

*Bequia Marketing*

T: 416.284.2335 F: 416.283. 9502

[gerry@bequiamarketing.com](mailto:gerry@bequiamarketing.com) [www.bequiamarketing.com](http://www.bequiamarketing.com)

25 Charles Tupper Drive - Toronto, ON. Canada M1C 2A8

Marketing

Design/Manufacturing

Management

## **12 SANITY SAVERS** for a Trade Show Manager.

The off the wall business of trade show management comes to you free of charge from our 20 years in the bullish show arena.

So.. industry rookies, new-B'S those with 120 days behind them, here with our compliments are the 12 Sanity Savers. These are pulled from our files on why Bequia Marketing is called in to improve companies show performances.

### **1. Have back-up plans 2-3-4- on your Crack-berry**

Mr. / Mrs. /Ms. Murphy is on the payroll, and their Law is well paid for. If anything is to go wrong at a show or event promotion, the challenge to solve will happen at the 11<sup>th</sup> hour, in Moose Jaw,Sask., with challenging personalities, on a long weekend, with a UNIQUE wing nut BOLT designed only for your exhibit and an installation crew with tattoos covering 86% of their male torso text messaging you to go and %\$#@ your exhibit.

Regardless of your detailing there are too many details to expect 100 percent plan execution.

Ask what happens if my exhibit arrives late... what to do? Will you be able to rent and exhibit? from whom? Do you have ALL your graphics on a CD format ready to print off in a venue in Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan? Can you borrow exhibit components? if needed?

Many a problem is based on doing to much in to short a time frame. BUILD IN EXTRA MURPHY TIME.

In 1991 my client's two rented displays arrived on Tuesday date as planned---but they were busted. My head of installation, called the exhibit house and they sent out a second one, by their courier it arrived next day also busted. The head installer knew the city and pulled in locally segments and display cases to complete the exhibit. I had padded my schedule and I knew my team in cases of crises would find a way. STRENGTH and the art of COMMUNICATION is the KEY.

## **2. Associates Make the Show.**

“Did not I see you at last months show”?  
The industry is a small world in North America. You need to cultivate the relationships with the security guard- union representative- restaurant Chef- trucker- and yes the show president. You will come to value the awesome power of relation-ships. No you don't have to sleep with the fork lift driver but a little box of something...works!

## **3. Its Show Time!... Team**

You the rookie manager---you require plasticity and YOU hold the diplomatic pouch. In your job description you must add dealing with the world. Ms. Executive in the pearl necklace to the janitor with no teeth. All the above need to know what you as the paying client want and what you can share with them. This means time lines and micro-management. Knowing what cranks them up or ticks them off, you need to be in the know. So in your crack-berry have (with hard paper copies) names - job descriptions- contact numbers.

## **4. Show PURVEYOR**

When on the show floor know the hour to hour happenings, know the time line of your exhibit house time table, your installer/dismantler, show electrician, the place your own staff is staying. Hit lists, phone numbers. Ask them to stop by the exhibit booth at the end of each phased completed for something special, even if there was a royal screw up. This builds and cements relations.

## **5. Special Exhibitor Discounts**

You will not see big RED or ORANGE tags saying \$\$\$ OFF SHOW SPECIALS.

ASK-ASK-ASK always ASK show vendors and suppliers. They may have short or long term discount savings for new exhibitors, package deals, price-matching. Cost savings can be in the form of decreased shipping costs, special rental rates and times for multiple renters. Do not leave cash on the table. Be sure to get all in writing and the vendors name.

In your post-show analysis don't strain your shoulder to pat your self on the back. Let both the highlights and learning evaluation come to the for front.

## **6. Pad your Budget with \_\_\_%**

The magic number used to be 10%- then 12% today into the USA it runs at 15%-18% padded budget---but document all paper work for the accounting department. A paper trail shows and saves your butt.

In the USA and large CANADIAN cities overtime, material handling (drayage) labour and bribes are not uncommon.

Watch for last minute price reduction on print advertising at the show, use it. If you do not spend all your budget as planned you don't have it for next show, and again document, document document.

Budget and administrate with micro management precision. Present to your boss(s) the budget and the items that tend to fluctuate and sound reasons for the 15%-18% padding. Train you boss to realize that trade show costs do rise and fall. The sooner the boss understands this the easier the budgeting.

## **7. Variety, Prompt, Inexpensive**

You can obtain product and service with a vendor or exhibit house that has VARIETY with PROMPT delivery ...but not INEXPENSIVE.....You can obtain PROMPT product at an INEXPENSIVE price...but... you guessed it not with VARIETY....Get the message? You my friend NEVER get all THREE.

We suggest you work with your colleagues in the trade arena to communicate your timelines for PRE- DURING and FOLLOW UP schedules for your monthly and yearly shows. Missed deadlines are costly with shipping, with overtime and with lost sales leads/customers.

Last minute changes to your exhibit, rush charges for graphics, last minute printing and shipping are BIG financial plan fears

## 8. CUSHION –deadlines

To stay ahead, build spare time into your show time lines. Reality comes from the University of the Streets the probability of theory in your plans is at times only 50-50 your plans will work out. CUSHION your time lines.

Yes, a high energy work-a-holic can scramble for a couple of show cycles. Your personal halogen light bulb has to go on sooner than later. Try moving your time lines and dead lines for your written plan up, this gives you and your team breathing room. This helps de-stress and can qualify you for early bird discounts.

## 9. KUDOS FOR YOUR SHOW STAFF

Your show weapon is your on-site staff. A positive motivated staff is a productive team. This means a successful show from start to finish.

Ask what plans you will have to make your staff show comfortable, mentally and physically?

Mentally: Add in for your staff a time frame two months prior to the show or event pre-show communication tips, allow these to sink in with examples for show lead up times. In-exhibit and booth- person. OFF-site training in role playing. Make them show-ready. The staff and you are all in SHOW BUSINESS. The world is coming to your stage. Your props are the exhibit, graphics, and demos Script is your 30 second GOING-UP introduction elevator speech. INTRODUCED -QUALIFY-INFORM and CLOSE. ALL IN 30 SECONDS!

***YOU'RE Staff CREATURE PAC.:*** To have with you.

- Small bottles of water
- Granola and snack bars
- Headache & Cold remedies
- Antacid tablets, for show food
- Gatorade for dehydration
- Vitamin C candies, throat lozenges
- Safety kit
- Mouth Wash, breath strips
- Hand wipes
- Foam gel shoe inserts (large for trimming)
- A meal/break plan
- Staffs phone numbers AND their cell.

## 10. Praise in all the Right Places

Your team and you need to know everyone is moving in the right direction at your show. Before-during and after and event.

Recognition for large or small jobs done, to meet your show goals need to be praised when they arise. Don't be artificial with the praise. Support the worthy effort with great communication, warm thanks, lets all have a coffee and take a break or a gift card for those who go above and beyond the task.

## 11. Your Own Show Luggage

**Swollen Feet:** I purchase two pair of shoes one for working in and one for presenting in. The early morning finds me on the show floor when my Install/Dismantle crew is still their,(4 A.M.) to give direction and thanks.

In the show presentation time my shoes have extra thick gel pads for my feet are usually swollen and comfort is important, for the long hours ahead.

**My personal road kit:** A hip Pac- When setting up a display a box cutter, black felt pen, note pad, cell phone, batteries, vending machine change, mini camera.

**My luggage:** Lap top, printer, paper, shipping forms, copies of exhibit agreements, internet cables, extension cord, cell phone charger, bag of office supplies, all phone numbers of show contacts.

**Ship your personal items:** My show clothes are sent with my exhibit. This may be dangerous, but have plan B-C as back up. Be prepared to work in clothes for two days, so purchase easy iron, drip dry products to wear. PAY YOUR VISA/MASTER CARD BILL have a company credit card ON YOU DAILY.

## 12. Keep your promises simple

Learn to think before you promise all the great things you will do as a trade show manager.

Be sure of your measurable goals and if they come abundantly successful bask in the praise.

***Remember Mr. / Mrs. /Ms. Murphy is always watching.***

**Gerry Wolkowski**-President of Bequia Marketing  
Trade show designer, speaker, and marketer  
to the food/beverage, medicinal, life-style, and  
manufacturing fields in the trade show arena.  
[www. bequiamarketing.com](http://www.bequiamarketing.com)

