

SUCCESS IS UP TO YOU

Does the official golf selling season begin with the weather or an event? The answer is both. The weather reminds buyers that it's time to dust off their clubs. The events happen each winter and early spring when golf shows across Canada attract thousands of buyers, dreamers and tire-kickers providing dealers and operators with opportunities to promote new products and spark interest in their properties.

The beauty of exhibiting at one of these shows is that the people who attend are high quality leads. Studies have proven that seventy-six percent of golf show visitors have developed an agenda before they attend. Eighty percent are prepared to make a purchasing decision within the few months and the visitors have a high level in interest in golf or else they wouldn't attend the show.

With this motivated group of visitors you would think that everyone would be

happy. Yet they are not. From the exhibitor's prospective poor planning and execution often result in lost opportunity and a negative return on their show investment. From the visitor's perspective when they are poorly treated and ignored they often leave the show feeling like someone has deflated their dreams. Yet, with a bit of planning all this can be avoided.

Exhibitors must seize the opportunities that present themselves at tradeshow. Sales are there for the picking! If you have exhibited in tradeshow in the past and were less than pleased with your results, it is important to analyze you and your staff's performance both prior to and during the show. Often times, exhibitors do not take control of their booth at the tradeshow, and that is the biggest mistake.

How to Successfully Exhibit at Consumer Golf Shows

The following lists six steps that exhibitors can take to be successful at the next golf show:

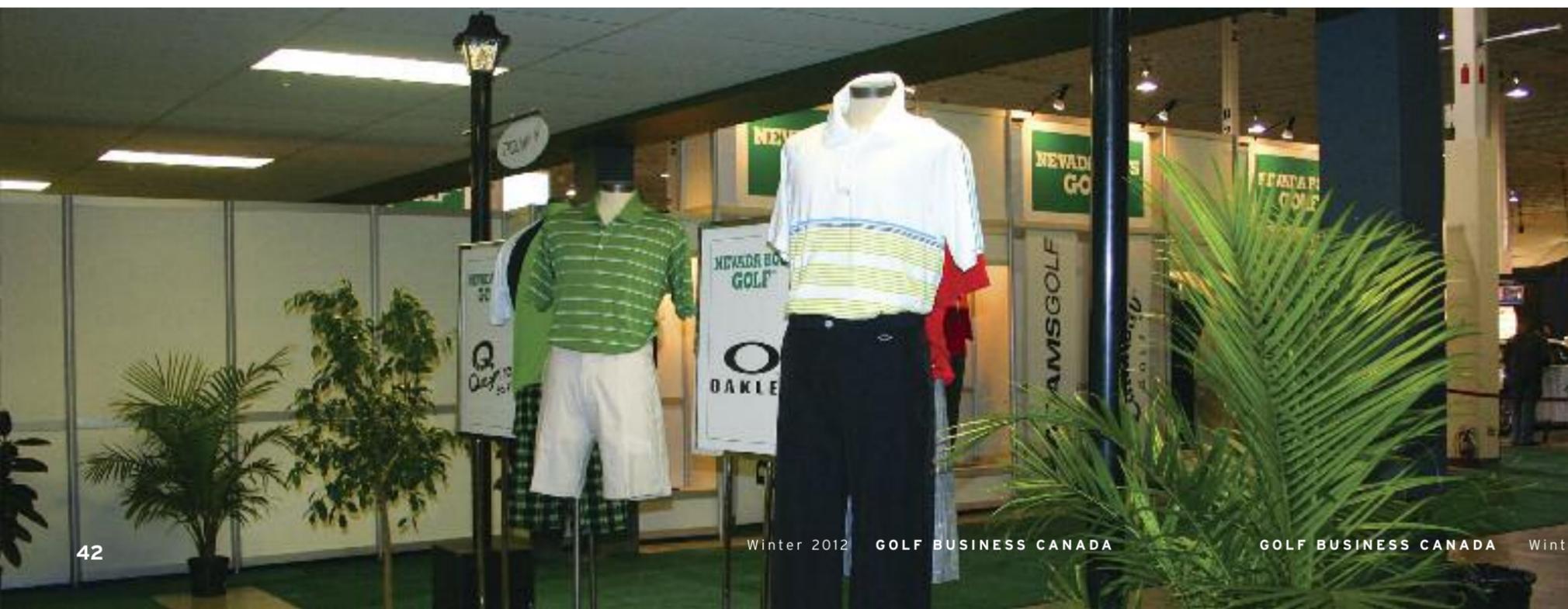
1. GET FOCUSED

When asked, most exhibit staff would state that their primary objective at a golf show is to sell a product or create awareness of their facility. While this makes good sense, the reality is that not all attendees are prepared to make decisions on the spot – in spite of the seduction of show specials.

Studies of similar shows have proven that a dealer or operator who uses the show leads for future follow-up has the ability of increasing the revenue generated from their participation by nearly fifty percent. What this means is that exhibiting objectives should include immediate results expected at the show as well as long-term post show activities that happen as a result of a well thought-out follow-up plan.

Your objectives can fall into one of two categories: sales which are those that lead directly to a sale such as selling products or obtaining immediate reservations; to communications which include such

It's Show Time!



Where The Golfers Will Be in Spring 2013 ... Consumer Golf Shows in Canada

London Golf Show
February 23 & 24
Western Fair District, London, ON
www.westernfairdistrict.com

Toronto Golf & Travel Show
March 1 - 3
Metro Convention Centre, Toronto, ON
www.torontogolfshow.com

Vancouver Golf & Travel Show
March 2 & 3
Vancouver Convention Centre, Vancouver, BC
www.vancouvergolfshow.com

Ottawa-Gatineau GOLFEexpo
March 9 & 10
CE Centre, Ottawa, ON
www.ottawagatineaugolfexpo.ca

Montreal GOLFEexpo
March 15 - 17
Place Forzani, Laval, QC
www.expogolf.ca

Atlantic GOLFEexpo
March 23 & 24
Casino New Brunswick, Moncton, NB
www.golfatlanticexpo.ca

Winnipeg GOLFEexpo
March 23 & 24
Red River Exhibition Park, Winnipeg, MB
www.winnipeggolffexpo.ca

things as creating a presence or awareness. Both are valid and measurable. Your first job is to determine what makes sense for your business and then focus all your efforts on achieving it.

2. ENGAGE CUSTOMERS

Customers know about golf products, ideal golf vacation locations, and most of the local golf facilities long before they come to the show. They have done their homework on the internet and have compared your offerings with the competition. They attend the show hoping to get a better grasp for how: your products feel in their hands; specific locations fit into their vacation plans, and of course, where they should be golfing locally for the upcoming season. Knowing this tells you that your time should be spent engaging your customer in a conversation about their plans and goals rather than pitching the features and benefits of your facility, which they have already seen on your web site.

There are several techniques exhibitors use to engage visitors such as draws, promotional products and brochures. While each of these has considerable value, they should not replace the value of the personal interaction. Here are a few tips on how to make your investment in these techniques more impactful:

Draws

Draws are a great tool to use to encourage attendees to stop at your booth. The best prizes are those that directly relate to your property or product. So giving away a complimentary round of golf for a foursome, a set of irons or a series of lessons makes sense. The draw box should be somewhere that is easily accessible to encourage people walking by to complete a ballot. The ballot alone does not constitute a good lead so to improve its values here are a couple of things to keep in mind.

Ask for complete contact information such as name, address, e-mail, telephone etc. Then ask for a few bits of information

that will help you understand the visitor's potential such as age group, and type of holidays they have participated in previously as well as the social media sites they use.

Add this line, in bold letters, to the bottom of the ballot, **MUST BE VALIDATED BY A BOOTH PERSON.** This gives you a chance to engage the visitor in a conversation where you can learn more and be better able to access the value of the lead.

Promotional products

Giveaways are a good tool when you give them the value they deserve. You do this by removing them from your counter-tops where anyone can grab one on their way past your booth. A better technique is to save the item to use when the conversation is over. This reinforces the conversation, is a welcome surprise and leaves the visitor with valuable contact information.

When the conversation is over you can say something such as: "Thank you for taking the time to visit our booth. I have a sleeve of balls for you as a thank you. If you would like more information about our facility, our website is engraved on each ball."

Brochures

More and more exhibitors are moving away from providing the hard copy brochures that they find are too expensive, take up a lot of booth space and the mostly go unread. A better solution is to have one or two brochures prominently displayed marked "BOOTH COPY." This encourages attendees to ask for your brochure that you can promise to send after the show if they will leave their contact information.

Alternatively if you include a QR code somewhere in your booth attendees can access the information they want immediately on their Smartphone. For more information on QR codes for your facility please refer to the Technology article in your Spring 2012 edition of *Golf Business Canada* or access it online at www.ngcoa.ca by clicking on the *Golf Business Canada Magazine* image.

3. GATHER RELEVANT INFORMATION

Have you ever heard a booth staffer say something like this to a visitor: "When you're ready give me a call?" We all have. To be successful you need to control the entire sales cycle particularly with those visitors who are not prepared to make a decision at the show. You will need to establish methods of gathering relevant information so a follow-up program can be implemented.

4. SET REALISTIC EXPECTATIONS FOR YOU AND YOUR STAFF

Working at a golf show is different than working in a showroom, or talking to potential visitors on the phone because of two variables; time and space. You could have hundreds of prospective customers drop by your booth and a small space to engage them in conversation.

Your staff needs to understand these restrictions and hone their skills so that they work in this unique selling situation. There are five basic steps they need to take:

Engage visitors

Most people are comfortable handling customers in normal selling situations - in a store, office or a showroom. Exhibiting at a golf show is different. With dozens - maybe hundreds of people walking by, there are two choices: to hang back and let the visitor approach the booth or to proactively approach them.

Approaching strangers is not easy. For many it is the number one social fear.



Being proactive in the exhibit hall can be terrifying with fears of being rebuffed or appearing pushy or simply not knowing how to approach gracefully. Think about approaching as a compliment - an attempt to engage visitors that nine times out of ten they will appreciate.

A good opener engages the visitor in a meaningful conversation about them rather than launching into a pitch about a new feature, or a show special.

Qualify

Before beginning a discussion it is imperative that you understand the primary concerns of the visitor. You and your booth staff need to understand that in the first few moments of the interaction the visitor should not be told anything. Rather, the booth staffer should gather some relevant information about the visitors' concerns, lifestyle, golf experience, vacation preferences, etc. This reveals the information you need to properly craft the presentation.



Make effective presentations

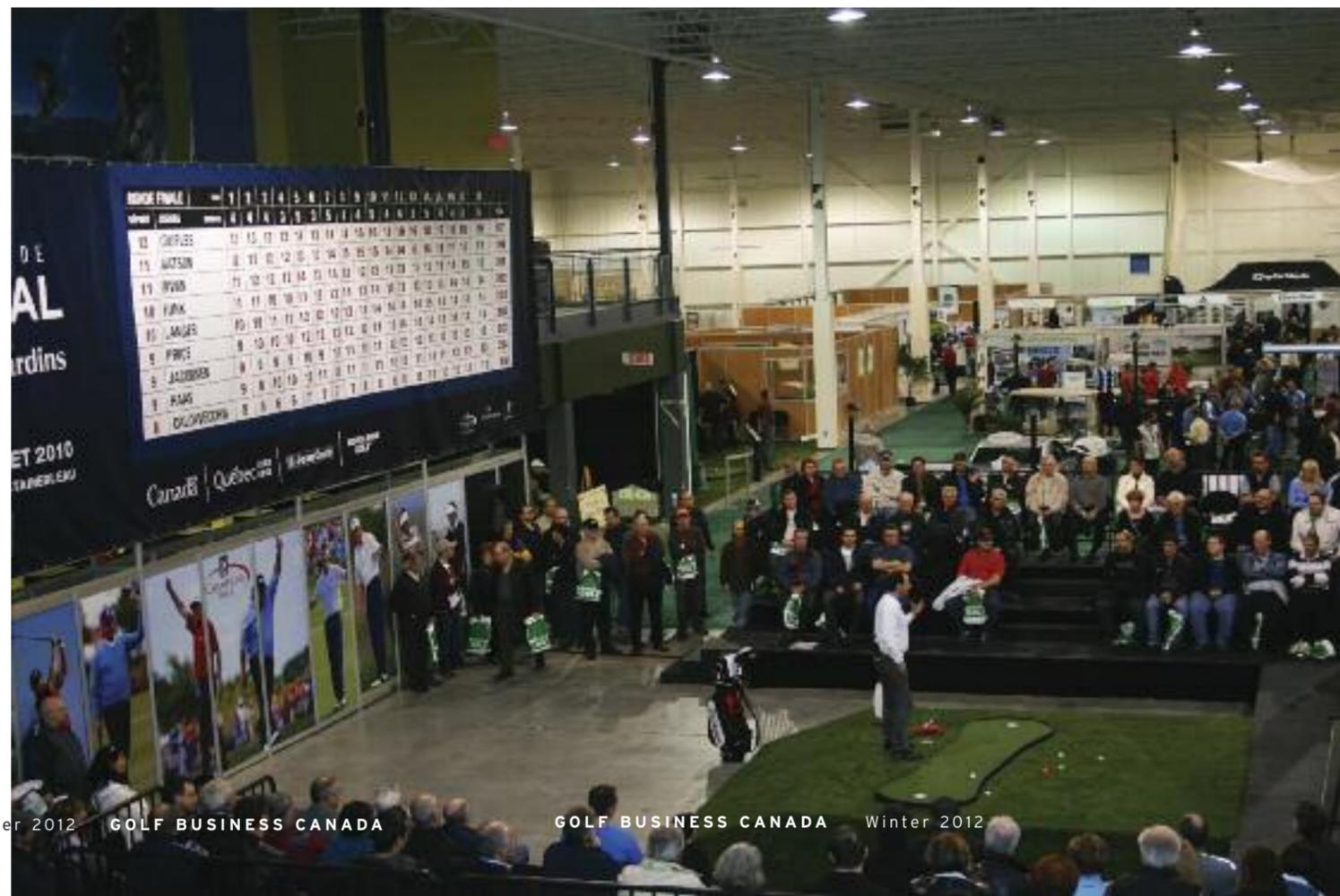
According to psychologists, the human brain can remember seven pieces of information at one time. Tell visitors too much, and the chances that they will remember all of it are slim.

The trick is to focus on those features and benefits the visitor will relate to.

In order to keep you focused, memorize my presentation mantra and before you speak, play it through in your head. Here it goes: Tell visitors what they want to know rather than what they need to know. What visitors want to know comes from their perspective. These wants were uncovered during the qualifying step. What visitors want to know is from their perspective. What they need to know is from your point of view. Stay focused on them.

Close to a commitment

If you want the visitor to make a reservation or buy a product then you need to ask. However, they are not always willing or able to do so on the spot. So, think of a back-up objective that will leave you



with some sort of commitment such as including their name on your mailing list, a subscription to a newsletter or invitation to events you are planning in the future.

Disengage

The last step is to wrap up the conversation effectively so you can gracefully move on to the next visitor. On the show floor, effective time management is the most valuable asset of a booth staffer. There is nothing wrong with spending extra time with a visitor by getting into a detailed discussion during low-traffic times. However, at high-traffic periods you and your staff will be missing opportunities by continuing to talk to the same person after the show objective has been met.

The key consideration for you and your staff is to ensure that they are trained on the nuances of working at a golf show. A little bit of preparation goes a long way towards your success.

5. PROMOTE YOUR PRESENCE

The show management will be doing a lot to promote the golf show in your local area but to be successful you need to understand the part you play in promotion. Prior to the show you should be inviting your customers and prospects to visit your booth. Mention any show specials and other special features that might whet their appetite. You can send invitations electronically through e-mail or text or you can send them by mail or deliver them with each sales interaction. This puts your business on the prospects short-list of booths to visit when they come to the show.

6. FOLLOW-UP

Follow-up is what separates the truly successful from the rest. Studies have proven that nearly eighty percent of all leads collected at trade shows are mishandled. Of these a whopping forty-three percent are called long after the prospect has made a purchasing decision with another dealer and nearly eighteen percent are never called at all. Remember that your revenue from a golf show can be raised by nearly fifty percent when you develop and implement a strong follow-up program.



If you have created a method of recording contact information at the show, the next step is to ensure that this information is added to your database and an aggressive follow-up program is put in place. The first contact with a visitor should be within days of their visit to the show. The chances are that they came to the show for a reason and left excited about the possibilities. You do not want to leave this initial follow-up too long, five to seven days after the show is appropriate. The trick is to develop your follow-up plans before the show begins.

You can create a post-show mailer or make phone calls. An important element of the program is to record the contact information and document each contact that has been made. Ensure that you or your sales staff are aggressively following up on the leads you have collected.

Another winning technique is to schedule a post-show event such as an open house for interested golfers or a golf improvement seminar. You can also use your post show activities to promote subscriptions to a newsletter or special promotional offers.

PLAN FOR SUCCESS

Some exhibitors at golf shows produce little results while others, with more extensive planning, see results that are off the charts. These six steps are critical for a trade show strategy that will ensure your business is in the latter category. Remember that success is up to you and your performance prior to and during the golf show.



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*2013 Consumer Golf Shows
Can You Afford Not To Exhibit?*



**TOP 10
Reasons
To Exhibit**

1. Reach Primary Golfers
2. Make Immediate Sale
3. Introduce New Products
4. Test Market Your Product
5. Strengthen Market Share
6. Communicate Directly
7. Increase Course Awareness
8. Drive Traffic To Web Site
9. Pre-Sell Golf Rounds
10. Expand Your Database



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