



EXHIBITOR SUCCESS KIT TIPS + TOOLS

NOVEMBER 1 AND 2, 2021
GREATER COLUMBUS CONVENTION CENTER

Congratulations! You're exhibiting at the 2021 Mid-America Restaurant Expo & Conference

This three-part kit includes information to help make your The Expo exhibitor experience a great one. The kit includes:

- **Before, during and after-show tips + tools**
- **Social media insights for success**
- **The Expo exhibitor checklist**

PRE-THE EXPO

- 1 Set goals and establish a clear call to action** – What do you want to get out of The Expo? Is it sales leads? Want to create brand awareness, generate buzz or launch a new product? You and your team need to set clear goals on what you're trying to accomplish prior to, during and after the show. If your tradeshow strategy is built into your overall marketing plan and aligns with your business goals and objectives, you'll get the most out your The Expo experience.
- 2 Prepare for the show** – Start planning NOW! Companies purchase a tradeshow booth in advance, but most wait to plan for the show until the last minute. Create specific checklists (see attached example) that bring your plan to life, including giveaway/promo items, business cards, booth design elements, staffing, products/services to display and a social media/marketing campaign.
- 3 Pre-show promotions, new product(s) and/or launches** – Let your customers and prospects know in advance that you'll be at The Expo on November 1 and 2, 2021. This can be done in a series of 2-3 email campaigns prior to the show that highlight what makes your products unique or to introduce a new product or service. Supplement your messaging with engaging social media content (pictures and videos) and be sure to share your booth number!
- 4 Set up appointments in advance** – The Expo is a great opportunity to contact customers and prospects or meet with regional industry influencers. Set appointments with them before you arrive at the show. Scout the exhibitor list to see what other companies are attending. Maybe some of them are potential customers as well. The Expo is about making connections that will expand your network and boost your business.

DURING THE EXPO

- 5 Be social media savvy** – If you're not on social media, you're missing out on potential business, and that means money! With social media you're able to reach the masses by reminding people that you'll be at the show, what your booth number is and what products or services you'll be highlighting. You can blast out messages to your entire network or target customers you know will be at the show. If you're not comfortable with how to use different social media platforms, check out our Social Media Tools & Strategies Guide for easy steps to be successful.
- 6 Eye catching booth** – There are more than 350 booths and displays at The Expo, which means standing out is important to maximize your experience. Do something to distinguish your booth and make a good first impression with an inviting and welcoming presentation. Signage, promotional items, flyers and business cards should be carefully chosen to set your brand apart from the crowd.
- 7 Have a strong demonstration** – Make your demo exciting! Attendees like to be drawn-in, have fun and experience what you have to offer first-hand. Attendees are drawn to samples and experiential displays, both of which will increase your visibility and ROI. Create a conversation starter so that potential customers will spend more time in your booth and learn more about your business.
- 8 Provide giveaways** – Contests, promotions and giveaways can be used to help potential customers remember you after the show. Between speakers, demos, panels and visiting booths, The Expo attendees have a lot of ground to cover. A takeaway with your branding, logo contact information, website address and social media channels will allow them to take a deeper look at your business and offerings after they leave.
- 9 Have the right people in the booth** – Your booth should be staffed with energetic and enthusiastic employees that connect with attendees and understand the strategy that was set. Be approachable and engage with customers. Working on laptops, looking at phones, sitting down in chairs is sure to send negative signals to attendees passing by. Booth personnel should be comfortable creating genuine interactions with people walking by.
- 10 Be a speaker** – Inquire about a potential speaking opportunity at The Expo and submit a proposal well in-advance. If you do decide to give a presentation, tell your customers before the show, post on social media and share with attendees you engage with. It's up to you to drive interest in your session.
- 11 Be a sponsor** – This is a great way to raise visibility at the show, partner with The Expo and elevate your business profile. There are many affordable sponsorship options available to increase your brand awareness, front and center.
- 12 Scan, Scan, Scan** – You need to have a plan of action for identifying legitimate leads and capturing customer contact information. Lead capture is the only way to gain intentional leads. There are many options for this, usually provided by the The Expo registration team.

- 13 Experience** The Expo – Just because you’re exhibiting at The Expo doesn’t mean your experience ends there. This is the best regional tradeshow in the Midwest focusing on innovation, technology and trends. Consider this as an opportunity to learn and grow as a business, take advantage of the professional development opportunities and take turns with staff to check out programming and other booths. Make the most of your time by growing your sales leads, connections and industry knowledge.
- 14 Re-sign for 2022** – Don’t leave the The Expo show floor until you’ve re-signed for the next year. You’ll be able to secure a great location for your booth in 2022, secure the best price, and capitalize on the energy and buzz as you grow those connections throughout the year.

POST-THE EXPO

- 15 Follow-up promptly** – Although the show is over, your work is just getting started. Follow-up with attendees. Send an email to thank them for stopping by and gauge their interest. Keep the buzz going by generating post-tradeshow content on your blog or social media channels. Don’t let the end of the show be the end of your relationship! Create a multi-touch campaign after The Expo by providing information that will lead up to the final hard sell.
- 16 Track success over time** – If you’re already tracking your leads, add The Expo to your list. It may take several months for your leads to pan out and it will be useful to know that the connections you made at The Expo developed into sales opportunities. Exhibitors often end up selling major equipment or service to attendees up to 9 months after the show.
- 17 Debrief and follow-up** – At the end of the show, your team should review the results. What went well, and what should be done differently in 2022. Even with a smashing success of a show and many leads, there’s always room for improvement. You’ll want to draw more customers and lead with your dynamic booth and marketing campaigns, which result in long-term engagement and high ROI.
- 18 Plan your work, work your plan** – Any company on almost any budget can be successful at tradeshow marketing if they take the time to develop a solid strategy, execute it and follow through with post-event activities. Your opportunity to make it all happen is at the 2021 Expo. The right people are there, and the time is now!