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Trade Show Shopping List

Many of us are used to having a general list of what we usually buy at the supermarket. Now here's your general list of the items you need to buy or always have on hand for a trade show, so you are prepared for most contingencies:

- 1) Small tool kit – Philips and flat head screwdrivers, various sizes of screws and nails, hammer, box knife (also known as a Japanese knife)
- 2) First aid kit – Just in case you hurt yourself using any of the tools listed above. Include hand sanitizer as well, as you'll be meeting a lot of germs at the show as well as people.
- 3) Sewing kit – You never know when the fancy shirt you ordered for the show will pop a button in an embarrassing spot.
- 4) Tape – Before you packed for a trade show, you may not have been aware of the types of tape out there.
 - a. For a trade show, you need
 - i. Masking tape
 - ii. Painter's tape
 - iii. Duct tape
 - iv. Electrical tape
 - v. Translucent tape (Scotch®)
 - vi. Double-sided tape
 - vii. Packing tape
 - viii. Velcro tape
- 5) Don't forget the scissors and dispensers to help you cut all this tape (not including the red tape you had to deal with to get your materials to the show)
- 6) Writing utensils – Only a few less types than tape – Pens, pencils, permanent markers, dry erase markers
- 7) Paper – Only three here - printer paper, lined paper, corporate letterhead
- 8) Tablets – Two-four, based on the size of your booth, preloaded with the forms you need to prequalify your visitors
- 9) Business cards – 100-250 cards per person expected to staff the booth. No matter how much contact is done electronically, you want your potential customers or partners to have a business card to hold on to

- 10) Electrical cords and chargers – Murphy will be at work at the show, so make sure you have at least two of each – Standard electrical cords, printer cables, phone chargers, USB cords, tablet chargers
- 11) Candy and "bars" – With regard to food, the show's caterers will require that you buy the bulk of the food from them. However, you need to have individually wrapped pieces of candy just for general distribution. Also, you should pack at least 3-4 health food bars/energy bars per person, per day. If your show is going as well as you'd hope, you won't have time to leave to get something to eat.
- 12) Water – Even if your booth is set up to have a beverage for your guests, your staff needs to remain hydrated. Bring in at least a case of bottled water or order a water dispenser from the show to make sure that everyone has water to drink throughout the show.
- 13) Paper goods – Paper towels, tissues, and napkins
- 14) Toothpaste, dental floss, tooth picks, mouthwash, and some extra toothbrushes – You never know what type of food you'll be able to grab on the run, so just in case, make sure everyone on the booth can freshen their breath.
- 15) Giveaways – You cannot send a booth visitor home empty handed. What works the best are tiered giveaways – as long as you have a locked cabinet in the booth to store them. The first tier should consist of cheap keyrings, pens, or stress balls with your company logo on them. Have these out generally for anyone walking by to take. They may not be a potential customer, but they'll at least have a good feeling about your brand because you've given them something they can give to their kids when they come home from the show. Tier two gifts are a little more expensive and should be held back for potential prospects. These should be something innocuous but useful – and branded, of course – like thumb drives/disks on key, nice pen & pencil sets, or lower-end tablets. Tier three gifts should be saved for customers who close deals on site, long-time partners, or anyone considered "worthy." Make sure you review this designation in advance with your salespeople to make sure these gifts don't disappear too early in the show. Tier three gifts should be more expensive - tablets, drones, etc. – to demonstrate the value of the relationship to your company.
- 16) Well considered marketing materials – What we mean by "well considered" is this. No one wants to pay extra to ship paper home in their suitcases, which means most of the paper brochures and data sheets will end up in the hotel trash. Fewer and fewer computers are being sold with CD drives, so that's out.

By collecting people's contact details on your tablets at the show, you can email them after the conference with your follow-up materials. Don't forget about GDPR. If they are European, make sure you ask them to opt-in within that first message.

If you want to ensure your prospects walk away with "something," then put your materials on inexpensive thumb drives and give those only to pre-qualified leads.

- 17) Gifts for the media – Members of the media are generally not allowed to accept gifts. You can give them your pre-qualified lead giveaways but think hard before you offer them one of your tier three gifts. What you can give journalists are food gifts that mean something in your native country or state. For example, if you are going to a trade show in America, bring chocolate. American chocolate is made with corn syrup, which means chocolate from abroad made with sugar is a novelty for them. Just don't bring any produce, as those will not make it through customs.

If you have any questions about what other items you think may be worthwhile to bring, feel free to reach out to amy@K2-gc.com. We're here to answer your tradeshow questions.