

The Top 2 Ways Attendees Want to Interact in Your Booth (4 min read)

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“The buyer’s perception is the seller’s reality” is an important insight every exhibitor should keep top of mind as they design their exhibit and visitor experience. At the end of the show, the most important evaluation of your exhibit’s impact and effectiveness will not come from you and your design team, but from each attendee who visits.

With this big idea in mind, here are the top two ways attendees want to interact with an exhibit based on the latest exhibition industry research.

#1. INTERACTIVE OUTPERFORMS STATIC

57% of attendees state that hands-on opportunities or demonstrations are most useful for product solution evaluation and decision making. Source: CEIR

Immersive, multi-sensory, learning-based product/solution experiences that are intentionally and thoughtfully designed are the key to not only impressing attendees, but also influencing purchase decision certainty, differentiating your company and your solutions, and building preference.

When designing your interactive visitor experience, think about “people to people” interactions, “people to product” interactions, and other supporting tactics like samples, giveaways, educational games, and raffle prize drawings to create excitement and capture leads.

For the “people to people” interaction part, make sure to staff your booth with various job functions, and also consider how you can integrate other attendees and peer-to-peer discussions. It’s also important that you train your booth staff on their roles in the booth and the skills and information they will need to execute high-quality interactions.

Here are some “people to people” engagement tactics to consider:

1. Have technical product experts, executive management, marketing, and sales staff in the booth.
2. If possible, have space in the booth to facilitate peer-to-peer interaction. A few round tables may do the trick.
3. Make it easy for visitors to provide feedback on your featured solutions. Give your booth staff specific feedback questions to ask and a way to capture visitor responses.
4. If possible, have a dedicated area for meetings in the booth.
5. Integrate breakfast, lunch, and dinner meetings, along with possibly holding receptions and meet ups in the booth.
6. If you have a medium or large booth with multiple solutions, consider designing a booth tour with a guided host.

For the “people to product” interaction part, make your interactive presentation or demonstration the centerpiece of your exhibit. Here are some engagement tactics to consider:

1. Hands-on product demonstrations where they can see and touch products.
2. Interactive digital screens or tablets where they can take a guided or self-guided journey.
3. Digital games that blend fun and education.

4. Visual signage that quickly communicates the product application, and the top three facts or features and/or benefits you want visitors to know.

#2. SUBJECT MATTER EXPERTS ARE IMPORTANT

84% of attendees said connecting with subject matter experts is extremely or very important.

Source: Freeman

Staffing your booth with Subject Matter Experts has a positive impact on the visitor experience. Attendees aren't just looking for general product/solution information, they want to engage with someone who really knows their stuff. They want the opportunity to ask specific questions, validate your claims, and walk away with the kind of information that just can't be found in a brochure or on a website.

Subject Matter Expert tactics to consider include:

1. Identify who your SMEs are for your featured solutions.
2. Promote that you will have SMEs available in your booth in your exhibitor listing and pre-event marketing campaign.
3. Have your SMEs wear special badges or even branded apparel to identify them.
4. If presenting multiple solutions, have a dedicated SME stationed near each solution.
5. Offer one to one technical/solution discussion meetings through a scheduling tool.
6. Identify the top questions you typically receive about your solutions and provide written answers to your entire booth staff, so everyone is able to answer FAQs in a consistent and impactful manner.

By integrating these two strategies into your next exhibit, you will be perfectly aligned with what today's attendees want, need, and expect from an exhibit. You will differentiate yourself from your competitors, and you will make a positive impact on attendees' knowledge, perception, and preference for your solutions. And in the end, you'll probably be the one that earns their business.



Jefferson Davis, President of Competitive Edge LLC is known as the "Tradeshow Turnaround Artist". Since 1991 his exhibit marketing consulting and staff training services have helped clients improve tradeshow performance and measurable results by over \$800,000,000. For questions or more information contact Mr. Davis at 800-700-6174, email at jdavis@compedgetrainng.com