

Session 6b:

Tradeshows

Finding export sales at international trade events



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Hello, my name is Bob Erwin, and welcome to session 6b of Export-U. In this webinar we will explore the keys to succeeding at international trade shows.

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There are a number of things you can do ahead of time to maximize your chances for success. Certainly, you should

-- Click –1- know your objectives, and have a reasonable expectation of what you can achieve.

-- Click –2- Do some serious advance work, so you can operate strategically.

-- Click –3- Choose your staff very carefully and train them thoroughly. Spend some time developing your

-- Click –4- show marketing plan and collateral materials.

-- Click –5- Carefully choose your booth contractor. And,

-- Click –6- Create a task timeline checklist and stick to it.

USA
SESSION 68:
TRADESHOW

KEYS:

KNOW YOUR PRIME OBJECTIVE

- Sales
- Overseas representation
- New product
- Customer contact
- Market intelligence

BOOM!



© 2002, A U.S. Marine Corps M-1A1 Abrams main battle tank, <http://www.defense.gov/photos/newsphoto.aspx?newsphotoId=1136>

I am often amazed by the number of people who spend considerable sums of money to exhibit at a trade show, but have no clear idea of what they might get out of it.

Typical objectives might include:

-Click-1- making sales,

-Click-2- finding overseas representation,

-Click-3- introducing a new product, or

-Click-4- maintaining contact with existing customers. If your sole intent is to gain

-Click-5- market intelligence, you can often do this better by walking the floor as a visitor. Potential competitors will give you a lot more information if they suspect you might be a customer.

KEYS:

ADVANCE WORK

- **Don't just show up!**
- Develop a task timeline and stick to it
- Research the market
- Avoid frustration
- Maximize ROI



Spend some time doing advance work for the show.

-CLICK-1- Don't just show up unprepared. As previously mentioned,

-CLICK-2- develop a task timeline and stick to it. Also, take some time to

-CLICK-3- research the market before you go. These simple measures can help you

-CLICK-4- avoid frustration, and

-CLICK-5- maximize your return on investment.



KEYS:

PREARRANGE APPOINTMENTS

- Existing customers
- Past attendees and exhibitors
- Trade association membership lists
- Online directories



Photo: SIAL 2014 PAVILION USA, Washington, DC, Ambassador Pagan and Mr. Tolson shaking the USA pavilion

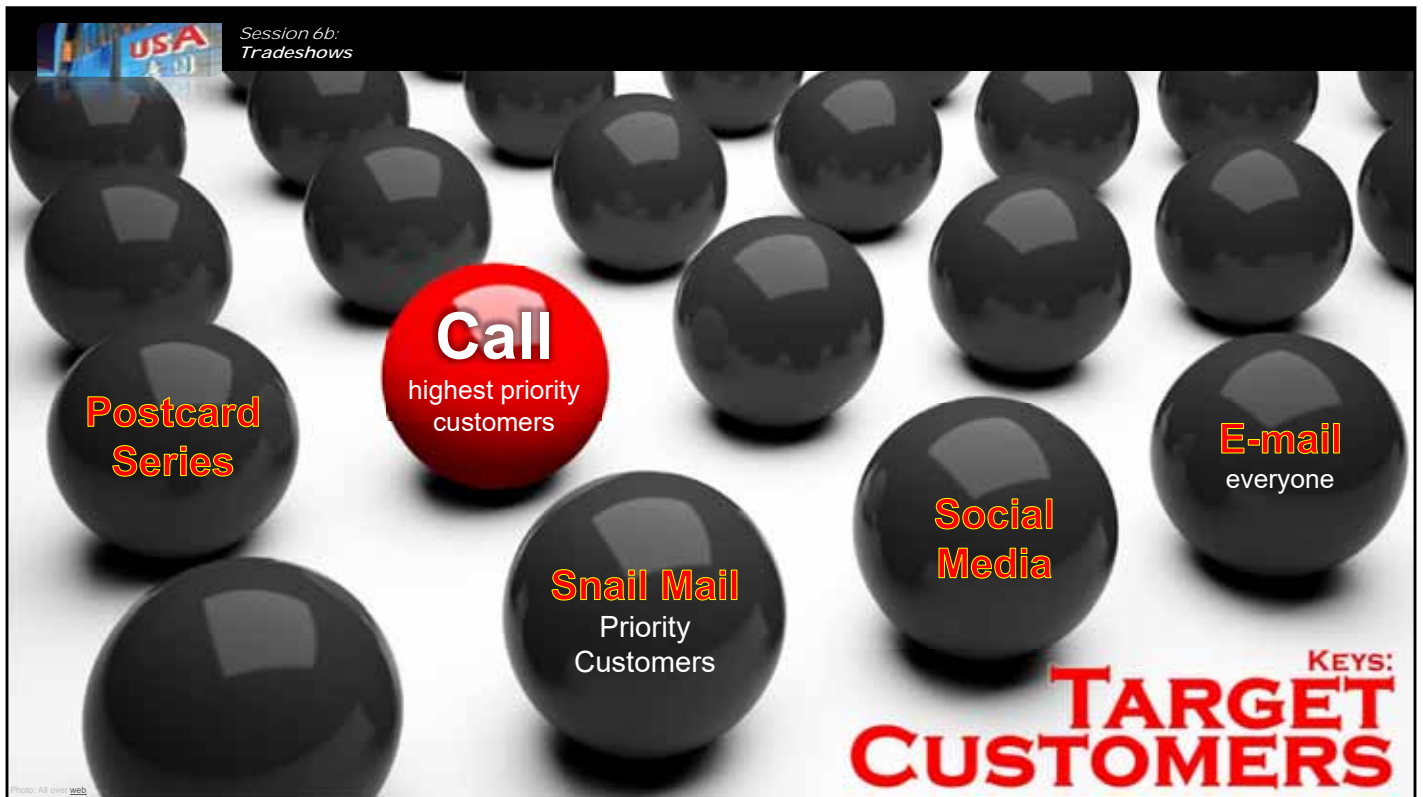
One of the best ways to ensure success at a show is to prearrange your business appointments. These might be with...

-CLICK-1- existing customers. And, and if you have access to the information,

-CLICK-2- past show attendees and exhibitors. Trade show organizers sometimes publish this information for marketing purposes, and it a great resource when you are trying to identify potential customers. You might also find promising contacts, in...

-CLICK-3- trade association membership lists, and in

-CLICK-4- online directories, some of which are listed in the links section of this website.



Be proactive and invite targeted customers to your booth. You can contact them in a variety of ways, but in recent years, plain old

-- click -1- "snail mail" of individually signed letters has become much more productive than sending out mass e-mails. And,...

-- click -2- Call your highest priority customers to let them know how you really want their business. Some companies have found it effective to send a

-- click -3- series of 3 or 4 quick reminder postcards prior to a show. These should be very simple and cordial notifications that say you'll be at the show, and give your booth location. And, while

-- click -4- e-mail is generally less effective than individual contact, it can broadcast your interest to a large number of people.

Finally,

-- click -5- social media can be very effective for some target populations.



KEYS:

GIVE THEM A REASON TO VISIT

- Say you value their business
- New product or pricing
- Hospitality suite
- Map makes you easy to find (multi-lingual is even better)



Remember, give people a good reason to visit your booth, and make it as easy as possible.

Let them know that

-- click -1- you value their business. You might also tell them about

-- click -2- something new with your products or pricing.

-- click -3- Invitations to a hospitality suite can also be effective. Finally, all of your printed and electronic invitation should include a

-- click -4- map of your booth's location, so your customers will have no trouble finding you.



KEYS:

MAKE APPOINTMENTS WITH PRIME CONTACTS

Meet where and when convenient for them:

- Booth
- Their hotel
- Restaurant or bar
- Hospitality suite



Photo: www.Smartfilm.blogspot.com

You should go out of your way to make appointments with your prime contacts. And, be willing

-click-1- meet them wherever it will be most convenient them. This might be:

-- click -2- - in your booth.

-- click -3- - in their hotel,

-click -4- - at a restaurant or bar, or



KEYS:

PROMOTE YOUR PRESENCE

- Be a little flamboyant
- Press release
- Advertise in show directory
- Advance ship trade literature



It's always difficult to stand out from the crowd in a big trade show. One key is to

-click-1- be a little bit flamboyant, and perhaps over-the-top.

-- click –2- Prepare a press release for circulation during the show. A well worded and concise press release can be used in a variety of ways. Certainly you can post it in the press office at the show, and it may get picked up by some of the media. It can also be used as an inexpensive handout for visitors to your booth. Also, consider

-- click –3- advertising in the show directory. And,

-- click –4- advance-ship everything to the show allowing plenty of time for it to arrive before the opening day. I have been in events where the literature did not arrive, and I can testify that it was a BIG problem.



KEYS: STAFF TRAINING

- Customer inquiry forms
- Key talking points
- Invite customers into booth
- Dress code
- Comfortable shoes
- ***“Nobody ever sold nothin sittin down”***



Photo: http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/b/be/Marines_do_pushups.jpg

Carefully train your exhibit staff in how the booth will be operated. Make sure that they are familiar with...

- click –1- customer inquiry forms, and how to complete them. Prepare a written list of
- click –2- key talking points.Your staff should be able deliver the basic message to booth visitors in under 60 seconds. They should also..... proactively engage people who are passing by and
- click –3- invite them into the booth. You should also establish a
- click –4- dress code. Depending on the event this may be casual or formal. Again....
- click –5- wear comfortable shoes because you’ll be on your feet many many hours. And, as my old boss used to say,
- click –6- Nobody ever sold nothin sittin down.



KEYS:

MARKETING & COLLATERALS

- Translate literature
(for some markets)
- Nametags
- Useful giveaways
(people will keep)
 - desk items
(pens, clocks, calendars, etc.)
 - travel accessories
(passport holders, led flashlights)



Photo: USCS, USA Pavilion, Shanghai Expo 2010

I can't overstate the importance of having good marketing and collateral material.

While English is one of the most widely spoken languages on the planet, it is still good marketing to have at least some of your

-- click -1- literature translated into the local language --- especially in Asia. More than anything, this is a polite signal that you want to do business there. You'll also want to make sure everyone has

-- click -2- a corporate name tag, where their first name is printed large for easy reading. Ideally, this should be placed just below their right shoulder, so that it is prominent when shaking hands. If you decide to have giveaways, make sure that they are something

-- click -3- useful that people will keep...perhaps desk or travel items.



KEYS:

CHOOSING AN EXHIBIT COMPANY

- Establish firm budget
- Review portfolios
- Experience with your product?
- **Check references!**



If you plan to have anything larger than a basic 9 square meter booth, you will probably need to hire someone to design and construct it. They must make sure that all the components are correctly assembled, the lighting works, carpet is installed, furniture is rented, etc.

For small booths, you can arrange everything by simply filling out forms in the exhibitor packet. But as the size of a booth increases these “packaged” services are not always adequate.

And, unfortunately, exhibit services are almost always outrageously expensive. So, in order to control costs you must

- click –1- establish a firm budget enforce it. Then, carefully review the
- click –2- portfolios of previous work by the companies under consideration.
- Click –3- Experience with your type of product is also a plus. And, above all: ...
- click –4- check their references.



KEYS:

THE BOOTH

- Location is ^(almost) everything!
- Bigger isn't always better
- Custom designs can be tailored precisely to your needs
- Turn-key rental solutions are convenient



Photo: Based on BAUMAC Show in China.

Booth location is everything. And, you will need to reserve your space as early as possible to secure a good location.

If you can only afford a tiny space you should check to see if a USA pavilion is planned. That will probably give you better exposure. And, remember:

-- Click -1- big isn't always better. Bigger booths certainly are more visible, but they may not be a good investment unless they can attract visitors and clearly deliver your message.

-- Click -2- Custom designs can be tailored to precisely fit your needs, and for maximize impact. But,

-- click -3- turnkey rental solutions are certainly the most convenient.



KEYS:

GIMMICKS DON'T ATTRACT QUALITY VISITORS

- Don't use booth models →
- ~~Cheap giveaways~~



Photo: Princess Barbie, link.

I have found over the years that gimmicks rarely attract the right kind of visitors to your booth. For example,

-CLICK-1- don't use booth models → Typically these people do not attract high-quality booth visitors. And, they can actually hurt sales if they are not knowledgeable about your company and product. You should reserve giveaways only for high quality prospective customers. Having a large pile of

-CLICK-2- cheap giveaways is relatively ineffective. It may be better to opt for more expensive giveaways, produced in smaller quantities, for select visitors only.



The signs and graphics in your booth have a major impact on its effectiveness. Generally, you want to convey a

-CLICK-1- clear and concise message that visitors can absorb in a glance. So, don't clutter up your exhibit wall with reams of small print that no one will stand and read. This information is better consigned to your handout literature. Remember that

-CLICK-2- bigger and higher signs are easier to see from a distance. If you have the option to go above the typical 8 foot height limit, do so. At the same time, if you're going to be on a narrow, and packed aisle, ..

-CLICK-3- place your key information at eye level, in the front of the space, and make sure it is well lit.

-CLICK-4- Any video presentations should be very short --- probably less than a minute.

KEYS:

ORGANIZE GRAPHICS LIKE A NEWSPAPER

- Key graphics and headlines are **HUGE**
- First paragraph quickly tells story



Many experienced booth exhibitors and designers recommend that you organize your booth graphics much like a newspaper article.

-- Click –1- Headlines and key graphics should be absolutely HUGE --- as big as you can make them. And the most

-- Click –2- critical information should follow in a paragraph that quickly tells your story.



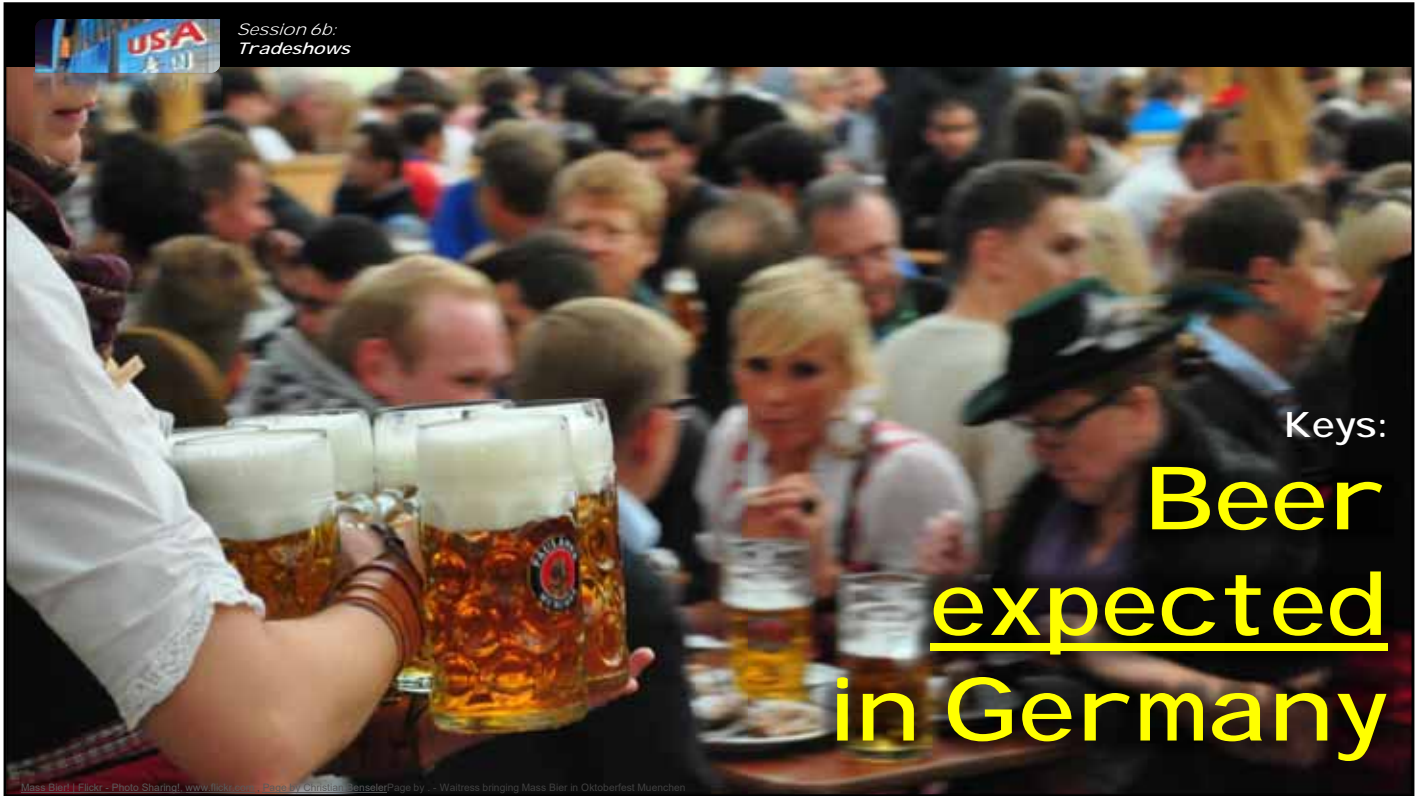
Staffer dress is also important.

If the show is casual,

-- click -1- You might consider buying everyone a matching golf shirt with your company logo. Also, the dress mode is generally

-- click -2- more formal in Europe and Japan than here. Suits and ties are the norm. And again,

-- click -3- take comfortable shoes because you'll probably spend a lot of time on your feet.



Keys:

Beer
expected
in Germany

Another difference:

In the US it is fairly rare to serve alcoholic beverages in your booth, but in some countries like Germany, this is considered an essential part of booth hospitality, at least after 4 PM.

At minimum, you should have soft drinks, coffee, and some light snacks. These are often served during client meetings.



SUMMARY:

Thousands of shows present opportunities

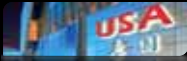
1. Choose the right event
2. Establish budget/ timeline
3. Do advance work
4. Invite key customers
5. Train booth staff
6. Follow-up

IF

Photo: NASA. Sun rising above the earth taken from the International Space Station

To summarize, every year thousands of tradeshows are held all over the planet presenting excellent marketing opportunities, if you

- click –1- choose the right event
- click –2- establish a reasonable budget and timeline. And,
- click –3- do your advanced work,
- click –4- take the time to invite key customers,
- click –5- Properly train your booth staff, and
- click –6- and follow-up all your trade leads in a timely manner.



Session 6b:
Tradeshows

1-800-USA-TRADE or the nearest US Export Assistance Center or SBDC International Trade Center



I hope you found this session helpful, and should you have any questions about it, please feel free contact me ~~by~~

~~-CLICK 1- clicking the e-mail button to the left of the screen- You can also:...~~

-CLICK- call the Commerce Department's Trade Information Hotline at 1-800-USA-TRADE, contact your nearest US Export Assistance Center or visit your Small Business Development Center.

Thank you.

Session 6b:
The End
Tradeshows

