

### Introduction

After getting people to your booth, but once they're there, you've got a prime content marketing opportunity that many organizations totally miss. At the end of your tour, what do you have to show for it? A handful of new leads, a fraction of a fraction of which turn into actual customers?

Here is advice to make content the real headliner at your next tradeshow, for a rock-star performance.

Credit: Chris Wirthwein <https://salesandmarketing.com/content/5-wa-ys-make-your-tradeshow-content-rock>

### 1. Message with brevity, clarity & impact

Too many companies try to make their tradeshow presence a catch-all — afraid of alienating the one prospect who might show up interested in your most niche of product lines. By saying everything, your tradeshow presence ends up saying nothing. Decide on one big message for your tradeshow — one that complements your brand strategy — and design every part of the experience to support that content. That doesn't mean you can't be prepared to play some B-sides if the crowd requests them, but remember, you're here to promote your latest album. Find that memorable riff, and play it over (and over)..

### 2. Treat everything as content.

The booth is your set: What does it say to support your main message? Every panel, every piece of multimedia, every handout, even what the people in your booth are wearing is a chance to communicate. Sponsored events shouldn't just grab attention, they should also drive your message. Celebrity appearances, for example, are a great way to drive traffic, but they're only valuable if they're on point. Don't invite a guest musician onstage who doesn't play your style of music.

### 3. Give everyone a part to play

Developing your message also means making sure everyone in your booth is ready to communicate it and live it during the tradeshow. Don't waste time on pages-long scripts nobody can remember. Instead, develop a simple, memorable message with a few supporting points. (We have our clients employ a three-second/30-second technique. The message isn't verbatim, but it's easily internalized. It leaves room for that talented guitar solo, without wrecking the song.

Arm every single person in your booth with this content. The intern you brought along to keep the booth stocked? Your prospects don't know he's an intern...they just see a person wearing your company's polo in your booth. Even he should be able to deliver your basic message.

### 4. Be ready to improvise

With the focus on tradeshow logistics, we tend to worry about improvising when technology goes bad: "What's our back-up plan if the Wi-Fi goes down?" But what we should really be prepared for is when visitors to our booth surprise us with something that could throw us off our message: "What are you doing about the regulatory changes that might affect your new product's approval?" "I heard you've had some manufacturing challenges. Is that hurting supply?" Thinking on your feet actually requires a lot of preparation. Along with your main message, develop a set of HIMLOs — high-impact, most likely to occur questions — and prepare everyone to answer them, then pivot seamlessly back to your planned content. Use the "why and what" technique: Why can't I answer your question directly? "Our negotiations with regulatory bodies are ongoing, but what I can tell you is that we're already approved in a number of markets..."

Don't forget that in addition to prospects, tradeshows are also filled with competitors, industry journalists and other marketers who aren't there to buy your products, but are very interested in what you have to say. Guitar strings DO break. You better have three more axes waiting in the wings, tuned to perfection.

### 5. Plan your encore

Attendees leave tradeshows enthusiastic and re-energized about their industry, so don't let that momentum go to waste. Before the event, plan two to three weeks of follow-ups directly related to your message. Whether you post event photos to your website, blog about an interesting topic that came up at the show, or respond to customer questions in a social post, include your main message in every follow-up and you'll keep the audience humming your tune long after the curtain falls.



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