



The Evolved Tradeshow Presentation: Take a New Look - Part II

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Q: I now appreciate how tradeshow presentations can deliver a disruptive message to large numbers of attendees. But how can they work for my company?

A: Many people think all tradeshow presentations are alike. Let's explore several options, as well as an optimal implementation game-plan.

In [Part I](#) of this series, we explored how in-booth tradeshow presentations can help deliver a disruptive message to large numbers of people on a tradeshow floor.

To recap, it doesn't matter if you're occupying an open market space that's ripe for disruption, or if you're infiltrating an already cluttered one, your efforts will be less-than-successful if you're unable to reach *large* numbers of people.

In-booth tradeshow presentations can give you the audience reach you desire ... when done properly.

That last phrase—"when done properly"—is key. Part II of this series will explore the different forms a tradeshow presentation can take (this list is not exhaustive), as well as a tried-and-true structure that ensures you achieve the desired results.

All Presentations are not alike. When you say the words "tradeshow presentation" in marketing circles, many listeners summon up the image of a lone presenter standing in front of a flat-screen monitor, talking to attendees about their company's solutions ... and that, in their minds, is the entirety of a tradeshow presentation program.

This is an over-simplified perception; there's much more to a tradeshow presentation program than meets the eye. Furthermore, that description represents only ONE way to do it. But before we explore the correct HOW of implementing in-booth presentations, let's review several alternative formats.

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Speed Briefing: Time is a precious commodity on the tradeshow floor. Companies are sending fewer staffers to tradeshow, and to prove the value of the trip, these staffers attend as many sessions, seminars, etc. as they can. This reduces the amount of time they spend on the show floor. Therefore, if an attendee is going to invest time in your exhibit, they need to quickly learn who are you, what do you do, and what you can do for them. If the answers are relevant, they'll step in.

Many marketers depend on signage and video loops to communicate this message. These tools have their place, but they often get lost in the clutter of a busy, noisy tradeshow floor. A better way to deliver this information is through a Speed Briefing. This is a 3-4-minute high-level messaging piece, delivered by a human being, that quickly and succinctly communicates the information an attendee needs to decide whether or not they wish to learn more. This interaction generates a steady flow of qualified leads into your exhibit.

I say "qualified" because often, after hearing hearing the Speed Briefing, attendees will "self-qualify," meaning, they walk away. This is good; your reps don't need to waste time talking with attendees who have no interest in your product or service. However, these "self-qualified" attendees will have absorbed your messaging and are more likely to generate positive word-of-mouth. (A "disruptive" engagement plan depends heavily on WOM Marketing). Furthermore, if an attendees DOES enter your exhibit, they have shown interest, and reps can feel good about spending time interacting with them.

There are several logistical elements to consider when mounting a Speed briefing, but in short, briefings should be positioned on a busy corner of the exhibit; they should be truly "brief," (no more than 3-4 minutes); they should quickly answer the top FAQs your prospects routinely pose; they should be supported with a powerful attraction and pull-through strategy. (More on that later).

Facilitated Demo: One of the biggest assets a company has are their EXPERT product managers or techs. These people are extremely knowledgeable about your products/services and have valuable real-world experience to share. However, on a show floor, these reps are often given the *additional* responsibility of attracting an audience, engaging them, and maintaining their attention throughout a protracted demo. This is tough job, especially in the Engineering, Medical, and Hi-Tech verticals. The results are often inconsistent and unreliable.

A Facilitated Demo Program transforms these demos into engaging, interactive presentations, and takes the weight of gathering, engaging, and transitioning an audience off the shoulders of your internal experts. (They'll love you for it).

The format is simple: a Professional Presenter acts as the Host of the demo and, before the Expert is introduced, works with Professional Engagers to attract, engage, and build an audience. The Host then opens the demo with an energetic, 1-2 minute company overview that details the target audience's pain and current industry challenges, and then positions the soon-to-be-demo'd-product as the solution. The Presenter *now* introduces the company Expert, who is able to do what they do best ... demo the product.

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Throughout the demo, the Host can interact with the Expert, ask (pre-determined) questions, and make pertinent (pre-determined) observations. This approach keeps the demo well-paced, relevant, and answers tacit attendee questions in order to hold their interest.

At the conclusion, the Host thanks the Expert, closes with high-level brand messaging and a strong call-to-action. The Presenter and Engagers then guide attendees into the exhibit to connect with reps to have detailed sales conversations.

Booth Tour: If your booth is not the largest on the floor, don't be deterred by the name of this style of presentation. If you're in a 20x20 island, or even a 10x20 inline, a Booth Tour can be used to great effect. (You'll just have fewer stops!)

First, you determine a starting point for the tour, perhaps identifying it with a piece of signage or tabletop video monitor. Professional Engagers intercept attendees in aisles and assemble a small group. This group is further engaged by a Tour Guide (Professional Presenter) who tells them what they are about to see. In many respects, this introduction is a shorter version of a Speed Briefing (*Speedier Briefing?*), and serves to attract qualified, interested attendees.

When 3-5 people have assembled (the size of the group will be dictated by the size of your exhibit), they are taken on a "tour" of your solutions, stopping at 2-5 areas around your booth. At each stop, the Presenter delivers a 1.5-minute solution overview, and then moves the group to the next.

The whole process should take no longer 5-7 minutes, and at the end, attendees are urged to return to the area that most interested them to talk with a rep (and perhaps receive a Thank You gift.)

This approach is especially effective when you're featuring disparate solutions, or solutions that connect in a logical sequence. It also creates a familiarity with your booth and staff, which makes attendees more comfortable, which increases their dwell time.

Note: if you have several partners on the show floor, you can scale up this idea and transform it into a Show Floor Partner Tour.

Presentation Theater: I've left this one until last because I will use it to describe the many elements an Evolved Tradeshow Presentation Program should have if you wish to achieve maximum results.

If you build it, they won't necessarily come. When I discuss in-booth presentations, I often paraphrase a popular movie quote ... if you build it, they won't necessarily come. Just because you have a Presentation Theater in your exhibit does not guarantee that your seats will be full, that you will attract the right people, or that they'll remain in your booth to connect with reps. To ensure this all happens, you need a great deal of pre-planning, so let's begin at the beginning ... weeks BEFORE the tradeshow begins.

Pre-Event Engagement. Studies continually show that in order to maximize their time at the show, over 70% of attendees create an exhibit "must-see" list before traveling to the show.

It's important, then, to **get on that list.** Here are four ways to do this:

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- 1. Print Mail:** Print is experiencing a Renaissance. It's cheaper than it's ever been, and since fewer people use it, there is less clutter to cut through.
- 2. PURLs (Personalized URLs):** Email campaigns that are personalized and content-driven have a significantly higher open and click-through rate. PURLs can also have a Print component that targets attendees for whom you have an address and title, but no email address.
- 3. IP Targeting:** If you know your target audience's office address, you can create a geo-fence around their property and push your tradeshow marketing messages through commonly visited websites that accept banner ads (CNN, ESPN, Candy Crush, etc.).
- 4. Mobile Targeting:** You can also target attendees' mobile devices AT THE SHOW by creating a geo-fence around the Exhibition Hall and other popular event sites. When they use their mobile device to access apps or visit websites that accept banner ads, they will see your tradeshow marketing messages at a time when they are most likely to act on them ... AT THE SHOW. These banner ads are also clickable and can take recipients to targeted websites.

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At-show Attract, Engage, and Pull-Through: As I mentioned before, that list of presentation styles is NOT exhaustive. However, no matter which format you choose, experience has taught me that there are four essential components that *must* be present in ANY presentation format if you wish to ensure success:

- 1. Professional Engagers:** These are people whose sole job is to intercept attendees in the aisles, pre-qualify them, initiate your metrics process, and build your audience. They are highly skilled and engage people from the first minute of the first day to the last minute of the last day of the show. They ensure that your presentations are well-attended *by the right people*, which in turn, maximizes your disruption. Professional Engagers also free up your booth staff to do what they do best ... talk with qualified attendees. Last, they help guide attendees to connect with reps *after* the presentation.
- 2. Professional Facilitators/Presenters:** These professional business communicators are highly trained and experienced in engaging attendees in a professional manner, and clearly and consistently delivering your messages. You may have a rep who's a real "people person," but the experience and stamina of a Professional Presenter enables them to deliver a high-energy, on-point, and engaging presentation throughout the entire show. Plus, that loquacious in-house rep is bound to get embroiled in detailed sales conversations (as it should be), and be unable to deliver presentations in a timely, consistent manner.
- 3. Pull-Through Strategy:** When it comes to planning and implementing a Tradeshow Presentation Program, this is an often-overlooked element. If you succeed in delivering a disruptive message to a large group of people, but then *allow those people to wander away from the exhibit*, you have not accomplished your primary goal ... filling your sales funnel. Also, without this important step, you cannot gather the metrics you need to prove the value of your event investment. Therefore, you must define and implement a clear "next-steps" strategy, which includes a strong call-to-action and a well-defined *physical* mechanism for connecting attendees with reps. This requires trained staffers to make this happen, which is another reason to have Professional Engagers and Presenters on your team ... *this is what they do*.

Which brings us to the final component ...

4. Measurement: I always lament that Measurement is routinely left until the end of the discussion, when I know that it should be the **FIRST** thing talked about.

When measurement is not used to drive presentation planning, it is often retro-fitted onto pre-existing engagement ideas. This is not optimal. The *best* way to ensure quality metrics is to decide *first* what you want to measure—driven by input from all of your major stakeholders, including Sales, Marketing, Product Managers, Senior Management—and then create an engagement program that can deliver those metrics.

The result? You'll be able to generate metrics that enable you to know *for sure* that you have achieved your goals.

Also, well-defined measurement goals intelligently inform your engagement program brainstorming.

We've explored Measurement in depth in other **IGNITE** articles [here](#) and [here](#), but suffice it to say that measurement, like presentations, can be mounted in myriad ways, using many types of technology, at multiple price points.

Conclusion: I hope this 2-Part Series has piqued your interest in exploring how an Evolved Tradeshow Presentation Program can help you deliver a disruptive message to large numbers of people on the show floor, and how you can ensure its success.

Something else to consider: Creating a Tradeshow Presentation is not a cookie-cutter process; what works for one company, or even one show, will not necessarily work for another. Therefore, it's important that you allow adequate time for planning, creation, and implementation. I also urge you to seek help and advice.

Why?

Because maybe you need to have your existing pre-conceptions about tradeshow presentations disrupted a little.

Maybe you need to have your existing attitudes about tradeshow presentations disrupted a little.