



ROGERS
WORLDWIDE

GLOBAL VIEW

Notes

Top 12

Ways to Market



a U.S. Trade Show Overseas

By Michelle Bruno

According to author Thomas Friedman, “the world is flat.” In other words, the entire world can now compete on a more level playing field than ever before. Trade shows in emerging markets such as Brazil, Russia, India, and China are evolving at a rapid pace and drawing the world’s attention. U.S. organizers can watch and wait for the international buyer community to turn their attention to exhibitions in the emerging markets or they can expand their efforts to attract foreign buyers to their U.S. shows. With the American market transitioning and (number of domestic buyers) shrinking, foreign buyers will play a critical role in American exhibitions of the future.

Marketing a U.S. trade show overseas will soon become standard practice for most show organizers. Here are some ways to use new media and traditional marketing outlets to market a U.S. exhibition to overseas buyers:

NETWORK OF AGENTS—Some organizations set up offices or work through existing companies to promote their shows around the world. The advantage for potential attendees is that they can receive information and ask questions in their native languages. The caliber of the information usually goes

beyond details about the show and live people are available to address inquiries about specific products and companies.

TRADE ASSOCIATIONS—counterpart trade associations, chambers of commerce and other trade groups can be useful in providing lists of potential buyers and “key players” in the region in exchange for visibility at the U.S. show or access to potential buyers for their overseas shows.

EXHIBITING IN OVERSEAS TRADE SHOWS—participating in key trade shows in the region can give U.S. organizers direct access to the potential buyer pool for their shows. Exhibitions outside the U.S. tend to be far more regional—attracting audiences from nearby countries—making them very appealing for recruiting.

MULTIPLE LANGUAGE WEB SITES—As in the U.S., many information seekers look to the show’s Website for information about the event. In order to make the site user-friendly for international visitors, designers should include information pages in multiple languages as well as a method for addressing inquiries from non English-speaking attendees.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE INTERNATIONAL BUYER PROGRAM—the IBP recruits thousands of qualified foreign buyers to U.S. trade shows every year. Organizers must apply for designation (the next

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application period will be for shows in 2013), pay a fee, and comply with the terms of the agreement. Selected shows (about 35 shows per year) are then promoted throughout the Foreign Commercial Service.

INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY BUILDING—although community building through social networks is becoming more common in the U.S., few organizers seek members from outside the country. Special promotions, incentives or content geared toward international attendees can help grow the community outside of the U.S. and lead to more word of mouth promotion in international circles.

SPONSORING A U.S. PAVILION—participating in an overseas show as an exhibitor is one way to gain visibility with foreign buyers, but bringing an entire pavilion of U.S. companies to a show gives potential attendees an opportunity to sample the show first-hand.

MEDIA TOURS—press releases geared toward and released to an international audience are an effective way to promote a U.S. show, however, some organizations have executed media tours in major international cities where large pools of potential buyers exist. When done well, media tours can be an efficient tactic for generating interest in a U.S. show.

TRADE PUBLICATIONS—although many countries still don't have established trade publications (general interest newspapers are the only outlets available to business prospects), when they are available and if they have good circulation and penetration, they can be good outlets for audience promotion. In some cases, Websites have taken the place of trade publications.

A local public relations firm can be a good investment to learn about the best advertising options.

WEBINARS—virtual events are great tools for recruiting attendees to U.S. shows. They can also be effective for international buyers when the subject matter is specifically geared toward their concerns and questions. Simultaneous translation into foreign languages can help buyers understand the content better. This type of outreach also demonstrates the U.S. organizer's willingness to accommodate international customers.

LISTINGS IN TRADE SHOW DIRECTORIES—Online trade show directories can be a good way to provide updated event information to potential attendees. The specific directories should be carefully researched and selected to make sure there are no hidden fees and the directory is legitimate.

DIGITAL MARKETING IN MULTIPLE LANGUAGES—It is possible to advertise in multiple languages on Google and other search engines. Other online media outlets including blogs, digital magazines, trade publications, trade association newsletters, and Websites geared toward specific international markets can be cost-effective and productive.

With the emergence of digital media and social networks, new media represents an exciting way to promote to international audiences. As populations in the emerging markets skew younger and younger, Web-based advertising blended with traditional marketing strategies can help U.S. organizers attract a new generation of foreign buyers.



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