

# MARKETING IDEAS FOR TRADE SHOWS & EVENTS

## Hotsheets

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If the editorial and demographics of an event are the same as your magazine, the cost to participate is reasonable, the marketing is effective, then there's strong potential to generate enough revenue to cover costs and perhaps even profit!

Benefits of participating can also include increased brand awareness, boosting advertising sales, meeting readers and advertisers face to face, increasing subscriptions and single copy sales.

Whether your title is consumer or B2B, very likely there's a show or event that your readers attend. This question should be included in your readership surveys.

There are many niche shows: bridal, cottage, health and wellness, auto, farming, gardening, interior design, real estate, food and drink, parenting, sports (skiing, golf, cycling), hobbies and crafts, antiques, art, dogs, etc. There are also shows geared towards a broader audience, such as Word on the Street and local food and neighbourhood festivals.

### RESEARCH

Be clear and realistic about your expectations before you commit and that comes with research.

Once you've figured out what event may work for your magazine, ask them what their attendee profile and demographics are as well as how many visitors they are projecting.

Find out what other exhibitors are going to be there. If your competitors and/or advertisers are there, then it's a no brainer. You test it.

Ask how they promote their event including web, TV, outdoor and/or print and include the media schedule, viewership and circulation numbers for each medium. This is especially important if you're interested in a sponsorship.

If possible, talk past exhibitors, ideally magazines, to find out how their sales were and if they're going to participate again.

Also consider if the event is conducive to people purchasing items. Participants in a marathon or golf

tournament? A gala evening event? A music concert? From past experience, these types of events aren't strong subscription sales venues.

If the ad rate and booth costs are comparable, consider exchanging an ad in your magazine or website for the cost of renting a booth.

If considering sponsorship at the event, find out what else is on offer apart from the booth: It could be logo recognition on all their media promotions prior to the date (including their media and promotion schedule, attendee demographics and numbers as mentioned above), extra signage at the event, audio and/or visual mention on the day of., or perhaps you can insert a brochure or free-standing insert in their welcome package upon registration.

Once you've decided on a particular event, create a budget. Make sure you get the exact size of the booth and confirm exactly what is included, e.g. table, chairs, electrical outlets, lighting and even the walls of the booth so you'll know how and where to hang your signage (note: sometimes event organizers rent tables, chairs, etc.). Then decide what other items need to be in the booth, how many staff will be required and any other potential expenses.

On the revenue side, figure out how many subscriptions you would need to sell in order to break even. For example, if the total event costs \$500, then you'll need to sell 25 subscriptions at \$25 each (and ask yourself if this is a realistic goal). If the mandate is to sell advertising pages, then work that into the math as well as back issues, premiums and/or single copy sales.

### EXPENSES

Booth Rental = \$500

Staff = \$200

Shipping = \$100

Premiums = 30 x \$5 = \$150

Décor = \$50

**Total = \$1,000**



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## REVENUE

Subscription Sales = 45 x \$20 = \$900

Single Copy Sales = 10 x \$5 = \$50

Advertising Lead (potential \$1,500)

**Total = \$950**

Trade show subscriptions are a strong circulation source for many magazines and are incorporated into annual circulation models and budgets. In some instances, this source can be more cost effective than direct mail. For example, a 5,000 direct mail campaign would generate about 100 subscriptions at a cost of \$4,000 (a loss of \$18 per sub).

## HOW TO ATTRACT ATTENDEES TO YOUR BOOTH

Signage is one of the most important, but often overlooked, ways of getting someone's attention and getting them to your booth. Using the F word "FREE" will pique their curiosity (everyone wants something free and/or want to know they're getting the best deal possible). The copy should be large enough to read and the design eye catching with bright bold colours.

## OTHER METHODS OF BOOSTING ATTENTION:

- FREEBIES - balloons, candy, but not copies of the magazine (current or back issue)
- DEMONSTRATIONS – related to the editorial e.g. cooking, art, fashion shows
- READINGS – authors and/or editors of the magazine
- CELEBRITIES – musicians, movie stars
- CONTESTS – enter to win something an advertiser has provided. Include these names in your next direct mail campaign (but remember to get permission on the contest form).

## THE SUBSCRIPTION OFFER

**Special Show Offer**

**Today Only**

**Save over 50% and get a FREE Tshirt!**

- Don't accept bill-mes

- Give 1st issue of their sub on the spot (so you don't have to pay for postage!)
- Make the sub price round and include taxes, e.g. \$20
- Keep track of sales day to day, and year over year
- Don't give anything away for free unless it's with something that's paid. For example, you could give a free issue if they subscribe now.
- Premiums are good incentives for subscriptions at events because there's no delivery & fulfillment costs. Perhaps there's an advertiser that could provide premiums.
- Consider commission for booth staff to sell subscriptions
- Sell subscriptions to other exhibitors
- Have a free-standing insert or other subscription forms available to hand out

## ADVERTISING OPPORTUNITIES

- Prior to the event, contact other exhibitors with a special rate offer and/or mail copies of the magazine and media kit to them.
- If sponsoring, see if you can arrange a co-op advertising group, e.g. four ads on one page for a special rate only to show participants
- Drop off a media kit to other exhibitors
- Distribute copies of your magazine to other exhibitors (note that some shows frown on this!)
- Have advertising sales reps' business cards and media kits available at the booth

## POTENTIAL RISKS

Some factors that may have a negative impact on attendance, mostly having to do with outdoor shows: raining or extreme heat. Other things that have more to do with the event organization such as not enough parking or accessible by transit, but especially placement of the booth in a low traffic.

Otherwise marketing your magazine at the right trade show or event can contribute to increased brand awareness, boost subscription and single copy sales and perhaps open the door to new advertising opportunities.



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