



ROGERS
WORLDWIDE

GLOBAL VIEW

Notes



Accommodating International Buyers at U.S. Trade Shows

By Michelle Bruno

With all of the effort required to attract international buyers to U.S. Shows—establishing overseas sales offices, advertising in local trade publications, partnering with overseas chambers and trade associations, working with embassy representatives, and organizing media tours—it is critical that they be welcomed into a hospitable environment when they arrive. Here are some ways that organizers can accommodate international buyers and make it easier for them to do business at their U.S. Shows.

Hospitality (in-booth food and beverage including alcohol) is an important aspect of doing business at trade shows outside the U.S., yet many American shows prohibit the practice. Organizers can create a more familiar environment for international visitors by permitting and encouraging exhibitors to provide food, alcoholic beverages, coffee and tea in their booths.

Business centers complete with refreshments, seating areas, computer/Internet access, translation services, international concierge (directions, restaurant recommendations, reservations, travel) and export counselors can facilitate business discussions between international attendees and exhibitors.

Signage and maps in a few of the major languages of foreign visitors (or using international symbols and iconography) will help them navigate the show more efficiently.

Mobile apps in several different language options can increase the adoption of the technology and help foreign visitors take advantage of the same facilities as domestic visitors. However, international visitors may have Smartphone operating systems that differ from the standard systems (iPhone, Android, and Blackberry) that exist in the U.S. They may also incur additional charges for sending and receiving texts or downloading the app.

VIP status with special benefits such as airport pick-up, pre-show tours of the show floor, an international reception, welcome packet at the hotel with registration materials, and multi-lingual assistance for first-time attendees can help international visitors feel welcome.

Exhibitor training that includes tips on greeting international guests in the booth, lead retrieval (some foreign visitors are unaccustomed to typical lead survey questions), exchanging business cards, in-booth hospitality, and cultural differences can reduce some of the barriers to doing business on the show floor.

Continued on page 2





Matchmaking software, which is becoming more and more popular at trade shows, should take foreign visitors into consideration. For example, many visitors have several last names or use their last names first when registering. This practice can make it awkward for software that requests an appointment from a specific individual where names, titles, and gender distinctions are important.

Menus should always include selections (or accommodation) for visitors who do not eat meat or pork.

Entertainment (the closing gala, cocktail receptions, off-site events) should take cultural differences into consideration—go go dancers, scantily clad performers, off-color humor can be considered offensive to some visitors. On the other hand, a greeting from performers in foreign languages, or recognition of the audience members from other countries is a good practice.

Roaming multi-lingual “**ambassadors**” can be tasked with looking for international visitors on the show floor (designated by ribbons on their badges or pins) and offering assistance.

Registration areas designated for international attendees and staffed with translators can make an excellent first impression for foreign visitors.

Invitations for ambassadors and consular officers to attend the show or an international reception helps to raise the visibility of the show with international audiences and allows the buyers to meet with important dignitaries.

Simultaneous translation for some or all conference sessions can help international visitors get more benefit from educational programming.

Host hotels with experience handling international guests can help visitors navigate the local area, select restaurants with familiar foods, check-in at times that accommodate international travel schedules, and access restaurants that are open late into the evening or early in the morning (for guests that find it difficult to adjust to the time difference).

International shipping assistance for buyers that make purchases directly from the show floor or need assistance understanding U.S. export formalities can help buyers with their decision-making processes.



An international buyer orientation meeting or a briefing breakfast can help foreign visitors become familiar with show amenities, features, and programming.

Not all of the suggestions mentioned above are feasible or possible. Much depends on the number and importance of international buyers, range of nationalities, languages spoken, show budget, and the goals of the organization. If, however, international buyers make up a large or increasing portion of the exhibition audience, some level of accommodation makes sense and will enhance the show’s reputation for and retention of international visitors.

Global View Notes is published by:
Rogers Worldwide
 1550 E. Higgins Road, Suite 106
 Elk Grove Village, IL 60007
Contact:
 Jeanette Mucha, LCB
 Director National Sales
 Tel: (847) 806-9200
 Mobile: (847) 970-8017
 jmuch@rerogers.com

Editor:
 Michelle Bruno,
 CMP, CEM
Tel: (801) 520-0797
 michelle@brunogroup.com

Past Articles:
 You can find all our articles archived on our web site.
www.rogersworldwide.com/content.asp?PageID=241

For a list of offices and agents of Roger Worldwide, visit:
www.rerogers.com/uploads/AGENTS052010.pdf