

The endurance of trade shows in a digital world

By [Gary Corin](#), issued by [Specialised Exhibitions](#)

7 Jan 2019

Marketing. The term has (especially of late) been deconstructed, reconstructed and analysed from every angle, curve and graph. Its core, however, has continuously remained robust and unchanging: communication.



As with most successes, if you connect with the heart of a matter – be it message, value, customer, product, services or more – you have a sure win.

Since The First Great Exhibition, held in London in 1851, trade shows have provided a perfect platform for business people to ‘click’ with both customers and other business people. This is simply because of an open channel of communication.

Naturally, the stronger a message and the more it resonates with the recipient, and of course bounces back and forth between sender, the greater the chances of success. This unique and ideal communication environment is the reason that we firmly acknowledge to be the lifeblood that has kept this almost two-century-old marketing tool not only alive, but also pulsating with endless energy.

Furthermore, what trade shows have to their advantage today, when compared to their humble beginnings, are the added platforms that are available to both sender and receiver. This means that the symbiotic relationship between trade show floor and the various levels of digital channels have the ability to put marketing messages on steroids.

Statistics confirm: the stand is worth it

The continued popularity of trade shows is constantly being studied to see exactly why this traditional marketing tool is growing when other older style marketing means are struggling in the digital economy.

Strong statistics are regularly being updated, all backing up the power of trade shows, and marketing execs trust the influence of events too. According to Forrester Research, events make up for 24 percent of the B2B marketing budget. By 2020, 3.2M global professional events will be taking place on an annual basis. Companies believe in the power of live events and this trend will only continue to grow in the coming years.¹

To further assist with visualising the impact of trade shows, US based event experts, put together a list this year highlighting *20 powerful stats on the value of trade shows and expos.*²

Based on information gleaned from the Centre for Exhibition Industry Research (CEIR) amongst other sources, this list aims to show that trade shows give exhibitors and attendees the chance to talk face-to-face, allowing exhibitors to raise awareness of the company and its brand while making it easy for attendees come to see and learn about what's new in products and services.

Lastly, from this list, it is worthwhile highlighting that studies confirm that an astounding 90 percent of expo attendees have not met face-to-face with any companies exhibiting at the show in the 12 months prior to the event. Therefore, trade shows provide a great opportunity to network and build relationships with current clients and potential prospects.



Trade shows alone are not enough

Naturally it has to be noted that trade shows are not an island. As touched upon earlier, trade shows needs to form a healthy relationship with digital efforts. The entire strategy should be to maximise an exhibitors' trade show marketing and embrace both own and organiser's digital plans.

When it comes to harnessing digital channels for your trade show event, there are three distinct phases on which to focus: before, during and after the show. Each phase has its own goals:

- Before the expo: Here, the goal should be to promote the show to your current audience, including existing customers, to encourage attendance, in particular to your exhibition stand.
- During the show: At the event itself, the goal must be to collect as much data possible about the attendees you meet.
- After the show: At this point, the objective is the development of relationships with as many of the attendees of the show to generate sales.

As businesses around the world are grappling with designing lifelike customer experience strategies encompassing artificial intelligence (AI), chatbots, natural language understanding and more, trade shows already present all of these on a real live platform. Take advantage of effective trade show communication now and be the hero of your company.

¹<https://blog.bizzabo.com/event-marketing-guide>

²<https://www.spingo.com/blog/post/20-powerful-stats-on-the-value-of-trade-shows-and-expos>

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