



## Part of the Washington SBDC Podcast Series

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### Exhibiting at Trade Shows:

Plan for Success

**Purpose of exhibiting at trade shows: to generate sales leads.** Plan a strategy *prior* to the event and include a plan for follow-up on leads afterwards.

#### Plan for the show:

- **Preshow promotion:** Let existing customers know when/where you will be during the trade show.
  - Direct mail
  - Participating in the host organizations promotional efforts
  - Place your own ads
  
- **Create a budget for the trade show**
  - Know what is provided by the trade show host.
  - Budget should include: booth space, phone and electricity costs, staff time, exhibit display and materials, supplies, decorations, marketing before and after the show, promotional gifts, personal travel, shipping your exhibit, and lead tracking.
  
- **Supplies**
  - Trade show display
  - Trade show headers and signage
  - Sheet to cover display
  - Personal portfolio and calendar
  - Pens for notes
  - Giveaways

- Tape, scissors, Velcro
  - Your business cards
  - Fishbowl for business cards and drawings
  - Business card holders
  - Hot glue gun
  - Flyers and brochures
  - Tools, risers
  - Freshen up kit (breath mints, toothbrush)
  - Clamp-on lights
  - Snacks and water
  - Catalogue
  - Nametags
- **Train your employees for the trade show**
    - Bring enough people, bring the appropriate people
    - What should they say? Role play for interacting with potential customers
    - Arrive early, stay late
    - Display a thorough knowledge of products and services
    - Be friendly, proactive and enthusiastic
    - Proper attire
    - Attractive nametags
    - Stand at the edge of the booth
    - No private conversations
    - Properly handle rejection
    - Do not eat, drink, or sit at the booth only during breaks away from the booth
    - Take frequent breaks
    - Eat healthy snacks
    - Drink plenty of water
    - Use breath mints
    - Smile and have fun
- **Follow-up and leads**
    - Enter customer information into a database immediately after the show
    - List things you will need for the follow-up mailings
    - Target hottest leads first

If attending a trade show be prepared with preshow promotion, develop your budget, have supplies ready, prepare your staff, and follow-up afterwards.

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