

FIND NEW DISPLAY IDEAS WITH YOUR EXPO EYES

By Barry Siskind



If all exhibitors' booths are designed to attract attention, you need to understand the techniques that can be used to increase the attention-getting ability of your hardware. The best place to learn how a booth works is at a trade show. Many exhibitors have learned that prior to working with their display builder, they should visit shows to see firsthand what works and what doesn't. Walking a show with a well-honed eye for detail is called "using your expo eyes".

The trick to finding new ideas with your well-honed "expo eyes" is to ensure that you don't short-circuit your attempts. This happens when you look at some booths and discount the relevancy of what you are seeing by saying:

- This exhibitor is too small
- This exhibitor is too big
- This exhibitor is from a different industry
- This exhibitor (The number of excuses is endless.)

When you look for reasons to ignore what you are seeing, you are in fact putting blinders on your possibilities. Remember that all exhibitors regardless of size and industry, are attempting to do the same thing – attract attention. Notice what they are doing and see if you can identify the techniques they are using. Then ask yourself if there is something that you can incorporate into your plans.

Some techniques to observe are: **the use of signs, graphics, motion, games, contests, interactive elements, technology, colour, materials, product placement, group demonstrations, in-booth educational seminars, video and out-of-the box thinking.**



You are looking for a new trade show display. You've been to a number of booth builders' showrooms, seen lots of interesting ideas and now face the challenge of choosing what's right for your organization.

This is a common dilemma, and while a professional display representative can be helpful, it's important for you to have some idea of what will work for your organization in the shows you will be exhibiting at. You now have a choice; you can be reactive and wait for your display reps to offer suggestions, or you can be proactive and develop ideas of your own that your rep can incorporate into their design proposals.

The first step is for you to acknowledge that all trade show booths are designed for the same purpose; to attract the right attention among the throngs of trade show visitors. That's not an easy job. At some point, attendees are often overcome with the effects of information overload. From their point of view, there is simply too much for them to see and too much information to absorb. Once mental fatigue sets in, it's up to your display to catch their attention and motivate them to want to visit.



Most techniques will be self-evident; out-of-the-box thinking needs a bit of explanation. In most situations, your space is governed by specific rules that you need to adhere to when creating your display. Think of your space as a cube – 10 feet X 10 feet X 8 feet high. Many shows prohibit you from extending your display outside the cube; however; within the cube you can be creative. One way is to move away from displays that are designed with right angles. This produces a boxy effect and is used by the vast majority of exhibitors. By using interesting angles within the box, you can create a display that stands out in the crowd.

Once you have visited a number of shows and have found some really interesting ideas, talk to your booth builder about what you have learned, along with details that include your exhibiting objective and information about your products, services and corporation. Then, before you roll out a new idea throughout your entire exhibit program, you might consider trying this idea in a limited way until you can prove to yourself that it is giving you the desired results.

Finding the right mix of techniques that will help you differentiate your booth from your competitor's, as well as attracting the attention of the right visitors, is a blend of art and science. Visit shows with your "expo eyes" and see what new techniques you can use to make your next show a smashing success.

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