

EXHIBITOR SUCCESS

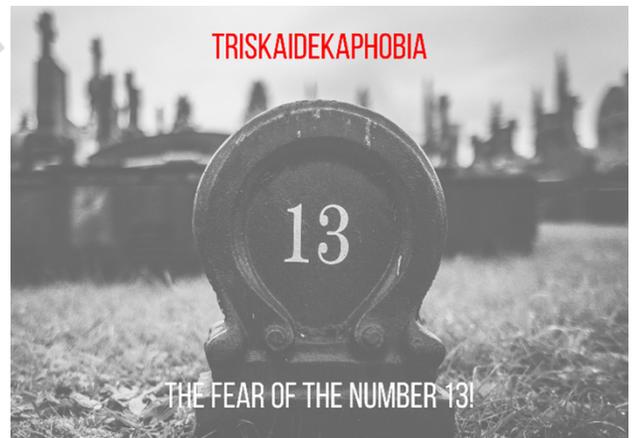
PROGRAM

INSIGHTS FROM [THE EXHIBITION GUY](#) ... Stephan Murtagh

The 3 Key Numbers of Exhibiting©

In life for many or some, the number 13 evokes fear and is seen as unlucky. In fact, there's even a phobia name for it...TRISKAIDEKAPHOBIA! The fear of the number 13. Before you think I have gone off the deep end, there is a reason and a very logical one as to why I am telling you this...and it relates specifically to Exhibitions and Exhibiting.

Post Covid, there is understandably a fear with the whole area of getting lots of people into a big room or exhibition and this has to be a judgement call and you need to feel comfortable with it. Many potential exhibitors also fear the whole concept of exhibiting as there are lots of strands to it. To allay these fears, we as organizers or suppliers, to exhibitors need to make it easier for our clients. This really is the premise of this article.



The reason why the number 13 is lucky for exhibitors is because it's simply made up of the 3 key numbers (3+4+6) that will really define your success in the exhibition hall. Rather symmetrically, each number refers to pre-, during and post-show...One number for each .

⇒ 3 – Pre-Show

Key: Setting 3 Clear Objectives

Exhibiting is a big investment and understandably you want to do well and achieve as much as possible. This is perfectly logical. However, the old expression “Jack of all trades, master of none” is particularly applicable here. If you set too many objectives, you spread yourself too thin and risk a real danger of not achieving any of them. Equally if you set just one (very often a sales number) you too run the risk of failure. It may surprise you but as someone who works with 3-4,000 exhibitors per year...over 50% of

EXHIBITOR SUCCESS

PROGRAM

INSIGHTS FROM [THE EXHIBITION GUY](#) ... Stephan Murtagh

them look blankly at me when I ask them what their objectives are for exhibiting. “Oh, we want to sell as much as possible” or “We are launching a new product.” The real key to successful exhibiting is about setting your 3 clear objectives. This, of course, will vary per company but if you look at the 9 key reasons why companies exhibit, this should help you identify what are the most important for YOUR company.

1. Launch New Products
2. Find New Staff
3. Meet Existing Clients
4. Market Research
5. Get Appointments
6. Find New Distributors
7. Brand Awareness
8. Demonstrate Products
9. Make Sales

When we identify these, we then have to put in train a plan to make them happen and this is where the metrics or numbers come into play. As an example, If you need to get 11 appointments for post-show...how many conversations do you need to have at the show? Or if you know that the average number of demos to get a sale is 6...How many demos do you need each day. I appreciate I am over-simplifying this but that’s because it is simple if we know what we want to achieve.

Ultimately, we want to achieve sales by exhibiting but what actions are we taking to lead the sale on its journey? This is exactly why we set objectives. People often say to me... “I never thought about shows as a way of finding new staff” – Well staff retention/acquisition is one of the biggest challenges right now. Combined with the cost of Recruitment fees, it becomes a nightmare! The people who come to a tradeshow are probably working in and have a genuine interest in that sector. Maybe that’s one of your objectives?

What I just want to stress is the power of the number 3 in setting and achieving all you can from tradeshow and not being the “Jack” who wonders why it didn’t work.

EXHIBITOR SUCCESS

PROGRAM

INSIGHTS FROM THE EXHIBITION GUY ... Stephan Murtagh

⇒ 4 - During Show

Key: You have 4 Seconds to Make an Impression when Exhibiting

They say first impressions count and at exhibitions it's a small window of time. In fact, visitors will decide if they are going to stop at your booth, within 4 seconds. The time is short but let's not overthink this...If we focus on the reasons why people will stop this helps ensure they do. There are 3 key elements here...

YOUR

- PEOPLE
- BOOTH
- PRODUCT

PEOPLE:

Picture this...You are walking down the aisle of a show and you see an exhibitor who is sitting quietly reading his newspaper...eating lunch or just sitting there looking bored... All too common these days at shows. This is probably someone who has been "sent" to the exhibition. Are you likely to stop? Probably not.

Great exhibitors know how important body language is. Years ago, when I worked in Yellow Pages, there was an expression used in all training sessions. "Smile as you Dial" – A bit cheesy maybe but the point of this can't be over stressed...Visitors want to see potential suppliers as people who are happy, engaged and really interested in them. If we want to really engage with people, we do it eye-to-eye...standing, smiling, open body language that says, "I'm interested and want to help you." There is also a logic in sales training that you speak more clearly and more passionately when you are standing up. So, my advice is to ditch the furniture on your booth as these force you to stand and engage.

BOOTH:

The second part of engaging your visitors is about your booth and this can probably be best explained via a few simple tips...Some do's and don'ts...

EXHIBITOR SUCCESS

PROGRAM

INSIGHTS FROM [THE EXHIBITION GUY](#) ... Stephan Murtagh

Some tips here include...

1. Floorspace – You should have 60% of your floorspace free for visitor access – this makes it comfortable for visitors to walk onto your booth. This is going to become even more important and relevant post covid.
2. Graphics – Your graphics should be readable and visible from 15-20 ft away – This makes it easier for visitors to know what you do and have a strong message that encourages them to stop.
3. Product – TMI, or in this case TMP (Too much product!) leads to what they call sensory overload. Whilst I understand you want to showcase all you do...It's not necessary to put everything and the kitchen sink on the booth as you want that little bit of mystery to engage your visitors. Clutter leads to confusion. Talk to your Exhibition Contractor as these guys know what works. Think of your "Hero" products – What exact products are you really trying to promote at this particular show?
4. Lighting – If you get an interior designer into your house, the first thing they will tell you is that lighting is critical. This is no different at tradeshow. It's about focusing on highlighting what you really want people to see. As someone who does a lot of shows, it's one area you should not skimp on.
5. Staffing – There is a rule of thumb in exhibitions that you should have 1 team member for every 65 sq ft of space. You don't want the booth overcrowded with your team as this leaves no space for the really important people in the equation...The visitors!

PRODUCT:

We have spoken about this above but its important to really take some time to consider what products you are "showcasing" at this particular event. The "Hero" product is the one you really want people to see. It should feature heavily in both your booth design but also in your pre-show marketing. Too many companies try and sell too many products at shows and wonder why it didn't go to plan. What's your hero product for your next show?

EXHIBITOR SUCCESS

PROGRAM

INSIGHTS FROM [THE EXHIBITION GUY](#) ... Stephan Murtagh

⇒ 6 – Post Show

Key: Chase Up Every Lead Within 6 Days

The final number in our series is the number 6. In reality its probably the most important number, but before we explain...Consider this scary statistic...

81% of leads from tradeshow are never followed up.

This is a true statistic and one that whether we want to believe it, is some of us!

The reason this happens is, people come back from a show and they have been away for 5-6 days between build up and show. Lots has happened while they were away. They come back into the office and start firefighting what happened when they were gone. They say, “I will chase up those leads tomorrow” – The next day, they do exactly the same thing and as the movie says...Tomorrow never comes!

Its absolutely critical that we prioritize lead follow up before anything else when we return from the show as this will be the future marker of the success of your exhibiting effort. Two tips here are:

1. Have a “Back at Office Show Day” – The first day back you are still focused on the show and following up. This will ensure you follow through and be in that 19% of companies who excel at exhibiting.
2. Ensure your follow up plan/strategy is decided BEFORE you exhibit and not when you get back!

No doubt, exhibiting can be challenging, but when you focus on your 3 key numbers you are not only less stressed you are more successful. Make 13 your lucky number.