

# At the Booth and Beyond:

**Branded Merchandise &  
Tradeshow Marketing**

## Why tradeshows matter.

Tradeshows are a great opportunity to connect with customers, interact with partners and build new relationships. Some may wonder in an age of constant connectivity, social media and mobile devices, does this traditional marketing channel still matter? The answer is still yes, absolutely.

Tradeshows bring together people with complementary business goals, allowing successful networkers to develop relationships that can reap big rewards down the line. Approximately 99% of marketers said they found unique value at tradeshows that they did not get from other marketing mediums.

Though they tend to have a higher cost per lead than other prospecting methods, relationships developed at tradeshows can be extremely valuable. Tradeshows are an excellent place to make new contacts, as attendees spend an average of 8.3 hours viewing trade show exhibits. They are also a great place to connect with decision makers; with 80% of attendees having some influence on their organization's buying decisions and almost 50% planning to buy one or more products.

99%

of marketers said they found unique value at tradeshows that they did not get from other marketing mediums

In order to capitalize on the high likelihood of post-tradeshow sales, successful tradeshow marketers must do one thing: create a memorable and meaningful brand experience.

### Tradeshow trends to help get the most from your exhibit.

Like virtually every aspect of the sales and marketing process, tradeshows have experienced a dramatic shift in the face of technological and social factors.

To ensure your organization is making the biggest impact possible, you need more than just a booth reservation and a person to man it. To help your brand stand out, use a creative approach that takes advantage of the latest technology and consumer trends:

**1. Create an experience** – Do more than just attend the show. Tell your brand story with powerful visuals, videos and infographics. Music and special lighting can also help to create a unique and memorable experience.

**2. Social media** – It's official, social media is now an essential element of a successful marketing strategy. Allow non-attendees to experience everything your booth can offer by live streaming and using web based technology. Use promotional gifts and giveaways to incentivize social media interaction with your brand by rewarding social media check-ins, status updates and the use of hashtags to boost your visibility online.

**3. Games and virtual reality** – The growing presence of technology at tradeshows suggests interactivity is transitioning from an exhibition booth novelty to a normal experience. A great way to engage attendees is to let them experience your brand in a virtual world, in order to help them understand what you can do for them in the real one.

**4. Generate a buzz** – Draw in people walking by with promotional products. Once you have their attention, differentiate yourself by showcasing something unique or featuring an interactive activity. Don't underestimate the power of a giveaway. Holding a drawing for a branded tablet or other high-quality product is a great way to generate word of mouth publicity.

However you choose to incorporate these trends, it's imperative to implement them as part of an overarching strategy. Consider how each tactic works within your overall tradeshow marketing campaign in order to create a memorable brand experience for those visiting your booth.

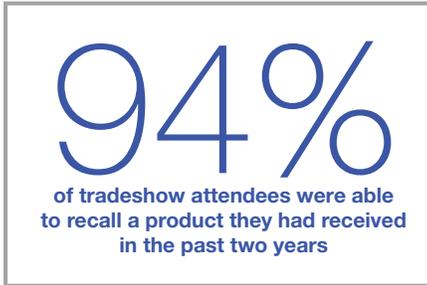


### Using branded merchandise to stand out from the crowd and create a lasting impact.

The average tradeshow has hundreds of vendor booths, each vying for the limited attention of attendees. So how do you stand out from the crowd? Well-planned and executed tradeshow promotions will not only help you stand out from the rest, but will also ensure that your business reaps the rewards long after the show has ended.

Branded items used as giveaways in traditional tradeshow marketing are effective primarily because they're desirable. In a study by the Promotional Products Association International, 83% of respondents reported that they liked receiving branded giveaway items, with an astounding 94% able to recall a product they had received in the past two years. That's an impressive reach. With this in mind, it's no surprise that many companies are heavily investing in branded merchandise. Industry tracker

Ad Age found that on average, business-to-business marketers spend 20% of their total marketing budget on tradeshow and event marketing. With such a significant amount of funding being dedicated to these shows, it is of the utmost importance that these dollars are used to provide the maximum impact.



Luckily for exhibitors, promotional products are among the most cost-effective forms of advertising, according to the Advertising Specialty Institute. With an average cost per impression of only .6 cents, this can be even lower for some merchandise categories such as bags, as they are used on a regular basis and generate more overall impressions.

Regardless of the form, promotional products are more than just a great way to advertise – they also serve as an effective psychological marketing tool. From logoed banners and polos, to giveaways and incentives, custom items are a powerful tool for increasing brand recognition and driving repeat business.

They also help create long-lasting positive feelings about your brand, reinforce your company image and serve as a lasting reminder of your offering.

Cultivate a distinctive show presence by outfitting your staff in boldly colored branded apparel to help them stand out from the crowd. You can complement their outfits with promotional items in matching shades, such as tote bags, USB drives or sunglasses. Pens, shirts, travel kits and hats are other popular tradeshow giveaways that will continue to find use and create brand impressions long after you've packed up your booth. Whatever you choose to give away, be sure it is consistent with your overall brand identity and ties into your event theme.

An ideal kitted solution for all of your tradeshow giveaways.



CEIR: The Changing Environment of Exhibitions, <http://www.tsnn.com/news-blogs/16-powerful-stats-value-trade-shows>  
Exhibit Surveys <http://www.tsnn.com/news-blogs/16-powerful-stats-value-trade-shows>  
<http://www.exhibitsurveys.com/trends>  
<http://www.ppai.org/press/ppai-study-confirms-effectiveness-of-promotional-products>  
link <http://pubs.ppai.org/2015/07/trade-show-marketing/2/>

For additional marketing insight, resources, and upcoming trends visit [YourBrandPartner.com](http://YourBrandPartner.com)

## Lasting Impressions



5,722 Impressions

34% of consumers own logoed bags. Bags are the best performers, generating 5,700 brand impressions each in the U.S. alone.



2,805 Impressions

56% of U.S. consumers own logoed writing instruments



2,805 Impressions

25% of U.S. consumers own branded drinkware



2,650 Impressions

44% of U.S. consumers own logoed shirts

## SmartPapers™

At Staples Promotional Products, we're dedicated to helping you meet your marketing and promotional goals. That's why we've developed our exclusive SmartPapers™, expert guides that address real world issues facing businesses in every industry.

