



## Top 6 Exhibiting Suggestions for THA Exhibitors

By Jefferson Davis, Competitive Edge

A tradeshow works best when the show organizer and exhibitors work together in a spirit of harmony to “sense and serve the needs” of show attendees. To help improve exhibitor performance and ROI, and improve the quality of the attendee’s experience in the exhibit hall, the E3 Exhibiting Effectiveness Evaluation was provided again on a complimentary and random basis to 50 exhibitors.

Here are my top observations about what I believe exhibitors can do to improve the exhibit hall experience for their company and attendees. Please be sure to read the 2016 report for additional suggestions.

1. **Hospital executives come to learn... exhibitors should too.** Because exhibitors can attend educational sessions for FREE as part of their exhibit package, why not review the roster of sessions beforehand and plan to attend sessions on topics relevant to what you offer? Arrive 15 minutes early, try to meet a few people before you enter, and plan on hanging around 15 minutes afterwards to meet a few more people. Then, invite them to visit your booth to continue the conversation. Who knows, you might learn something important from the sessions too!
2. **Get “in the mind” and “on the agenda” of attendee before they arrive.** Because of the many educational sessions and the limited amount of non-opposed exhibiting time, it is critically important that you use targeted pre-show marketing to try to get on the right attendees’ agenda before you get to the show.
3. **Window shoppers don’t open their wallets.** Once again, far too many booths had tables across the front leaving attendees standing in the aisle, thereby physically separating them from your staff. Smart retailers know the only time people spend money is when they are “in” your store. Move the tables off to the side and get more hospital execs in your “store”.
4. **Less swag, more relevance and value.** Busy hospital executives are not attending an educationally driven conference to fill their bags with swag. They are there to find solutions to known and coming problems. Far better to identify what specific problems you can solve, execute a well-designed pre-show marketing campaign, and use your swag money to reward attendees for putting you on their agenda. Be sure to make the reward unique, and useful. And ideally, tie it to a message or theme.
5. **Don’t confuse your brand space with your office space.** Working on computers in your booth is OK at times... like when no one is in the exhibit hall. But doing so while attendees are in the hall sends a clear message that you’re not interested in interacting with them. If you’re not interested, why should they be?
6. **Reduce grab n go.** Once again, too many companies had a bunch of literature and swag setting on a table. This encourages hit and run behavior and also limits your ability to engage the visitor. A better strategy would be to have literature, but distribute after conversing with a visitor. Ditto for your swag.

We hope you will consider these suggestions as you plan your exhibit for next year’s show. Remember, just one small change can make a big difference in your results. For more information, be sure to review the **Standout Exhibit Reports** on the exhibitor section of the THA show website too.

**For questions about improving exhibiting performance contact:**

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