

On-site Orientation

In addition to a pre-show meeting, it's also a good idea to conduct an in-booth orientation at the show, before the exhibit hall opens to attendees. Here, you're putting together all of the pieces from the pre-show meeting, plus adding the exhibit environment to the mix.

By Candy Adams

Typically host an in-booth orientation session about an hour or so before the show opens. That way, the booth is completely set up and staffers won't have any surprises come show time.

Keep in mind, however, that even exhibit walls have ears. In fact, some of my best unintentional corporate reconnaissance has occurred during a competitor's pre-show meeting in the neighboring exhibit. So if you have confidential information to discuss (such as product-launch dates, pricing information, competitive intelligence, etc.), I suggest moving to a more private location, such as a conference room.

The following is a list of action items you can use to make your next on-site orientation as efficient and effective as possible.

- ▶ Point out the proximity of your exhibit to the following: exhibitor registration (if you're hosting orientation before the show opens), exhibit-hall entrances/exits, business partners' exhibits, competitors' exhibits, restaurants and fast-food venues, restrooms, fire and emergency apparatus (such as fire extinguishers), coat checks, shuttle and taxi pick-up and drop-off locations, etc.
- ▶ Discuss the overall booth layout, including the location of the info desk, product areas, demonstration areas, theater(s), meeting room(s), storage areas, etc.
- ▶ Note the location of the staff schedule (including cell-phone numbers for all staffers), message center, collateral literature, press kits, staff business cards, office supplies, lead-retrieval equipment, etc.
- ▶ Provide thorough training on how to use the badge scan/lead-retrieval system (or lead forms), including hands-on testing of each staff members' badge and a plan B in case of electronic-system failure.

- ▶ Preview any in-booth demos and/or live presentations.
- ▶ Review collateral literature (data sheets, brochures, etc.) and discuss who should get these materials and how it should be distributed.
- ▶ Outline promotional programs and any related give-aways (and the corresponding qualification procedure).
- ▶ Discuss emergency procedures (e.g., what to do in case of an illness, fire, or other evacuation). Note a safe location where staff should congregate in the event of an evacuation so they can be briefed and accounted for. **E**

