exhibitors at the show were all ingredient suppliers of functional, healthy and botanical ingredients. A sample of 797 pre-registered attendees was drawn from a total registration of approximately 2000. The sampling was divided into three groups. Each group was given a different treatment as described below:

- **Group A** received a postcard inviting the recipient to stop by the respective exhibitor's booth at the trade show.
- **Group B** received an inexpensive promotional magnet custom imprinted with the respective exhibitor's company logo and an invitation to visit their booth at the same trade show.
- **Group C** received a postcard offering a t-shirt for redeeming the postcard at the exhibitor's booth at the trade show.

The control group for the experiment included the on-site registrants. After the show, each exhibitor provided a list of attendees who stopped by its booth. Each list was used to determine which incentive type generated more traffic to a given exhibit and a potentially greater number of sales leads for the companies.

Results

- 47.9% of the attendees who stopped by the three booths had received a pre-show mailing.
- Of the recipients who stopped by the booths, the largest number (41%) received an offer for a free t-shirt. The next largest number (36%) received a postcard with a magnet imprinted with the exhibitor's name. The group with the lowest response (23%) was the one that only received an invitation to stop by the booth. In short, 78.2% more people responded with the t-shirt offer than with the postcard alone, and 56.5% more people responded to the magnet than the postcard alone.

Assessments

- Including a promotional product with a pre-show mailing or an offer for a promotional product **increases the likelihood** of the attendee stopping by the booth to see the exhibitor's product offerings.
- As a general rule, **promotional products of greater value generate more sales leads than products of lower value.**

Using promotional products in conjunction with pre-show mailings make effective tools to inform, remind and persuade attendees to at least stop by a booth, which increases traffic to these booths. Greater traffic to a booth generates greater potential for more sales leads.



Are Pre-Show Mailings With Promotional Product Offerings More Effective Than Mailings Without?

