

Trade show booth design

Learn how to design eye-catching tradeshow booths through the use of audiovisual, special lighting, motion and large graphics.

Tradeshows are one of the most effective ways to get your company's message and product line out to prospective customers across the United States and internationally.

Virtually every industry in the business world as has tradeshows, at local, regional and national levels.

Today, the displays and booths that are being designed for these types of tradeshows are increasingly becoming more elaborate. That has led to an increasing trend of high-tech or virtual displays that allow for customer interaction. But because of budget constraints and set goals, this is not for everyone. A standard booth can be developed that is just as effective.

According to Mike Mullen, who specializes in developing trade show booth concepts for Skyline Graphics in Livonia, Mich., determining the proper booth for you is based on several factors. What is certain though is the goal is to get your booth noticed.

“It has to be an efficient booth and the buyer or designer has to feel (he/she) is getting a return on their investment,” says Mullen.

“You have about eight to 10 seconds before a person will either decide to stop at your display or move on. A business needs to make their booth stand out – that's what you're after.”

Mullen outlined four features that incorporate a successful booth that will attract visitors:

1. Audiovisual – This can be as simple as bringing a TV and VCR. Other tradeshow exhibitors can use interactive laptop computers, projector screens or laser images with sound. Generally the audiovisual effects are prepared in advance and edited. Let's face it, video and sound are two characteristics that draw attention.

2. Use of lighting – Special lighting in particular, such as a laser show or halo lighting can be extremely effective although costly. But lighting can also be simple. A row of light bulbs plugged into an outlet can highlight a corporate name or a picture of a product. Lighting should be used to make something stand out. After all, a person's eye will first see lighted text or pictures, and you only have a few seconds to garner attention.

3. Motion – Any unusual motion can add a positive influence on your tradeshow booth or display. Examples include: rotating/revolving signs, running water and custom-made props. Just like lighting, video and sound, motion attracts attention.

4. Large graphics – Don't make it difficult for a customer to see what you are selling. Logos, graphic indicators and pictures should be readily visible. Samples of your product should be on-site. Graphics don't have to be too elaborate and don't be afraid of white space on your display. But colors should be bright and noticeable.

Mullen says the industry in which a business operates will help determine how detailed a booth should be. For example, computer software and automotive firms often spend hundreds of thousands of dollars on their displays where other industries, such as human resources and pharmaceuticals are not as attuned to interactive displays and multiple visuals.

“Displays certainly can be super expensive and you can spend as much as you want,” says Mullen. “Those responsible for getting a display for their company need to step back and look at their budgets.”

