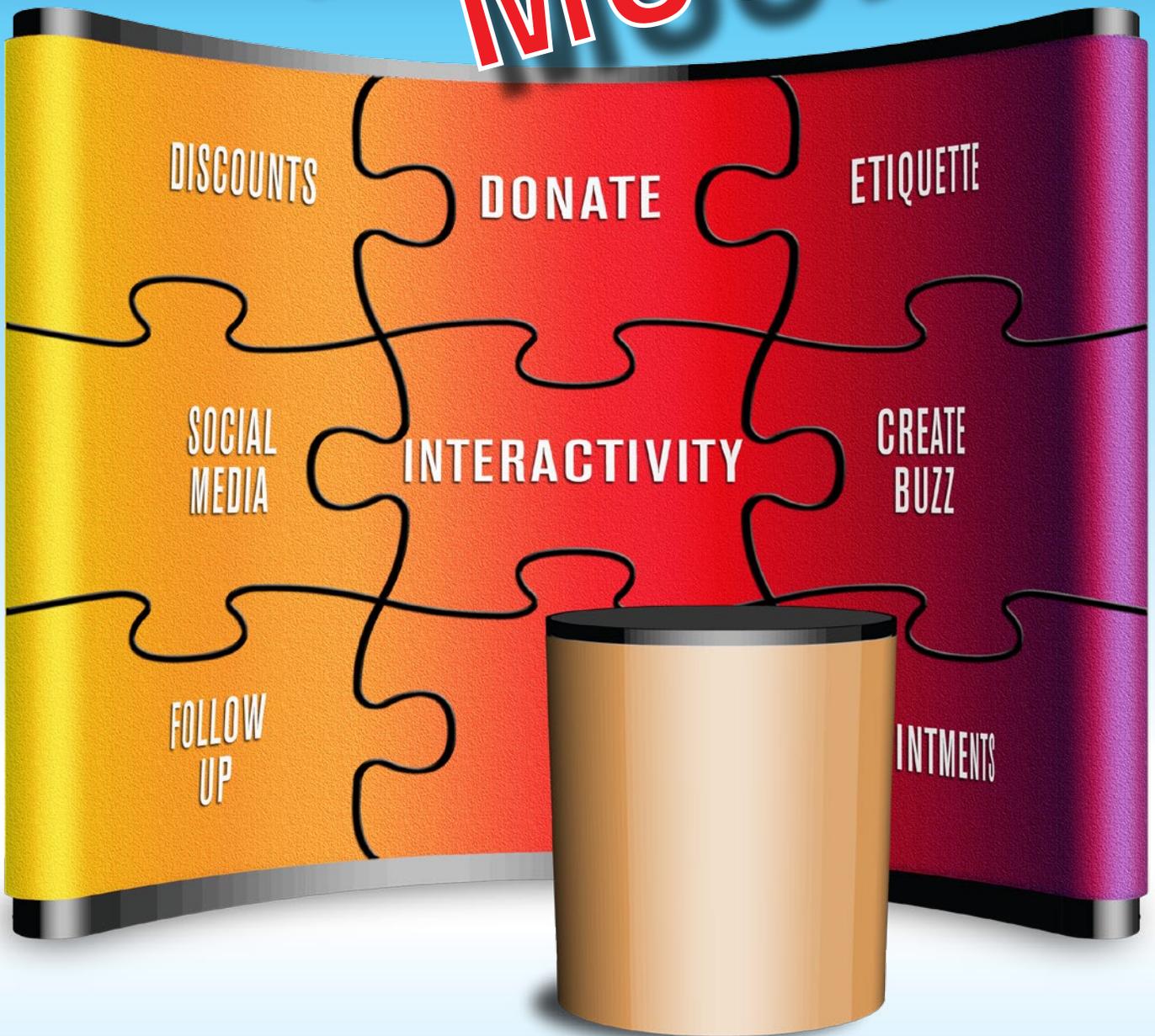


By Nia Hovde

Getting the **MOST** Out of



Your IFEA Expo Booth Investment

You've signed up for a Trade Show booth at the IFEA Convention & Expo this year. You're ready to share your product or service with the top festival & event professionals across the globe. There are floods of people coming to the booth – asking questions – making deals – shaking hands! Everyone is happy . . .

Wait a second... Is this what's happening at the Expo booth next to yours while you're sitting behind the table in your booth all by yourself surfing the internet on your phone? Whaaaat?! How did the booth next to you get all that attention? How did it seem like everyone already knew they were going to be there?

Ah, that's the thing. Just by signing up for a Trade Show booth, does not always make for automatic traffic and sales. Signing up is the easy part. There's a whole lot of leg work that needs to be done from you first, before you even step foot into your booth, to get the most out of your investment! We'd like you to see great results from this year's Expo, so we thought we'd share a few helpful tips and pointers for you to take into consideration as the IFEA Convention & Expo draws near!

BEFORE THE EXPO

Let Them Know You'll Be There

Just because you signed up for a booth, doesn't mean everyone automatically knows you'll be there. So why not tell them! When you sign up for an IFEA Expo Booth, you'll receive a Convention Attendee list 3 weeks before the IFEA Convention. This will have the most up to date list of attendees at the time. Take advantage of this and reach out to attendees to let them know you'll be there and invite them to visit you at your booth.

While you're at it, take the opportunity to do some advertising with the IFEA either on our website, in our newsletter, in "i.e." magazine, in the Convention Program or perhaps create a convention bag insert. These main resources will be where convention attendees look for information about the IFEA Convention, so why not make sure your company name is right there too. Be sure to time your advertising to hit just before or during the convention, depending on what piece you choose to advertise within.

Use Social Media

Why not go one step further and take advantage of social media to reach out to attendees. Post on your Facebook/LinkedIn/Twitter etc. pages that you're looking forward to exhibiting at the IFEA's Annual Convention & Expo. While you're at it, be sure to post on the IFEA's Facebook and LinkedIn pages that you'll be there too.

Schedule Appointments

While you're taking the time to reach out to attendees before the convention, why not see if you can schedule appointments with attendees during the trade show or any time during the convention. Why leave who comes to talk to you at your booth up to chance? Take control

of your interaction and schedule some appointments ahead of time, so you know some people are coming your way. If you'd rather not take appointments during the Expo, schedule to meet your future customers another time during the convention – during a coffee break or before/after classes.

Attend the Entire Convention

There is one catch to trying to meet up with clients during the rest of the IFEA Convention... you have to make sure you are actually in attendance for the entire convention, not just the Trade Show. Don't just attend the Expo and then set off to your next location. Stop! Stay a while! Take some time to get to know the people you're trying to market your product to. Show them you're interested and available to speak with them further. You'll miss your chance to do this if you are only there for a short window of time.

Attend the Social Opportunities and Educational Classes

While you're taking the time to attend the entire convention, go one step further and actually... attend the convention. Go to the educational classes. Mingle at the social functions. Stay up late at the dfest™/Dixie Flag Event Services Team Hospitality Suite! See who's being recognized at the Awards Ceremonies. These are all ideal opportunities to take some time to learn from and socialize with the festival & event professionals you'd like to see using your product. The more you can relate and get to know your clients, the more they'll get to know and become familiar with you! The IFEA Convention provides you with the opportunity to build relationships. Take advantage of every second!

Donate an Item to the IFEA Foundation Auction Event

Since you're going to be sticking around for the entire Convention, you'll be attending the IFEA Foundation's Auction Event on Saturday evening. Not only is this a great event, but it's a great networking event and an even better opportunity to get your name out there a bit more. Have you ever thought about donating an item to the IFEA Foundation Auction? What better way to start a conversation with someone by suggesting "don't forget to look for the auction item we donated to the Foundation Auction!" The item can be your own product or service or perhaps you can come up with something else creative. This year's theme is a sports theme, so be sure to come prepared to join in the fun!

DURING THE EXPO

Well, now that you've done all the pre-Expo leg work and you're at the Conven-

tion and the Expo is ready to start, there's a few key things to remember to help draw people into your booth.

Expo Etiquette

There's some basic do's and don'ts for Exhibitors that can make the difference between a busy booth and you just sitting there by your lonesome! For starters... no sitting! Stand up in front of your table and be ready to greet the next person that walks by... and the next... and the next... until someone stops to chat. Stay off your phone! We're all very busy and have a lot of business to take care of during the day, but during the time you're at your Expo Booth, make it known to attendees that your time is theirs and you're ready to chat. Don't leave your booth unattended... an empty booth is not making any contacts or sales! If you have to leave, place a note on the table saying what time you'll return. Smile! It seems so basic... but never underestimate the power of a smile! A happy Exhibitor looks like they're having fun and is approachable.

Have Something Interactive or a Give-Away at Your Booth

Ideally, your product alone should draw people in to talk with you at your booth, but with so many distractions going on in a busy Trade Show, it may be tough to get noticed. Do you have something that can draw people in long enough so you can get a chance to chat with them? A spin the wheel to win a small item with your logo on it? (USB drives are usually a big hit). Or perhaps a 'scan the QR code' to win. What about a fishbowl for attendees to place their business card for a chance to win a prize at the end of the day? (a good way to get contacts too!) Can you do a demonstration of your product... can you get the attendees involved in your demonstration? Is your product interactive? Can you have a station or two at your booth where the attendees can interact with your product? At the very least, have a sign-up sheet so attendees can sign up to receive your newsletter or be contacted in the future. What else can you do to help draw people into your booth for a few extra seconds? It doesn't necessarily need to be related to your product... but it helps.

Create a Buzz about your Product

Do you have a new item you're releasing at the Expo? Have you received great press coverage about your company lately? Have you won any awards recently? (Side note: Did you know that there are some Vendor categories in the IFEA/Haas & Wilkerson Pinnacle Awards Competition? There are! And wouldn't it be fantastic if you won an award at the



Photo by Andrew Raikind

previous day's awards presentation so you can proudly display it at your booth during the Expo! Just an idea!) If you have something new, different and exciting to share about your product/company... then share it! Now is the time to brag about your company!

Have an "IFEA Expo Only Discount" for Attendees

Everyone is looking for deals these days, whether they're coupon clipping, buying Groupons, or going for the % off sales, everyone is looking to save money. While you have a captive audience at the IFEA Convention, don't forget to provide an "IFEA Expo Only Discount" for attendees. After all, you not only want to come away from the Expo with contacts, but you'd like to make some sales too, right? Give them a deal they can't pass up, if they sign on the dotted line right then and there. If you're planning on contacting the attendees before the convention to let them know you'll be there too (which you are, right!), this is a great time to fill them in on your "IFEA Expo Only Discount" you'll be offering. That way they have a little time to think it over, before they chat with you in person. Also, be sure to mention it on all your social media sites and your website too.

AFTER THE EXPO

Well, you've let them know you'll be there, you reeled them into your booth, you had a great conversation with them at the Expo... now what? You sit back

and wait for their call? NO! Your job is not done yet. There's still more leg work to be done after the Expo is over, so don't relax yet!

Follow Up with Everyone You Spoke With

Hopefully you had some sort of tracking method to know who exactly you chatted with at the Expo? Whether you collected business cards, a sign-up sheet for a newsletter, or you were keeping score on your Convention Attendee List, be sure to take note of those you specifically spoke with. And then follow up with them. A quick phone call. A short email. A postcard or your product brochure. Anything! This is your hot audience!

Did you offer an "IFEA Expo Only Discount"? Perhaps follow up by sending them a different "post Expo" discount valid for a certain length of time. Perhaps congratulate them on any awards they won? If they spoke, send them a note saying you enjoyed their session. If you had a nice conversation with them, just send them a note saying that too. Or, just send them a note thanking them for visiting your booth. Whatever you do, and in whatever format, the key is to follow up... and keep your company name on their mind!

Follow Up with Everyone You Didn't Get a Chance to Speak With

With so many people in the Expo all at once, it's difficult to chat with everyone.

After you've contacted your hot audience, be sure to touch base with those that you didn't get a chance to speak with. Your Convention Attendee list will have all their details. If they didn't get to speak with you at the Expo, you didn't get a chance to let them know about your "IFEA Expo Only Discount" . . . a perfect excuse to get in touch with them!

With a little leg work on your part, before, during and after the Expo, following some or all of these tips, your booth could be the one that is the envy of everyone else at the trade show! Floods of people could be at your booth! You could be the one making deals and shaking hands! Isn't that a better scenario? We think so too!

For Details on this Year's
IFEA Annual Convention &
Expo Go to:

www.ifea.com

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