Fire–Rescue Med 2018

In this FRM Newsletter, you will find important information to help you exhibit successfully at Fire-Rescue Med and all the trade shows you attend. This edition looks at:

Effective Pre-Show Planning
Effective At-Show Participation
Effective Post-Show
Checklist for Exhibitors

EFFECTIVE PRE-SHOW PLANNING

Companies that utilize Fire-Rescue Med effectively plan their strategy long before the Show begins. You should start planning now to maximize your investment and to ensure your success. The following are the six critical areas that must be addressed in the Pre-Show planning process.

Set Specific Goals and Objectives Thorough planning and goal setting is possibly your most difficult task - yet it is by far the most important element of your participation. Without setting specific objectives, you will never know whether this show was a success for you. Therefore, you must set **SMART** goals:

Sensible
Measurable
Attainable
Realistic
Truthful

By going through this process, only you can determine what goals make the most sense for your company. Because your product is unique, and because there is no perfect formula, we recommend that you write your plans down on paper, discuss and debate them with your associates to refine them, and execute each detail carefully.

Decide On the Image You Want to Project
Think about the impression you want to make. Use appropriate identification, proper lighting, and establish a visual focal point that attracts the right person to your booth. But most importantly, keep in mind that quality, service, and fair pricing are the keys to selling. In this economy, the most successful exhibitors are those who present themselves as value marketers.

Value marketing means much more than slashing prices or offering show "deals". It means giving more: an improved product with added features and enhanced service - all at a better price. This is the image you should be striving for in order to best achieve your goals as an exhibitor.

Decide On the Content of Your Exhibit
Keep in mind that at a busy Fire-Rescue Med show, you have only a matter of seconds to capture an attendee's attention. In that short time frame you must convey three critical pieces of information:

- Who you are
- What you do

- How you can help them

Keep the concept simple. Use clear, strong, graphics and direct your message to your customers. You can use working products, hands-on demonstrations, audio-visuals, and other special effects, but everything should draw attention to your products and/or services.

Plan Your Pre-Show Promotion

Planning is a key tool in getting the word out about your participation at Wildland Urban Interface. Not only will you alert existing and prospective customers to be on the lookout for your exhibit ahead of time, but you will also establish yourself as a major player in the industry. Pre-Show promotions will significantly enhance the final results of your exhibition efforts by increasing the number of qualified visitors who will seek you out at the Show. The following are some basic Pre-Show promotional techniques commonly used by successful exhibitors:

Telemarketing - A telemarketing campaign from your sales staff can also increase booth traffic substantially. Extend a personal invitation to visit your display and follow-up with complimentary passes to encourage attendance.

Fact Sheet - Prepare a printed fact sheet for your employees (not just your sales staff) detailing your participation. Encourage everyone to "pass the word" to current and potential customers.

Advertise - Advertise your participation at Fire-Rescue Med in all magazine and newspaper advertising appearing during the month before the Show. Also, advertise in Show supplements and directories.

Sponsor - Become a sponsor of a special Show event and increase your on-site exposure. Investigate the availability of literature bags, aisle banners, you are here boards, etc.

Press Release - Alert your local media and Show Management through your my FRM: Exhibitor Login about any new products/services that will be on display in your booth that might be newsworthy.

Develop an Effective Lead Follow-up and Reporting System

Leads are the main reason why most exhibitors participate at FRM. Some might actually write orders on the Show floor, but most take leads. The following are two basic concepts that are the most overlooked and will make the difference between being profitable at shows:

1. Follow-up
2. Tracking and reporting results

Leads represent the return on your investment. When Fire-Rescue Med is over and everything is packed up, the only thing you have left for the money spent is the stack of leads in your hand.

Follow-up - A lead is worthless if follow-up is not done properly. Assign someone to collect all of the leads daily and see to it that they get to the next point in the sales process.

Tracking and reporting results - Tracking and reporting the results of your exhibit efforts are the final steps of participating in FRM. After all, the Show is over, the leads have been sorted and prioritized, and you are anxious to get on with other things. It takes relatively little effort to analyze the aftermath, and the resulting information is vital to determining whether your exhibiting efforts were a success or whether you need to change your focus.

Selection of Your Show Staff

You certainly would not want to send a green inexperienced sales trainee to call on a hot prospect in the field. For the same reason, you don't want to have a rookie working your booth at FRM. You want the best salespeople you have to be there waiting for these qualified attendees. Your investment in the show is high and you want your booth staff to be ready for action, to take advantage of every opportunity to reach your objective!

There are many things to consider when choosing your sales show staff:

1. Ideally, your staff should have similar interest as those of the audience
2. Salespeople should have a good personality and excellent prospecting skills.
3. The staff should be technically knowledgeable.
4. They must be product knowledgeable.
5. The salesperson must make it easy for the attendee to stop and talk.
6. The salesperson must have a good attitude about the role that they play in the company's marketing strategy.

Booth staffers must take responsibility for the quality of the visitor's time in the exhibit:

- Utilizing proper welcoming, qualifying, presenting, and closing skills is critical to the success of the staffer and to the company's participation in FRM.
- The staffer should commit quickly for follow-up action (whatever that might be), assure the attendee that follow-up action will be taken, and thank the attendee for visiting the booth.
- You may have an on-duty team of four or five in a 20-foot booth. In that team, there should be a mixture of ages, sexes, races, ethnic and technical backgrounds - and personalities.

EFFECTIVE AT-SHOW PARTICIPATION

Effective At-Show Participation

Once you get to the Show, there are three primary ingredients to a successful, well-managed trade show experience. They can be broken up as follows:

A. Move-in/move-out
B. Proper staffing
C. Selling techniques

This section will address each of these critical areas so that you will be better prepared to do everything right the first time in order to achieve the objectives you have now set for your company.

Move-In/Move-Out Tips

Once again, the first step toward a smooth move-in/move-out process is to **READ THE EXHIBITOR MANUAL,** and read it carefully. The most common exhibitor mistake is to put this thick stack of papers aside for later, but later never comes and important details will be overlooked. If you have any questions after reading the manual, call Shannon Gilliland at 703-537-4838 or email sgilliland@iafc.org immediately for clarifications. Most importantly, you should:

Order all services (everything you will need) prior to the deadlines. Confirm your orders before you leave your office. Keep in mind, anything ordered on the floor will cost 25-30% more.

Have as much work as possible done on your exhibit **before** it is packed or shipped.

Provide special instructions for your electrical requirements. Including a rendering is essential to getting it right!

Arrive at the hall early to see your booth location and find the Freeman service desk. Register your staff for exhibitor badges using the online registration system to save time.

Proper Staffing

Trade Show studies have shown that 80% of show attendees remember **MORE** about the salespeople manning the booth than the booths themselves! This statistic tells us one thing - your success depends largely on the collective talent, product knowledge and energy level of your sales staff.

FIRST of all, every exhibitor should distribute an on-site manual that includes the following information:

. A staff schedule of who will be working the booth on a daily and hourly basis
. A staff schedule of daily Show activities
. A staff schedule of any Pre-Show and daily "wrap-up" meetings
. Where they will be staying and map to the convention center
. A map showing the exhibit hall and vicinity to your booth location
. A diagram of your booth layout and booth number

. A list of products being displayed and a product pricing structure
. Explanation of Pre-Show advertising and promotion
. Corporate objectives and goals to be met at the Show
. Sales goals and any rewards for success

SECOND, as you think about staff motivation, also consider how to avoid burnout. Here are some tips:
Schedule an hour break after a staffing period of two or three hours.
Check the Show schedule and anticipate peak traffic times. Let some staffers go on a break during slow periods.
Drink plenty of fluids. Most halls are very dry and dehydration can feel like fatigue.
Eat and drink sensibly: it affects not just your physical well-being, but your mental attitude. This may sound like a simple thing, but you'd be surprised how many staffers ignore their own health at shows.
Know your limits and take time to rest when needed.
Avoid using a "canned pitch". This will numb your brain and your listening skills. Instead, ask a few good qualifying questions, listen to the answers, and base your demonstration on what you've heard

Selling Techniques
The art of selling at Fire-Rescue Med is how well you can personally communicate and/or demonstrate your product or service, so that a Qualified Attendee can relate, understand, and respond to your presentation. Remember, selling at a Fire-Rescue Med is much different than selling in the field, or on the telephone. It is much more intimidating. Even the strongest salesperson can have trouble selling at FRM.

Booth personnel should be knowledgeable, friendly, and approachable, not aggressive. Your ability to **ASK QUESTIONS** at the Show and distinguish between a Qualified Attendee and a Qualified Prospect, will determine the degree of success you will achieve. Your job will be to sell the Attendee on the **BENEFITS** of your product and your company in a minimum amount of time, to determine the attendee's **NEED, DESIRE,** and **AFFORDABILITY**.

Each of the following techniques can enhance the quality of the attendee's time with you. In very few other selling situations will your prospect leave your presence and within several minutes be in the presence of your competition. You must look better and act better than your competition. The following suggestions will help you differentiate yourself from your competition:
1. Be available - Don't leave your booth unattended.
2. Be warm - Smile and make good eye contact. Use good nonverbal communication.
3. Don't offend - No eating, drinking, or chewing gum in your booth.
4. Make a positive impression
5. Be actively involved with your booth visitor - Take responsibility for engaging the attendee in conversation.

Your body speaks before you say a word. You use your entire body because you are standing, not sitting, as in most daily business situations. The Fire-Rescue Med environment is public and every motion and gesture, no matter how slight, is a public one. BY CONSCIOUSLY SENDING WARM, CONFIDENT, AND POSITIVE SIGNALS AT ALL TIMES, YOU ARE TELLING ATTENDEES THAT YOU ARE SOMEONE WORTH KNOWING.

The following are known at the "Four **S**'s" of Fire-Rescue Med selling:

1. Stop Them

Your first contact with a prospect is often made through a simple greeting and good eye contact. There are many polite and enthusiastic ways to greet prospects and introduce them to the features and benefits of your product or service. Visitors should be welcomed with a firm handshake and a sincere smile. To start the conversation, your booth staff should be polite, professional, and respectful. Try some of these "openers":

"Let me show you some of the services we offer."
"We have many new features which you will find interesting."
"Our product has seen a great increase in popular acceptance, and I'd like to explain why."

2. Speak to Them and Listen

After you have gained the prospect's attention with an interesting, open-ended question and attentively listened for the answer, identify the prospect's needs and qualify the prospect. Ask the prospect to talk about themselves

through questions which require more than a "yes or no" response. Listen carefully to their answers, and begin to develop your method and words to describe your benefits to satisfy their needs. In order to establish the prospect's need, buying influence, resources, purchasing time frame, and purchasing power, take 90 seconds to ask these open ended qualifying questions:

"How are you familiar with our company, our product, and our competitors?"
"What do you know about our product(s) or service(s)?"
"How do you intend to use the product(s) or service(s)?"
"How much funds are available for what you are considering?"
"When will a purchasing decision be made?"

Be careful not to appear solicitous. Apply extreme courtesy. And, **LISTEN!** If your product should satisfy their needs, move to the next step in your plan. Otherwise, politely and briefly summarize your sales presentation and thank the prospect for their interest.

3. **Set Up an Appointment or Sit Them Down, if Possible**

By listening carefully and responding with polite and enthusiastic questions, you're ready to make your targeted presentation. You can describe your product's benefits verbally, with a demonstration, through sales and prospect interaction, or any of the many other sales techniques which have been successful for your sales staff in one on one sales calls.

4. **Sell Them**

While you have always been selling since first "stopping" the attendee with your opening qualifying questions, the final phase of achieving your goal with them should now be easy. Restate or summarize your product's prime advantages for the prospect, and have an acknowledged agreement with them. If appropriate, ask for the order; or gain agreement and commitment to the action you want them to take. If you still don't achieve their commitment, explore, through polite and enthusiastic questioning, what is needed to satisfy the prospect's needs. And **LISTEN!** Keep questioning and responding with benefits (not just features) and advantages until you get the prospect to agree. And keep asking for their commitment. Remember, if you have properly recognized the prospect's needs, your failure to gain their agreement may mean they still have an objection for you to overcome. Since their needs and your advantages are unchanged, keep on selling until you get their commitment to do what you have asked them to do. And, **LISTEN!**

EFFECTIVE POST-SHOW

Follow-Up

According to the Trade Show Bureau: "The majority of Trade Show sales take place within 11 months after the Show." Unfortunately, many exhibitors lose these additional sales because they fail to follow-up on a continual basis. Before the Show, you must develop a coordinated sales lead plan. Otherwise, you have wasted time, effort, and money. An effective follow-up system should be carefully planned as the rest of your Show activities. When you know you have a good follow-up system in place, then you’re qualifying and lead collecting activities at the Show take on far more meaning and urgency.

Here are several points for a good lead follow-up program:

- Set a realistic goal for the number of leads you plan to collect during the Show.
- Plan your lead follow-up system well ahead of the Show. It should be ready to roll as soon as the Show ends.
- Design or use a lead collecting system that makes recording and retrieval easy. Remember to prioritize and sort leads for easy follow-up. If large numbers are expected, make sure that the system will generate mailing labels without a lot of extra effort.
- Use telemarketing to find the best prospects. Telemarketing will ensure that you are putting the very best leads into the hands of your sales force as quickly as possible and in a time frame that positions you competitively with those big exhibitors. Taking the time to make calls is especially important if your sales force is small in relationship to the number of leads.
- Set deadlines for all follow-up activities and brief all staff on the importance of meeting deadlines and their individual roles in the project.

- Set up a system to record and review the results of your follow-up program.

Most importantly, make sure your staff follows through on all leads, inquiries, and requests for information as quickly as possible. Attendees react most favorable when sales leads are promptly followed. You should have contacted all of your leads within two weeks after the Show with at least a "thank you" or follow-up letter, and/or a telephone call.

Evaluation
If you are to extract the full benefit from the Show and maximize your investment, there are a number of things you should do in the days and weeks immediately following the Show.

Conduct a post-Show debriefing - This should be done as soon as the Show is over. Whatever method is used - staff meetings or evaluation forms - the review should take place while memories are still fresh in people's minds. Valuable feedback can also be obtained from your customers and other visitors. You can do this by talking to them on the phone or sending them a questionnaire.

Analyze your immediate results - You should review the results immediately after the Show and compare them with the goals that were set. Compare the number of qualified leads with the goals you set in different categories.

Analyze your costs and results in comparison with your goals - At some period, weeks or months after the Show, depending on your sales cycle, you should be able to bring together all of your costs, and the full results to date from the Show. These are tabulated against your goals and budget for each item. In addition to comparing the results with your goals, you should be able to come up with statistics which will indicate to you how successful the Show was for your company. By comparing results with non-Show sales costs, you will have a good yardstick by which to measure your current performance and that of future shows. For example:

. Number of sales calls required to close a show lead
. Cost of obtaining each lead (or sale) at the Show.
. Cost of each sale made as a result of the Show.

Compare these results with your non-Show costs of everyday business activities such as:
. Number of regular sales calls required to make a sale.
. Cost of obtaining a sales lead through advertising or other forms of promotions, such as direct mail, print or electronic media.
. Cost of each sale made because of non-Show activities.

Prepare a final report - Now is the time to bring together all of your information. It should be summarized in one final report that will act as a guideline for the planning of future shows, setting goals, and determining which shows are effective and which shows you should pass up.

Your report should assess the following:
- The overall reaction of customers, staff, and others to your exhibit, highlighting strengths and weaknesses.
- Recommendations for extra training, new approaches, etc., should all be included.
- Make a comparison of actual costs to budget.
- Compare actual results to corporate and individual goals.

We recommend that you confirm your booth selection for next year as soon as possible and that you consider sending a copy of your final report to Show Management. The information in your report can be vital to helping us make improvements to the Show and to better educate other exhibiting companies.

Checklist for Exhibitors

Before The Show:
____ Research the attendees- Check the statistics of your prospect to that of the attendee.
____ Set measurable goals - Clear objectives enable you to evaluate results.
____ Buy enough space. - Calculate for visitors, staff, displays, furniture, and equipment.
____ Assign responsibilities - Assign specific individuals for each exhibit task.
____ Plan Pre-Show promotion - Ask salespeople to call customers. Send invitations to prospects. Utilize your advertising.

At The Show:
____ Inform your staff- Tell everyone in your booth what your objectives are and what their responsibilities are in achieving them.
____ Train your salespeople - Agree on what constitutes a qualified lead. Make sure that all the staff can demonstrate equipment correctly and know what literature is available.
____ Set up your booth - Check all signs; run equipment.
____ Look at other exhibits - Make note of any new and innovative ideas.
____ Monitor booth activity - Be flexible.
____ Schedule staff meetings daily - Share experiences
____ Reward sales - Recognize those who make your exhibit successful.

After The Show:
____ Pack up exhibit- Pack carefully. The booth is an investment in your company's future.
____ Meet with all involved to evaluate progress- Look for feedback for next Show.
____ Follow up leads- Make phone calls.
____ Gather information- Track all leads, appointments, sales, and keep a record for next year's Show.
____ Evaluate performance- Did you meet your objectives?