



Booth Location Blues: The Truth about the Real Impact of Floor Location on the Overall Success of an Exhibit

By Jefferson Davis, President, Competitive Edge

You know the old adage in real estate... *location, location, location*. This adage appears to apply to exhibiting too. Get the best booth location and your success is assured.

But is it really? Instead of blindly accepting this as truth, we might want to ask a few questions like, “What is the best booth location?”, “How much of an impact does location really have on the success of an exhibit?”, and “What can we do if we don’t have the best location?”

Best Booth Location Theories Abound

There are many theories on where the best booth locations are. And most of them are just that, theories, not supported with any hard research. One theory says front and center is the best location. But in a large exhibit hall with multiple entrances, where is front and center? Another theory says draw a triangle out from the main entrance and try to be within the triangle. Another theory says the majority of attendees turn right when entering the hall, so be in the right center of the hall. Another theory says place your exhibit near your competitors. Another says be near concession areas. As you can see, many theories abound. Which do you subscribe to?

Research on the Impact of Location on Success of an Exhibit

Instead of looking to theories, why don’t we look to research? A quantitative study of 27 tradeshows conducted by Exhibit Surveys concluded:

“There was no statistical correlation between a booth’s location in the front, right, left or center of the hall and who had the most traffic and who was most remembered.”

I realize this may not be what you want to hear and it may very well go against what you believe. But unless you can produce hard research to the contrary, you might be wise to accept it as truth. I think it’s enlightening and bit freeing too. It means you no longer have to be so worried about where you are located, because it doesn’t make a big difference in the end.

What to Do If You Still Don’t Believe You Have a Good or the Best Location

If you really don’t like your location, you could try to get a different space, but that will not be easy to do in popular shows. Better advice would be to do a more effective job of designing your exhibit experience and pre-marketing your exhibit.

Here are 7 things you can do to draw traffic to your location regardless of where you are on the show floor:

1. Do more targeted pre-show marketing letting people know you will be there and what they can learn and do at your booth.
2. Make sure your booth number is highly visible in all marketing media.
3. In your marketing, include a map of the exhibit floor with your booth highlighted.
4. Do a better job of writing your exhibitor listing to draw more interest.
5. Use social media like LinkedIn, Twitter and Facebook to announce demonstrations and events in your booth.
6. Use at-show marketing media like the official show directory, mobile app, show daily ads and inserts, signs and meter boards.
7. Use city and venue marketing media like billboards, taxi top ads, hotel room drops, hotel room TV advertising, if budget permits.

In the final analysis, it's important to understand that there is no perfect booth location. It's also important not to rely on your location to be the reason why you think you're going to win, or allow your perceived bad booth location to be the reason you fail.

A well-designed exhibit that grabs attention, that offers attendees a quick and immersive interactive learning experience, that is well promoted, and has proactive booth staff working the show properly is all you really need to succeed.

By letting go of old booth location theories, knowing the research about the real impact of location, and using proactive strategies to drive traffic, you will no longer be singing the booth location blues.

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