

Trade Show Collateral Sales Material

Use of this Material

This information is intended to provide a basic understanding of the standard materials that trade show exhibitors develop and use as part of their sales strategy at a trade show. Please keep in mind that this information represents general guidelines and it is expected that the individuality of the exhibitors and the quality of their products should be reflected in their materials. Please remember that buyers appreciate materials that not only well represent the producer and the products but, also, that are simple and convenient to use.

Developing Collateral Sales Material

Professional looking, high quality, collateral sales materials are a necessary element in creating a successful wholesale trade show. The emphasis should be on sales material that properly represents your company and the quality of your products to the buyers for weeks, or even months, after the show. Many buyers don't generate orders until after the show has ended and, possibly, not until after visiting several shows, so your sales materials must stand out and well represent your products.

For purposes of the Show, collateral sales materials can mean anything from a single sell sheet to a multi-panel folded pamphlet or a multi-page catalog, but it also can include other pieces such as: order forms, price sheets, term sheets, product tags, package stuffers, re-order forms, and credit applications. We offer the following information and suggestions to assist you:

- Buyers are looking for professionally presented material which is clear and concise with easily identifiable product representations, whether that be by photo, line drawing, photo-copy, or other representation.
- The ordering process must be readily apparent with clear instructions on how to order sizes, colors, name drops, etc. A sample order may be included on order forms that are complex.
- All individual pieces should include your company's name, address, telephone and fax numbers, and, if applicable, your e-mail and web site addresses; because sooner or later they will get separated from other pieces of your packet.
- Your sales materials also should include an order form (if appropriate) and the wholesale price list. Often, a price list is printed separately from other pieces to account for changing prices. The use of an order form depends on how your company intends to receive and process orders; phone orders referencing your catalog or on-line orders from your website may not require an order form. In fact, some buyers will use their own order form. However, in general and

especially for new ventures, development and use of an order form is recommended.

- Your materials should clearly establish the company's policies as they pertain to:
 - Payment terms
 - credit policies,
 - shipping,
 - minimum orders,
 - returns, and
 - samples.
- * Also, consider the use of a signature block on the order form that signifies buyer's acceptance of these terms
- Establish a product identification system before your product line gets very large, and make sure that it's used consistently in graphic images, order forms, and price lists to avoid confusion during ordering.
 - Materials should be developed with an eye toward a common theme and color scheme. If you have a logo, use it in a consistent manner. All of this will lead toward brand identification in the buyer's mind.
 - In developing your materials, consider carefully the use of graphics such as line drawings, color copies, or photographs to represent your products. If you line is extensive, you may want to consider representations of your line as an alternative to using graphics to represent all of your products. Additionally, choice between black and white or color should be based upon budget constraints and the most effective presentation of your products.
 - An alternative to graphics in your materials could be one of the following stapled to the brochure or enclosed as an insert:
 - a postcard with a graphic example of your products,
 - a small color photo (or color copy of the photo) of your product, or
 - an inexpensive sample of your product (if economical).
 - Consider use of a professional for assistance with developing your sales materials. A poorly done photo or graphic can do a great disservice to the quality image that you are trying to create. Independent photographers, graphic designers, and writers can often be found for prices that are reasonable relative to the benefit of having good quality marketing materials.
 - Consider carefully how, and to whom, you will distribute your sales materials at the show. One school of thought suggests that your material should be made freely available and that any exposure is good exposure, especially if yours is a

young company or your product line has broad appeal. Others suggest that you screen buyers carefully and only provide materials to those who appear to be good prospects, especially if you've developed an expensive packet of materials. A combination of these approaches can be also be utilized.

If you have any questions about how to develop or improve your collateral sales material, please call your local office of the Maine Small Business Development Centers.