

Guess what? There is just over one month to go until the doors open at AHG.

Hopefully, the above doesn't send you into a hysteric panic with heaps of swearing and finger pointing.

Whatever your current situation, please grab a coffee or tea and prepare to focus on the things that you can still control in the lead up to the show.

I present to you....drum roll please.....

One month to go – Top ten tips between now and the show

1. Sign up to my free exhibitor training session (webinar).

You should have received this link from AHG and you simply have to register and then be in front of your computer on Friday 14th February at 11am (QLD time), 10am (VIC/NSW) and corresponding times for any other areas. Quite seriously, you will learn more in this hour about exhibiting than you ever have before.

2. Review your SMART Goals. These are the one's that you set last time we corresponded;

☺ Specific ☺ Measurable ☺ Achievable ☺ Realistic ☺ Timely

If you didn't do this or you have only recently joined as an exhibitor, I will forgive you! However, you will need 2-3 of these to help steer your performance at the show. IT IS IMPERATIVE!

3. Prepare your pre-show social marketing activities.

- a. What platforms will you use (LinkedIn? Facebook? Instagram? Snapchat? Twitter?)
 - i. Better to choose two platforms and do them well, than choose 4-5 and not be able to keep up with their demands.
- b. When will you post?
 - i. Start now with teasers. Increase the amount of posting between now and the show. The day before the show should have you doing 5-6 posts per platform.
- c. What will you post?
 - i. A variety of posts focussing on what to expect on the stand at the show, coupled with CLEAR information on how to register for the show.
 - ii. In the week leading into the show, ensure that your posts carry information on the venue, how to get there and your stand number. Make it as easy for the prospect as possible to attend the show and come to your stand.
- d. Share, share, share
 - i. Ensure that you badger your colleagues to share the posts. The extended reach achieved by this strategy will pay strong dividends.

4. Plan a staff briefing to be held in the week leading up to the show

- This is for the purpose of setting expectations, sharing goals and reminding staff that this is a major part of the businesses marketing budget.
- Communicate expectations regarding the time to be at the show and social functions
- Communicate behavioural expectations for the stand – Phones away, no group chats, well dressed

5. Take advantage of any ‘free’ opportunities to promote your brand through the organisers

Show organisers are always looking at angles to promote the show and if you are launching something new or have a tale to tell, this may provide a great way for a magazine or other form of media to promote the show through a product or service that will be exhibited. (sshhhh. Don’t tell them I sent you!)

6. Set a technology rule for the stand

That’s right. We love new rules.....okay we don’t. Ban the use of mobile phones on the stand. Ban the use of any technology device on the stand (barring what you are using for lead capture). Remove the temptation for staff to engage with something other than customers. Why? It sets a precedent. It tells staff that you are at the show for a reason. They are not there to carry on their day jobs at the same time.....or scroll Facebook/Twitter/Tinder/Cat Videos.

7. Check in with all your suppliers for the show

One of the main causes of anxiety leading into shows is the concern that products/services won’t be delivered on time or will be wrong. Remove (or at least limit this anxiety) by reiterating your expectations for these suppliers. It is better to be annoying to them and get what you need than trust them completely and be let down. The cost is too great. I have seen the whole first day of a show wasted because of suppliers letting exhibitors down.

8. Write a process for your leads at the show which includes their eventual follow-up

1. How are the leads being captured (data capture scanner / phone / pen and paper)?
2. Are these set up to capture the information required?
3. Who will own the follow-up of these leads (Select a person and hold them accountable)?
4. How quickly will you follow up and what method(s)?
 - o Remember prompt and personalised follow-up is best
 - o Already write follow up emails, etc prior to the show so there is only a need to insert names/companies/etc.

9. Book something nice for the staff to do during the show

Have a dinner together, bond, share stories, have a drink (not too much) and make the occasion fun. As much as I preach that you are there to work and ensure the show delivers a return, fun will assist this to happen and staff will appreciate some time to unwind and release the pressure.

10. Cut that idea.

What idea? You know. That thing in your head regarding the show that is taking up too much of your time and has questionable value. This is not the time for a risk on a questionable strategy. You now need focus on what you are doing and a firm plan. So, cut any idea that sounds like the above and free up some headspace and possibly some budget.

By no means is the above an exhaustive list of what you need to do.....and, I get it, implementing each of my suggestions is not practical as you are all busy. So, I suggest picking five of the suggestions above that you feel can most help you and get you on the right track.

Hope to see you at the training. Russell.