

## **TRADE SHOWS 101**

If you're thinking of participating in some kind of trade show, local festival, fair, or any other gathering with marketing opportunities, we want to show you ways to make this entire process run smoothly and possibly save you some money.

Trade shows, expos, and other fairs are wonderful! People from all walks of life and with similar or complementary interests gather at the same pre-determined date and place. Attendees and fellow exhibitors have all chosen to participate in an event with products and services that they are genuinely interested in. Where else can you conduct business, check out the competition, and develop new ideas and approaches, all while having a great time meeting people? You are presenting yourself and your products and at the same time establishing contacts for either onsite or future sales and leads.

Trade show booths and tables can be set up easily and efficiently by having a plan of action, clear objectives, and goals. The purpose of this article is to help alleviate unnecessary anxiety and aggravation, from the planning of your event through its completion. Following are some basic 'Trade Show 101' tips and recommendations intended to provide useful insight and guide you through the process.

### **Purpose, objectives, goals**

Be clear and be realistic about your objectives, goals, and expectations. These help you define what you need to achieve (sign-ups, sales, or just gathering contacts) and help you have a successful show. Know the message you will present and make sure it is focused on the interests of people attending your event. Ask yourself:

- ❖ Do I simply want exposure?
- ❖ Do I want to obtain as many leads as possible?
- ❖ Do I seek mainly consumer contacts or business-related, networking ones?
- ❖ Do I have an actual number of sign-ups in mind?

Remember, our business is based on relationships that are cultivated over time. The show can be the start of great relationships that culminate in sign-ups and future business.

### **Show selection**

Selecting a show depends on your goal (what you are hoping to achieve) and your target audience. For example, there may be 20,000 people at a local home show; but if your goal is to find people who have an interest in alternative health, that may be the wrong show for you. Regardless of the name of the event, if you look at an exhibitor list and see that everyone is selling goods or services that in no way relate to your products, you might reconsider exhibiting at that show.

Peruse the show's online site; find their mission statement. Ask for a listing of other exhibitors. Find out what venues the organizers have used to promote the show. For example, did they do print (magazines or newspapers) or online promotions? Are there local fliers? Did they do a direct mailing? If the event hasn't been well publicized, chances are that only a limited number of people are aware of it. Shows can be expensive, especially if they require airline travel and out-of-town accommodations. So be selective. Choose only events that have the best chance of success for your business.

### **National and international shows: Early planning**

Big national and international shows are scheduled one year or more in advance, while smaller regional and state shows may be announced only 3-6 months in advance. Typically, local or community fairs and gatherings are not announced until 2-3 months before the event, sometimes even less.

With large events that are planned a year or more in advance, sometimes a very important financial incentive is used to attract exhibitors; that is, a reduced early registration rate. Because these events are the most expensive, this alone can be the deciding factor for whether or not to participate. If you desire to exhibit with a well-known national event, you must plan in advance.

For substantial savings, take advantage of anything that can be ordered and paid for in advance.

### **Be aware of “add-on’s”**

While everyone expects to pay a booth fee, some events also include fees for furnishings (tables, chairs, display counters, etc.), electricity, water, carpet (where required), and the handling and transportation of materials. Paying for these things onsite can be a hassle, and an expensive one. To obtain the best price, know exactly what you need to order; and pay as far in advance as you can.

Materials’ handling and transportation, for example, can be a huge expense that most (especially new) exhibitors forget about—until they get the bill, that is. With any event held in a larger venue (in cities such as Las Vegas), you will find fees attached to almost every aspect of your booth. Typically in a large trade event, if you ship a box of brochures, fliers, etc., in advance and directly to the site, you will be charged, on average, \$40 per box by the show’s contracted logistics company. Some companies also charge by weight, with a 200-lb minimum, in addition to a venue ‘receiving’ charge of \$40. If you want that box actually delivered to your booth, add another fee for porter service. So plan to transport all necessary items yourself, if possible. Invest in a sturdy hand-dolly and recruit family and friends to help out on set-up day and at the close of the show.

### **Local and smaller events**

The previous information applies mostly to large national and international events. At smaller shows, most of the above concerns are not an issue. You will pay for your booth space, and organizers might provide a table and chairs. If they do, make sure to ask about the size of both the table and the booth itself. In smaller events, you will usually need to bring your own table covers.

Be sure to read the fine print in your contract. If you are not sure of all the rules, question the promoter before you sign on the dotted line.

If you are traveling out of town to a smaller event, most hotels will accept boxes up to five days before your stay. If you are shipping products, let the hotel know to expect them. If you have several boxes or heavy ones, find out if there is a fee for storage.

### **Registration**

When registering for a show, be clear about what is included in the registration fee. Typically, a standard 10’ x 10’ single booth includes the following: carpet, one table and two chairs, a backdrop or drape, trash receptacle, and a small no-frills sign. Additional tables and chairs, as well as electricity and audio/video equipment, can be rented for an additional charge.

Find out if there are any free ad listings or promos. If you have the option to purchase listings, find out how they are being distributed. If such listings are used as show promotions before the event, a wider audience will see your ad, making the cost worthwhile.

If a show program or exhibitor listing to which you can contribute is provided, including a website for the show, write a concise descriptive paragraph of less than 100 words detailing who you are, what you sell, and what your business is about. The following were recently used for a show program.

[70-word limit; no charge; show catalog only; no logo]

For 27 years Simplexity Health has been the industry leader for premium quality and innovative natural wholefood nutritional supplements formulated with organic, wild-harvested blue-green microalgae (*Aphanizomenon flos-aquae*) from Upper Klamath Lake, Oregon, USA. Simplexity Health offers a home-based business opportunity. We have offices worldwide and maintain a U.S. FDA-inspected facility. We hold organic, kosher, and halal certifications.

[120-word limit; US\$300 double entry (print & online); color logo]

For 27 years Simplexity Health has been the industry leader for premium quality and innovative natural wholefood nutritional supplements formulated with organic, wild-harvested blue-green microalgae (*Aphanizomenon flos-aquae*, AFA) from Upper Klamath Lake, Oregon, USA. Simplexity Health offers a home-based business opportunity. We offer a complete line of science-backed wholefood nutritional supplements specially formulated to help achieve optimal health designed to **nourish** with superfood nutrition, **energize** with digestive nutrition, **protect** with antioxidant nutrition, and **renew** with specialized nutrition for adult stem cell renewal. We have offices worldwide and maintain a U.S. FDA-inspected facility. We hold organic, kosher, and halal certifications. Distributor inquiries welcome!

Choose a location that will provide optimum exposure. If possible, request a corner booth (two aisles of traffic), or a location on the main or interior aisle, away from loud speakers and adjacent to the food service and restrooms. Be prepared to pay more for the premium corner location. Avoid side and back walls, as they typically have less traffic.

### Display items

Once you know your target audience and your objectives, select the items you wish to display. Any creative ideas you have on how to promote your favorite products can work well. Experienced exhibitors typically feature just a few items, with the rest as a backdrop or available only for interested prospects. Some place brochures and materials on the table for anyone to take, while others keep informational materials under the table where distribution can be controlled. A clean, simple display and booth are essential. You want to present a focused and engaging image, so keep your booth clutter-free; no drink bottles, food wrappers, or cartons visible.

One way to set up a Simplexity Health presentation:

- Essentials™  
This product perfectly demonstrates the Four Nutritional Building Blocks and how we provide great value for a reasonable cost—"Convenience and economy in a handy packet."
- BG Bar®  
Everybody loves freebies, so offer samples of the bars (cut into bite-sized chunks, 24 per bar). Be sure to have the impressive BG Bar ingredients list on display. For less than two dollars, you can enlarge and laminate this list so that it is easy to read and handle. The laminated copy will last for many events. People will often stop long enough to read it, giving you an increased opportunity to connect.
- NutraBeautiful™  
This is another great hands-on sampler that will attract passers-by. Simply start a conversation with, "Would you like to try our all-natural antioxidant lotion?"
- StemPlex®  
This flagship product will help your presentation stand out regardless of the event or venue. It helps open the door to conversations about how adult stem cells function in a healthy body.
- Newsletter or other informative handouts  
Most times, an event is about making connections. Maximize the return on your investment by offering an e-mail newsletter or series of letters you can easily create from company files or upline suggestions. Offer information that is about health rather than a specific product.

Also include:

- Business cards in an attractive holder
- Graphics (such as banners and posters from the company or your upline)
- Brochures and literature neatly presented; attractive, reasonably priced marketing pieces such as *Superfoods*, *Simple Solutions*, StemPlex® brochure, and *Products at a Glance*

- Fliers on “show specials” (for enrollment or on product; your upline might have experience using show specials)
- Handouts describing future talks, meetings, conference calls
- Display receptacles such as bowls, dishes, and trays
- Table drape or cloth, if not provided by organizer
- Raffle sign (if needed), sign-up forms
- Vase of fresh-cut flowers or a colorful plant for a decorative touch

### **Prepare your tool box**

Trade shows are hectic, especially on set-up day. It is recommended that you put together a small tool box that can be taken to any trade show or event. Lightweight tool or tackle boxes with compartments for keeping small items organized are ideal. Plastic storage bins with snug-fitting lids also work, but they normally don't have a convenient handle.

You can put anything in your tool box. This check-list, based on experience, includes all sorts of everyday items that often are overlooked. It is intended to help you prepare for an event, but of course can be modified to suit your individual needs. Having these items in place well in advance can save you considerable time and money.

### For use during the show

- Shower hooks, string, and clear fishing line—ideal for hanging banners
- A portable, collapsible hand-truck, if permitted by show organizers
- Phone re-charger
- Computer and cables (if needed)
- Extension cords and strip outlets
- Large scissors
- Tape, single- and double-sided
- Velcro<sup>®</sup>, which has multiple uses (for example, for hanging graphics) and is the only approved fastener for company-sponsored booths
- Pens, pencils, and highlighters
- Lead forms, notepads, badge scanner (if available to rent at large events)
- Clipboards
- Paperweights, rocks, or product-filled jars for use in outdoors events to secure loose papers
- Stapler, extra staples, and staple remover
- Paper clips, rubber bands, and bulldog clips
- Small chopping board and knife for cutting up BG Bars
- Toothpicks and cocktail napkins
- Rubber or disposable plastic gloves for handling food
- Waterless antibacterial hand sanitizer
- Paper towels
- Zip-type plastic bags in assorted sizes
- Wastebasket or trash bags for under the table

### Personal items

- Name tag, if not provided by show organizers
- Comfortable shoes and/or an extra pair
- Shoe comfort inserts
- Plenty of bottled water—stay hydrated
- First-aid kit
- Facial tissues
- Breath mints
- Packed lunch/snacks if you are by yourself
- Camera for pictures

Packing up

- Large roll of packing tape, scissors, box cutter
- Black markers
- Shipping labels
- Filled-out courier airway forms

**Before the show**

- ❖ Plan for sufficient time to check in, set up, and decorate.
- ❖ Confirm that any materials shipped in advance have arrived.
- ❖ Make a schedule for manning the booth.
- ❖ Have a clear agreement about how you will divide leads.
- ❖ Place contact information stickers on your materials in advance.
- ❖ Stock sufficient inventory if you're permitted to sell products at the event.
- ❖ Be clear about how to take and process orders, and about what your customers can expect.
- ❖ Prepare in advance for any show specials and pricing (e.g., wholesale for onsite sign-ups).
- ❖ Be ready to follow up on all orders, leads, and contacts.

Promoting your booth and the show

Alert all your existing customers to the show (name, location, hours, and your booth number) via:

- E-mails
- Postcards
- Formal invitations
- Special meetings
- Fliers wherever permitted (health food stores, supermarket bulletin boards, Post Office, city hall, churches, gyms, etc.)
- Handbills on cars parked in front of appropriate nearby businesses
- Classified ad in area newspapers

**After the show**

- ❖ Communicate with the Simplexity Health Community. Everyone at the Home Team and in the field wants to hear about your show; please let us know how it went using [simplexityhealth.com/feedback](http://simplexityhealth.com/feedback) and include pictures we can share.
- ❖ Be sure to re-pack your tool kit so you are ready for the next show. Keep an inventory of the items you have so you know what to add to your kit.
- ❖ Since others may need them for an event right after yours, promptly return all items borrowed from the company.
- ❖ Divide leads according to your agreement with those you worked with, and begin to make follow-up phone calls and send e-mails. Remember to cultivate the relationships. Just because visitors chose not to sign-up right away doesn't mean they should be taken off your list (unless they specifically request it).
- ❖ Always do a post-show evaluation of what you learned, including what worked and what needs to be enhanced, tweaked, or changed for the next show.

By following these simple tried-and-true suggestions, you will be able to say, "Good show!" We wish you all the best as you strive to help others live healthier, more fulfilled lives and at the same time see your Simplexity Health business grow.