

Storm the Show

*From my experience in the trade show business, I have found that it's all about how you approach things. You can either participate because it's the appropriate thing to do or you can **STORM** the show as if you were planning a military attack. Obviously, you have to **STORM** if you want to win!*

When I first started in the business of marketing thirty years ago, an older and wiser client of mine gave me some very good lessons on how to get ready for a show. I would like to share those with you now...

1. He figured out **SPECIFIC BUYERS** he wanted to talk to at the show and then commanded each of his regional managers to do the same. They contacted these buyers and made appointments to meet first in the booth and then for supper and some entertainment afterwards. New sales to any of these select and hard to reach buyers would, of course, pay for the entire show effort.
2. He **DELEGATED THE DETAILS** of making the show happen to me as an outsider with skills, experience and creative interest to make their show effort interesting and fully executed—on a specific budget.
3. He and the president, who was totally engaged in the effort, decided what products they should sell at the show. With that clear direction, they created **INCENTIVE PRICING AND PROMOTIONAL FACTORS** only available at the show. They then allowed me to advertise those incentives through direct mail and personal letters to their industry prospect base, starting a month before the show.
4. They pinned down specific sales territories that were either open or weak—and they worked through their regional managers to **IDENTIFY NEW DEALER PROSPECTS**. Then, they personally invited them to the show and a breakfast or luncheon meeting.
5. They thought about the products that were receiving some re-engineering or other improvements. They decided on which new products they might buy and resell under their



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The question is, always —
"Are you Ready?"

Harold Wallace

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own brand. Then, they allowed me to create new product releases, photos and other PRESS INFORMATION to present to the editors who were going to be at the show. They suggested that I follow their lead by calling and arranging specific appointments with target editors—which I did.

6. Thinking that the show would probably draw a number of their dealers from across the continent, they proposed a SALES MEETING. They allowed me to create an imaginative enticement to the dealers who attended and we jointly planned a short, action-packed meeting that would take place the afternoon before the show opening.
7. During the show, both the Sales Manager and the President roamed the halls, visiting with both competitors and friends to LEARN WHAT WAS GOING ON and to show industry visibility.
8. AS THEIR COMPANY'S TOP GUNS, they also spent measurable time in the booth talking to both prospects and customers. They really worked both the booth and the show!
9. They brought ONLY SELECT COMPANY EMPLOYEES to the show, and they shuffled them in and out—keeping them only for a couple of days at a time, based on the prior appointments they had made for specific sales appointments. Since the company's top management was at the show, they figured there was no reason for their entire sales staff to be hampered from working their territory—beyond the opportunities they had already created.
10. Since they committed a sizeable amount of money to the pre-show promotional effort, sales meeting, press materials, sales incentives, and substantial WINING & DINING, they were careful about the overall cost and execution of the booth display itself.
 - a. They brought only equipment that was representative of what they really wanted to sell through the show.
 - b. They had a very nice display with room for people to sit and chat, yet it was practical and efficient.
 - c. The display was current and memorable with strong graphics, but was not the most expensive or by any means the most elaborate in the show.

If you have any questions or need advice, feel free to send us your questions.

Comments are also welcome!

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