

Marketing 101 For Trade Shows

By Terri James

Marketing 101 For Trade Shows

Terri James
terrijames40@hotmail.com

CJ's Candy Wrap-Ups <http://www.cjscandywrapups.4t.com>

Marketing 101 For Trade Shows

When choosing a trade show or fair, do your research. Check the price of the tables or booths and make sure it's within your marketing budget (remember to get a receipt for tax purposes). How many people attended last year. This should determine whether it is a good investment and how much stock you would need to have on hand. If it is a large number of people, you will need to determine if you have enough stock on hand, and, if not, do you have enough time to make more. Don't rush preparations. If you just found out about it last week, be realistic and to whether or not you can really accomplish what you need to do to prepare properly and appear professionally polished at the show. Research what type of vendors they attract. This will determine two things, is your merchandise up to or below what the others are selling and are they complimentary to the look and feeling of the show. You do want your merchandise to stand out, but you don't want to be selling wraps when everyone else is selling farm equipment. However, you could sell bars that have a farm theme, do your research. Also, you do not want to be at an event with 10 other wrappers and be in a position where there's one on either side of you.

Find out what their general price range is for their merchandise. This will be directly related to what they are selling. If there is a vendor selling accessories carved out of wood, naturally, it will be expensive. However, we are referring to the general price range of a variety of vendors. There could be the accessories guy, but there could also be someone selling fudge and another person selling gift baskets. The last two would definitely be selling at a lesser cost.

Lastly, find out how the sales were last year. You could look at a show that charges \$200 for a table and another one on the same day that charges \$50. When you check, the \$50 show averaged sales of about \$10 for the vendors. The \$200 show averaged sales of about \$300. (Keep in mind, we are talking averages) Personally, I believe you would have to sell a lot of chocolate bars to make a \$200 show worthwhile. Those attending these larger shows, should be the businesses who offer a wide range of personalized items, not just bars. Any of the above information can be collected with a phone call to the organizers. If they are reputable, they should be able to give you 5 or 6 names of vendors from previous years as referrals. If they cannot give you names, then it probably would not be advantageous show to attend.

You should perfect the look you want the table to have before you go to the show. Take a table in your home and set it up as if you were at the show. Move things around, try different looks. Make sure you are satisfied long before you go. This will make your set up on show day as easy and stressless as possible. There is nothing worse than going to set up and the look you thought would

work doesn't. It can work against our self-confidence and make you feel unprepared, as you now have to rush through taking it down and starting again. Remember, when you enter that building and start setting up your table, the organizers and other vendors are there and they are watching you. Look as professional as possible from the time you walk into that building. Practicing your set up can make it look like you "do this every day". It will also give you an added boost of confidence and extra time to relax before the doors open.

LOOK PROFESSIONAL AND DRAW PEOPLE TO YOUR TABLE

You will need to have stock on hand without making your table look overcrowded or messy. I would suggest taking a little shelf unit that can sit on top of the table. If you don't have that take a couple of large tableclothes and some boxes of variety of sizes and heights. **DO NOT** take large boxes. Arrange the boxes randomly on the table, don't just line up the larger ones on the back. Cover the boxes with the tableclothes. Make a couple of different size bouquets (one for a baby's arrival and one for Mother's Day) and make sure you place one of them on top of a box in the middle of the table as a centerpiece.

Always bring a couple of tableclothes and make sure that they not only cover the table, but hang down sufficiently on an exposed sides of the table.

If you do wine labels, on one corner of your table, place a lace doily on top of the tablecloth, put the wine bottle and place a matching wrapper beside it as a grouping. If you can, get a picture frame from the dollar store and put a copy of the matching wrapper in the picture frame on the other side of the bottle. Showcase whatever it is you want to sell in a couple of vignettes to give a complete and polished look.

For the bars themselves to stand up on the table, get some mini plate stands from the dollar store, or, as an alternative, a cardboard box. Cut it into strips and, if possible, paint them white. Bend the strips into an "L" shape. This will be your backing to prop the bars up on the table. If you do have a little shelf that will fit on the table, this prop will work very well to display them on the shelf.

Put a variety of different sizes and for different occasions. These bars should be generic. Keep custom ones with you at all times and if someone starts asking questions, immediately pull out a personalized one, and have an order form in your hand. These people **ARE** interested. Hand them your flyer, price list, order form and ballot for your draw (see below), don't wait for them to pick them up themselves. Make sure the bars appropriate to the type of show you are at are the ones that are the most prominent.

In smaller containers on the table (such as a small basket and then a crystal dish) have some nuggets that you are willing to pass out as freebies. Those should definitely be for a variety of occasions, so people can get some ideas.

Have a container (how about a small tin that you've personalized with a label) for a draw. You must invite people to draw for one of the bouquets you've made, do not expect them to stop and notice the draw on their own. The draw cards should have their name, address, phone number, when their wedding is, or baby due, etc. (use this later to check local papers and when the birth or engagement is announced, send a congrats bar). The card should also have a box for them to check if they want to receive either more information on your services, or want to be informed of your specials throughout the year. This becomes your mailing database.

Lastly, make sure your business cards and pricelist are on the table and (if you can) have your portfolio standing up so people can see it clearly. Keep order forms handy!

BIO: Terri James is owner and proprietor of CJ's Candy Wrap-Ups. She resides in Toronto, Canada with her husband and two children, a boy, 13 and a girl 10. Her company offers personalized bars, bouquets, candy tins, trees and wreaths for the special moments of your life. CJ's Candy Wrap-Ups was born in December of 2002, with the philosophy that "Every customer's occasion or event deserves special attention from me". In addition to offering her customers unique ideas for gifts, favours, fundraising and corporate functions, her company has grown to include networking, coaching and mentoring other Canadians who wish to start their own business, accessible through her web site, chat group and as Chair of the Toronto Home-based Business Show.

Terri James
CJ's Candy Wrap-Ups
We sweeten any occasion
Join our Referral Club
www.cjscandywrap-ups.4t.com

Member of Bizy Canadian Women Entrepreneurs
at bcwe@yahoogroups.ca
Sign up now for the Fall Toronto Home-based Business Show, sponsored by BCWE

[Get-Articles.com : 1000's of reprintable business and internet marketing-related articles.](#)

[Submit your article for reprint.](#)