

Making A Major Influence At Tradeshows

Question: I want to make a strong impact at the Ed Expo Show. How can I attract buyers to my booth? what types of handouts should I give to prospective clients? What incentives will motivate store owners to order products at the show?
- Jennifer Fixman, Edutunes.com, Haleiwa, HI; Supplier

Answer: Attending your first NSSEA Tradeshow? Plan your booth design with the following factors in mind: Where is my placement on the exhibit floor to determine the general flow of traffic — from the right or left? What type of signage and display am I going to use to get the attention of the dealers walking by? How will my product(s) be presented to invite dealers to look, touch, and get a quick snapshot idea of how this product may work into their product mix at the store/catalog page level? Will you be incorporating some type of activity or demonstration? If so, keep it short and have some sizzle with it or you'll quickly lose the dealers' attention. Dealers have so much to see in such a compressed time that it has to grab their attention. I think it is important to work at creating a coordinated "look" that incorporates a theme or design scheme that brings the booth, the product, and all the hand out literature together in one common stream.

To offer some type of incentive for a buyer to stop by and review product is effective. To incorporate an incentive for the dealer to place an order at the show is oftentimes used as an effective vehicle to capture a sale. Look into the NSSEA Ed Expo Coupon Book as a good way to get your offer into the attendees' hands. I believe that many of our dealers like the "freebies," whether they are pens with your company name on them, tote bags, or mugs. Many vendors find that 'drawings' for door prizes build booth traffic. My thoughts are that whatever you believe will be effective, make it of good quality so it continues to represent your company well after the show. I would also recommend smaller, useful items that can be easily packed to take home.

There are several considerations to take into account when looking at handouts. Mailing your information to dealers prior to the show may be best. This could also be the vehicle to announce and promote your new product, show special or basically the invitation to stop by your booth. With so many vendors on the floor, and each passing out catalogs, flyers or info sheets, our dealers get easily weighted down with paper and by the end of the show they may not take home all the information they gathered. (Just take a look at the hotel maids' carts and trash at the end of show, all of those great catalogs in the trash). Understandably, there is only so much you can carry, and with new weight standards for the airlines, there are further restrictions. NSSEA offers a packaging and shipping facility right off the show floor for dealers to drop literature into throughout the show and then have it shipped home,

but not all dealers like to take advantage of this service. If you have unique offers at the show have supporting literature available for those dealers that are interested. Always have catalogs available and offer them to dealers. Don't be offended if the dealer doesn't take them, but offer to capture their information and mail literature immediately after the show.

In general this is the best platform for the dealers to view the "entire menu" prior to making strategic product and marketing decisions for the upcoming Back to School and this is the "golden opportunity" for vendors to showcase their products, reinforce their company image in our industry and connect with hundreds of existing and potential buyers over the course of three days!

To summarize, keep the booth attractive and appealing. Make sure it compliments not competes with your product. Keep the look of your booth and information as simple and concise as possible. Consider incentives for desired responses, with quality and usefulness as benchmarks.

- Brian Roberts, Creative Catalog Concepts,