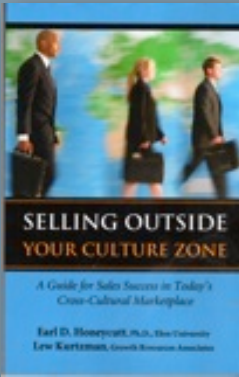


Changing Times



SELLING OUTSIDE YOUR CULTURE ZONE

by Lew Kurtzman and Dr. Earl Honeycutt

Read, Learn and Sell to a rapidly growing immigrant population

It's Pittcon time --- are you ready to make an impact?

Is your booth staff trained for maximum return on show investment?

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Trade Show Boothmanship

Boothology 101

Exhibitions and trade shows are meant to provide a venue where products and services may be showcased to a group of potential customers. Participation in trade shows is a major investment in time and money. So what can be done to maximize the return on the investment?

Besides booth design and product selection, attendees are favorable to booths by the conduct and appearance of those that are representing their respective company in the booth. Show attendees are generally "window shopping." They are usually seeking new technologies and products that will allow them to make buying decisions or recommendations. All too often, however, visitors leave booths with an impression that may cause them to be reluctant to do business with certain companies. Commonly, booth staff members are eager to talk about their respective products or services. However, without knowing something about the visitor's **interests, preferences** and **concerns**, booth workers are most apt to waste time talking about irrelevant information.

The Problem

The primary reason that booth workers fail to perform well is because they are well trained to sell their respective products or services, but are not adequately trained how to conduct themselves effectively in their booth. Simple questions like, *may I help you?* remind your visitor that you trying to sell, much like a salesperson in a department store. The same goes for, *"do you have any questions?"* If someone wants information, he or she will generally ask.

Another question that is somewhat useless is: *Do you do (e.g.: chromatography)?* If a visitor is seriously interested in a specific technology, he or she will express interest by asking questions and spending time in the booth

reading light boxes and looking closely at displays. And what about the answer to the question, *What's new?* So often this prompts an immediate sales pitch on the newest products regardless of the visitor's application, interests and buying role.

These and numerous other blunders are commonly heard at trade shows. So how can one demonstrate more effective boothmanship?

The Solution

Rather than following the example of most competitive booth workers, you can learn how to optimize your time in your booth. For example, replacing *may I help you?* with, *welcome to (name of company)*. Then begin seeking commonality with your visitor. You might start with your familiarity with his or her company or location. The key here is making them feel comfortable with you. Then ask questions. Perhaps you might ask about his or her application or project. Another area of questioning might be about how the technology will improve the current situation (i.e.: higher output / more cost-effective / less effort / more accuracy). Whatever answers are given will allow you to determine whether or not follow-up will be appropriate. Most importantly you demonstrated your interest in your visitor. You will be viewed as being trustworthy and professional. As a result, your efforts might put you a notch above your competition during the actual buying process.

People don't care about your product until you show them that you care about them.

Trade Show Boothmanship Positioning and Attention Getters

The old school of trade showmanship positioned salespeople in front of the booth to “capture” exhibition attendees as they walked by the booth. They would pounce on people with phrases like, “comon’ in and see what we’ve got.” Some booth personnel even attracted visitors with magic tricks and juggling acts. Times have changed. Today it’s more inviting if booth personnel and products are positioned further back into the booth allowing open access to the displays and posted information. Pouncing on people is no longer a very cool way to impress anyone. Nowadays that behavior would most likely send visitors quickly scampering to a neighboring booth.

Another ancient practice was to coax people into the booth with balloons and flags, much like a used car lot. This is definitely tacky to most technology shoppers and inappropriate at scientific meetings. The modern booth is uncluttered and tastefully arranged. Booth staff members are spread out to avoid the crowded effect. Additionally, when booth personnel huddle, they seem to be preoccupied with something other than attending to visitors.

The “J” Word

One common word that instantly diminishes the impact of a statement is the word, *just*. For example; *Let me **just** get your name and phone number so we can send you literature..* Now compare that with; *It’s important that I get your name and phone number so I can send you specific information regarding your application.* Or, how about; *I’d **just** like to show you some of the advantages of our new Model 2010 Autoframis.* Those advantages don’t sound as good as; *Based on your application, there are several important advantages you should know about the new Model 2010 Autoframis.*

Other words and phrases that minimize the impact of a statement are: *by the way, in actuality,* and the old favorite, *basically.*

Comparing *apples to oranges, Cadillac of the industry* and *state-of-the-art* are outdated and sound like used car pitch phrases.

So what are some of the words and phrases that have the most impact? Nowadays people want to hear what products can do for them specifically. Words and phrases such as: *in your case; as a result you will; personalized service; and customized solutions* get the attention of potential buyers.

Foreign Visitors

For some reason, many members of the booth staff are reluctant to speak with visitors that dress and speak differently than themselves. Indeed, this accounts for lost sales opportunities. Foreign visitors are on the exhibition floor for the same reason as the natives. They will go back to their respective company with impressions of what they saw and with whom they spoke. They will be making buying decisions and recommendations. So it’s important to listen closely when they speak. It’s vital that they feel comfortable and relaxed in the booth. Approach them confidently with a smile. Speak slowly and clearly and ask if you are making yourself clear.

Seek commonality but don’t make cultural blunders like the guy that told a visitor from Taiwan the he loved Thai food, or the sales manager that asked the Swiss visitor about the mountains in Scandinavia. To learn more about cultural do’s and don’ts, order a copy of *Selling Outside Your Culture Zone* or schedule a GRA SOYCYZ workshop.

GRA can produce a trade show training session specifically for your company and products. Call 910.617.1817 for details.

SCHEDULING

To schedule a GRA workshop, call **910.617.1817** to discuss your training objectives and requirements. Once the critical training needs are outlined, workshop content is laid out. GRA works closely with clients to match content with corporate values and culture. Workshops are conducted only after client approval of the content and presentation materials.

Workshops must be scheduled at least one month in advance.

Head Coach



LEW KURTZMAN

Lew has been coaching and training managers and sales professionals for over thirty years. He founded GRA in 1993 because he was dissatisfied with ordinary, “off-the-shelf” training programs.

Lew spends much of his time researching real world business situations and applies his findings to every GRA workshop. This insures that all training content is up-to-date and realistic.

To meet the specific new challenges of the life science industries, Lew has created a high impact, cost-effective series of workshops called

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