

## Developing Your Overall Trade Show Strategy

**Before you can develop your overall trade show strategy, you must first clearly understand what trade shows are and are not.**

Trade shows offer specific advantages (and disadvantages) over other promotional tools. Effective use of exhibits requires analysis and application of most of the same principles as for the printed media, television, direct mail and other publicity vehicles. But the advantages of trade shows as a promotional tool far outweigh those of more traditional marketing methods.

When properly organized and promoted, trade shows bring thousands of qualified buyers and sellers together in the same place, at the same time and for the same purpose.

Rooted in mankind's oldest traditions of trade and barter, shows attract people with incredible purchasing potential to come see, touch, smell, and learn about your products and services in a three-dimensional environment.

When properly analyzed, selected, scheduled and budgeted, trade shows provide powerful adjuncts to other sales and marketing objectives and goals. In fact, correct trade show expenditures provide protection of other sales and marketing investments.

The presence of your competition should not be the prime reason for your participation at a trade show — neither should it be automatic due to previous involvement.