



Integrating Social Media Into Your Exhibiting Program

By Jefferson Davis, *Competitive Edge*

Social media can be an effective way to promote your presence at a tradeshow and keep your brand or product/service on the mind of attendees. Following are tradeshow social media best practices and a couple ideas for post content:

- If you're new to social media marketing or don't have much time, don't try to dabble in all the options available. Pick the best two that fit your company, product and industry and commit to a consistent marketing campaign.
- Learn what channels your audience is paying attention to. Ask your staff to survey customers on incoming/outgoing telephone calls, or consider doing an email survey using a free program such as surveymonkey.com. Within each channel, if applicable, search for groups that your target customers are in and join them.
- Optimum send frequency is every other week 2 months before the show, once a week 3-4 weeks before the show, 2 times a week 1-2 weeks before the show, and daily during the show. By starting 2 months before the show, your audience has time to register and make plans to attend the show.
- Use the show name and hashtag in your posts and videos to quickly establish relevance and leverage the show's brand.
- Try to keep your posts to 150 words, or less. Your audience is used to having a short attention span when using social media sites. Include photos and video as much as possible. The old saying, a picture is worth a thousand words, is true for social media. According to research released by digital marketing analysts SyndaCast, 52% of marketing professionals worldwide name video as the type of content that generates best ROI.
- Use bullet points to emphasize what they will SEE, DO, LEARN, & GET when they visit your exhibit. Make sure these points address a key issue or concern your target audience is interested in. Don't be shy about saying what sets you apart!
- If you have a new product/service you'll be featuring at the show, consider using a picture or include a hyperlink to related educational materials. Don't over-do it!
- Have a clear call to action. What do you want your audience to do after reading your post? Place your call to action in the middle and bottom of copy.
- Social media is about conversation – not selling! It's a great medium for establishing thought leadership by providing educational content and starting or adding to conversations. Provide links to relevant web content, pdf white papers, case studies, industry intelligence reports, and content rich videos. Share other thought leaders' content that is relative to your target audience.
- Post your content to the show's social media channels to leverage their efforts.

Post Ideas:

- Post pictures/videos of your product/service in action, client testimonials, your exhibit being created, etc.
- Announce your exhibit – provide show name, dates, venue, booth number, what you'll be displaying.
- Share stories about how your product/service solved problems your audience may be experiencing.
- Mention giveaways, new product demonstrations, theater presentations, celebrities, and hospitality events.

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