



# InGenius

## Review

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A review of  
great thinking  
from

INGENUITY  
MARKETING  
GROUP

*a marketing and training firm that works primarily with professional service organizations and small businesses. We offer strategic marketing planning and coaching, marketing program development, and curriculum and training mainly in the areas of consultative selling, professional service marketing, and customer service.*

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### *Trade Show Success*

By Melissa DeBilzan  
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*Trade shows can be one of your firm's most powerful ways to begin new relationships and gather leads. Or they can be your biggest waste of time. What stands between the firms who reap the rewards of trade shows and those that don't? Trade show expert Allan Swartz says the key is having a plan.*

*Companies that just show up have little to show for afterward, he says. Success is deliberate. Allan recommends that every company consider the following before every tradeshow.*

#### **Send the right people.** \_\_\_\_\_

For better or worse, the people you send have a bigger impact than any eye-catching booths or materials.

We've all seen our share of glum-faced exhibitors sitting in the back of their booth with their arms and legs crossed. They're lucky if they attract a fly, let alone any leads. Believing trade shows are a waste of their time, they create a self-fulfilling prophecy and go home empty-handed.

The people you send should be optimistic about your firm as well as trade shows in general. They should be eager to meet new people. They should feel comfortable approaching strangers and discussing the firm's services.

#### **Develop a plan for before, during and after the trade show.** \_\_\_\_\_

Most people think a trade show lasts a few hours or days. In reality, it begins weeks before any booths are erected and ends long after they're torn down. Preparing a plan for before, during, and after the trade show will make all the difference.

Before you step foot on the trade show floor, be sure to do the following:

- ~ Identify your target audience. Consider which leads you're after, where they're located and how to best connect with them. For most professional service providers, the goal is to begin relationships, not make sales or get new clients at the show.



- ~ Review a list of the attendees. You can usually obtain their contact information from the organization hosting the trade show.
- ~ Warm up the attendees a week or so in advance to increase the number of visitors to your booth. Send them a postcard, letter, or email explaining who you are and where your booth will be located. Give them a few reasons why they should stop by. Mention you're holding a drawing, for example. Or include a key that could open the treasure chest at your booth.
- ~ State your goal in advance. For example, you may aim for meeting 10 new referral sources and three possible clients.
- ~ During the trade show, follow these steps to ensure a successful turnout at your booth:
- ~ Dress in something that makes you feel comfortable without appearing informal. At one time wearing a suit was an unspoken rule, but a shirt and tie or blouse are acceptable by today's standards.
- ~ Prepare to be rejected. Many people will avoid making eye contact with you and some may not smile back. Don't take it personally.
- ~ Watch your body language; it speaks much louder than words. Make yourself approachable by standing in the booth with one foot in the aisle. Keep your body language open, rather than crossing your arms. Smile!
- ~ As people walk by, force eye contact with them and smile. Eye contact almost always precedes conversation.
- ~ Keep your pitch short and sweet. The first 25 words you say are the most significant. Tell them who you are and what you have to offer. Don't ramble on.

- ~ Request a business card and ask who at the company you should follow up with. Take good notes.
- ~ Point them to the area in the booth where they can pick up a brochure or other materials about your company at their leisure. Don't stuff their bags with a bunch of paper; it will go unread or get thrown out. They are more likely to read your materials in an envelope that arrives on their desk a few days later.
- ~ If you need a break, leave the booth for a few minutes. Try not to eat at your booth as it looks messy and uninviting.

**Follow up is critical. Don't put it off.** —————

- ~ Send a letter and any other important information to your leads immediately after the trade show. Even if they took the information displayed in your booth, they probably haven't taken it out of their bags.
- ~ Call your leads as soon as possible after the trade show. Ask them if they had any questions on the materials you sent them. Offer to schedule an appointment with them. The rule of thumb is that for every 24 hours you wait to call, your positive response rate drops by 50%.
- ~ Remember that what you are looking for is an opportunity to begin a relationship. Follow up with invitations to a business meal or visit. Add the names of the people you meet to your firm newsletter or other communications.
- ~ Be sure to bring younger members of your staff with you so that they can learn from the pros!

**To learn more about Allan Swartz,  
visit [www.theconnectorguy.com](http://www.theconnectorguy.com)  
or call 1-888-487-6767**

## Reference Check

When you give out the names of current clients as references, have you ever wondered just what they say about you and your firm? Someone in a hurry may give a tepid answer such as, “Oh yes, they are fine, we have used them for years.” While that is not terrible, it hardly creates enthusiasm. If you are going to give out the names of references, we suggest you:

- ~ Ask their permission to list them as a reference.
- ~ Telephone them and warn them that a potential client is probably going to call them. Tell them who the potential client is so they are sure to take the call.
- ~ Consider using an outside source like Ingenuity Marketing Group to check your references and make sure they are the people you want talking about your firm to other companies.

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Ingenuity Marketing Group is a firm that helps professional service providers set marketing strategies, implement tactics, and most importantly, helps people and firms shift into a positive growth model.

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