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**#2** in a series

## trade secrets

### Trade Show Ideas

Here, a few insider tips on how to maximize your success in the trade arena.

### Have A Plan

Success doesn't just happen. It comes to those who have a clear and precise vision of their objectives — and a strategic plan to achieve them.

Goals such as “getting more exposure” are noble, but may not produce results you'd like due to the trade show's high-volume, highly competitive atmosphere.

Implement quantifiable goals, such as aiming for a specific number of orders a day, or making a point of handing out all of your business cards with a handshake and a nifty freebie.

### You Gotta Have a Gimmick

Not only do trade show booths practically beg to be bedecked with your signature schtick, it's your most important way of

making an impact and standing out from the crowd (and it doesn't have to be expensive.)

Whether it's a thematic vignette that reflects your brand, or a box of fresh donuts, make your booth exciting and inviting without being overbearing or overly “sales-y.”

### Keep Your Friends Close, Your Competition Closer

Sly, well-heeled spies are out and about, peeking on who's doing what, and when, and how.

Know what your competition is —and will be—doing. And keep abreast of trends and technology, whatever it is that drives your business. When you hit the trade circuit, blow them away with very current, and incredibly competitive display/product/service/etc.

### Invite and Entice

Don't depend on the law of averages and “hope” that your prospects will eventually saunter

by your booth. Invite them.

And be sure your invitation includes an enticing incentive (such as a great giveaway or sweepstakes) to drive traffic.

Also invite existing clients to stop by, as well as other industry insiders that may benefit you with their presence. The booth with a lot of traffic creates buzz.

### It's All In the Details

All the hand shaking and booth manning is actually the beginning of the sell. What you do afterward seals the deals you made, and helps create the long lasting relationships that are the bedrock of a strong business.

Send out a quick note or email (hard stationery is still preferable) to all your new clients thanking them for their business. Forward info, product samples, or other additional collateral to those who expressed interest in your company.

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