



## **5 Steps to Make Your Fall Fairs More Fruitful**

**By Barb Girson**

As the air turns crisp and the leaves change, fall presents many seasonal opportunities to work trade shows, events, booths, fairs, and festivals. Adding a booth or fair to your marketing mix can be very beneficial and help you grow sales, especially if you have a direct sales, home-based business. Selecting the right booth or fair that attracts your targeted market can be a tremendous opportunity to generate leads and to book parties or find potential recruits. You get to meet new prospects face to face, and see people who might want what you provide.

According to the Center for Exhibition Industry (*Source: CEIR.org*),

- 46% of executive decision makers made a purchase while attending a show
- 77% of executive decision makers found at least one new supplier at the last show they attended.

**Here are 5 steps to help you have a successful show experience this fall:**

### **1. (30 sec) Engage**

Draw people to you by making eye contact, smiling and inviting conversation. Make a connection with the person. People connect with people first.

### **2. (2 min) Qualify**

Not all attendees will need or want your product or service. Acting like what you have to offer is a fit for everyone is both disingenuous and turns off visitors. Present your product or service with a healthy dose of enthusiasm and a decent measure of objectivity. It is respectful to give people the choice to take advantage of what you have or not. Ask a question to help you decide if they are a qualified lead and part

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of your target audience. Your goal is learning quickly if the person has a need/desire for what you offer, can make a buying decision or if they can influence the person who makes the buying decision. Try to find out their needs by asking some strategic questions.

For example:

- "Tell me what brings you to the show today?"
- "What's your main goal regarding...?"
- "How would you feel if..?"
- "Can you tell me if ...?"

Once you ask a question to learn more about the person in front of you, LISTEN.

- 42% of attendees felt that the booth worker did not understand their needs because they did not fully listen - not because the attendee did not try to express their needs (*Source: EIRE*).

This requires concentration on your part because typically there are lots of stimuli and distractions during the event.

### **3. (5 - 7 min) Present**

Give a brief overview of your top services or products that match your leads interest. Watch their reaction in order to determine their interest or resistance. By paying attention, you will be able to gauge how much information to share. For instance, look for signs of possible disinterest: if they seem distracted or begin to disengage with eye contact, give short answers, or physically back away. These are clues which may signify they have heard enough.

Visitors attend events for different reasons:

- For recreation
- To get ideas
- To keep current
- To solve a need or problem
- To purchase
- To identify resources
- Because their job requires them to

While you are presenting a quick overview of your products or services (fashion show style-share the highlights), ask your prospect to complete a lead form or exchange business cards.

### **4. (1 min) Close**

Thank them for their time. Determine what is the most appropriate way to respectfully follow-up with them. This provides an opportunity for you to demonstrate your ability to keep your promises and pay attention to their individual needs and wishes. For example, *"I will call you tomorrow before noon and send you a link to my web site prior so that you have a chance to see our new items (or sales specials, gift ideas, new programs etc.)."*

Depending on the number of people gathered around your booth, read their email and phone number out loud to confirm their details, if you can. This one step helps me to remember the conversations I had with leads and connect their business card (or contact info) with them. It is a reminder to make sure you have the contact information you need to provide service.

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If they hesitate to give you their phone number, look them in the eye and say, *"May I please have your phone number? I will be courteous with your contact information."* You might even add if there is further hesitation... *"and if at any time, you prefer not to hear from me, please let me know and I will take you off my call list. I want to provide service on your terms."*

You might want to conduct a drawing with your leads. You will find it easier to follow up if you make notes about their interest level, (Use a score 1 - 5, 5 being high interest), and anything you want to remember about a warm-hot prospect.

### **5. (Within 48-72 hours after the event) Follow-Up**

When you complete an application to participate in a booth or fair, block your post event follow up time in your planner. Make a firm appointment with yourself for follow-up. By connecting shortly after the event, you will make a memorable impression in their mind. Remember, they met a lot of vendors at one time. To set yourself apart, follow up by phone, mail, or email.

- 80% of attendees receive no follow-up! What a waste!

Follow these five steps to make your fall festivals, shows, and booths more fruitful.

1 Chicago: Why Train?, <http://www.creativetraining.com/train/docs/WhyTrain.pdf> (accessed October 6, 2009).

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#### **About The Author**

Barb Girson, International Direct Selling Industry Expert, Trainer & Coach, helps companies, teams & entrepreneurs gain confidence, get into action, & most importantly... grow sales by sharing her "Strategies That Stick™".

Barb is a highly interactive, creative speaker and author offering customized, professional skill development programs for workshops, meetings and teleconference training programs. Active participants "Sell more, stop worrying and STICK with what works™". Visit [www.MySalesTactics.com](http://www.MySalesTactics.com) to learn more.

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