

# STAFFING FOR SUCCESS... WHO ARE THE BEST PEOPLE TO REPRESENT YOU ON THE SHOW FLOOR?

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## About the author

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Your booth staff will affect your results at a trade show more than any other aspect of your exhibit marketing program. In fact, according to a study published by the Trade Show Exhibitor's Association, the performance of booth staff accounts for a whopping 85% of an exhibitor's success.

Above all else, your company's representatives should be well-informed about your products and services. The Center for Exhibition Industry Research (CEIR) says that 94% of trade show visitors are looking for KNOWLEDGEABLE booth workers. Remember that most attendees have done some homework before leaving their office. By the time a qualified prospect enters your booth space, chances are good that they already know something about your company and your offering. Hence, they'll be looking for detailed information about your products and services relative their organization's often very specific requirements.

Most companies send their sales staff to trade shows, assuming that if they can sell in a client's office, they can sell on a trade show floor. The fault with this logic is that few sales transactions are actually completed on the show floor. Your objective in exhibiting is to promote interest in your offering in order to initiate the sales cycle. You want booth staff who are able to effectively field questions from educated prospects, and inspire them to set up that all-important second meeting.

If your sales staff is not capable of answering the technical questions that are sure to be asked, consider whether you might be better represented by marketing or technical personnel, or a combination of staff from different departments.

Your selection of staff should also take into account the show's target audience; you want to send people who can talk to the audience in a language that it understands. Accordingly, if it's a technical conference, send your technical people. If the audience is made up of high-level executives, make sure that your company's top executives are present.

Also remember that working a trade show floor is physically demanding. Your booth staff will require sufficient stamina to remain energetic, aware and approachable for many hours, all while standing on their feet. Choose those individuals you know you can trust to consistently deliver 110% on the show floor throughout the duration of the event.

Equally important, once you've determined who will best represent your company, make sure you train them. In addition to sharing your company's objectives for the show, clearly describe the results you expect to achieve. Provide instruction on working a trade show booth and fill them in on basic booth etiquette. Remind your staff that you are attending this show to talk to as many qualified prospects as possible.

A relatively small investment in the services of a professional trainer can increase the number of sales leads generated by as much as 20%. Research shows that trained booth staffers have shorter conversations and gather more qualifying information than un-trained workers.