

# Exhibitor Support

## Nine Steps to a Successful Trade Show

2010 Broadview Road NW  
Calgary, Alberta, T2N 3H8  
T: 403.242.0859  
F: 403.246.3856  
E: [info@CanWestshows.com](mailto:info@CanWestshows.com)



## Nine Steps to a Successful Trade Show

Whether you are considering becoming an exhibitor or have already signed on to partner with us at one of our great shows, we thank you for your interest and participation. We would like to offer our expertise to assist you in having a very successful show. By reading this document we are confident that you can improve your trade show experience.

- The Canwest Team



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## Nine Steps to a Successful Trade Show

*"Trade Shows still continue to be big business for all businesses... Business-to-business spending for trade shows is 3rd to advertising & promotion. In a world of websites, emails, & voice mails, trade shows offer one of the true opportunities to build relationships with face-to-face contact. Something every business can use a little more of."*

- Darrell Zahorsky, Small Business Information, About.com

### Unique Benefits of a Trade Show

#### ✦ Face to Face interactions

Unlike most advertising mediums, trade shows allow you to speak directly to your potential and current customer base.

#### ✦ Provides Targeted Pre-Qualified Leads

Since all of our trade shows are focused on a central theme or industry, there is a level of pre-qualification to the thousands of attendees coming through the doors.

#### ✦ Cuts through the marketing "clutter"

When attendees are at the show, they are focused on what is happening at the show.

#### ✦ Combines sales results with marketing initiative

At the show you can decide to pursue marketing initiatives, sales results, or a combination of both.

#### ✦ Provides the ability to conduct market research

Having so many companies and customers from related industries under one roof provides the opportunity to establish competitive industry and consumer trends.



Canwest Trade Shows staff has collectively over 120 years of trade show experience at all levels. We would like to offer this experience to our partners so we can ensure that each of you garnishes the greatest level of benefit leading up to, during, and after the show. In order to get the best possible value for the time and money that you invest in a show, it is important to remember that the show does not start when the doors open and it does not stop when the doors close. There is plenty to do before and after the show to maximize your return on investment.

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The logo for Canwest Trade Shows. It features the word 'canwest' in a bold, lowercase, sans-serif font. Below it, 'trade shows' is written in a smaller, lowercase, sans-serif font. At the bottom, the tagline 'CONNECTING CONSUMERS' is written in a very small, uppercase, sans-serif font. To the right of the text is a stylized green tree icon with three main branches.

# The Nine Steps to a Successful Trade Show

## Pre-Show

- 1. Establish a set of goals**
  - Common Goals
  - SMART Goals
- 2. Pre-Promote the event**
  - Get the word out
  - Tell people why they should care
  - Ask what we are doing/Sponsorships
- 3. Prepare your Team**
  - Hire and train the right people
  - Read your Exhibitor Kit

## During the Show

- 4. Increase Booth Traffic**
  - Booth Display
  - Booth Signage
  - Boothmanship
- 5. Gather Prospect Information**
  - Methods
- 6. Qualify the leads**
  - Methods
  - Criteria
  - Lead Scoring
  - Nurture

## Post-Show

- 7. Timely Follow up of Leads**
  - Some great ways to follow up
- 8. Evaluate the Show**
  - By Gross Revenue
  - By Net Revenue
  - By Cost per Lead
  - By Cost per Contact
  - By Return on Investment
  - Based on Activities
- 9. Make Changes and Prepare for Next Show**

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# 1. Establish a Set of Goals

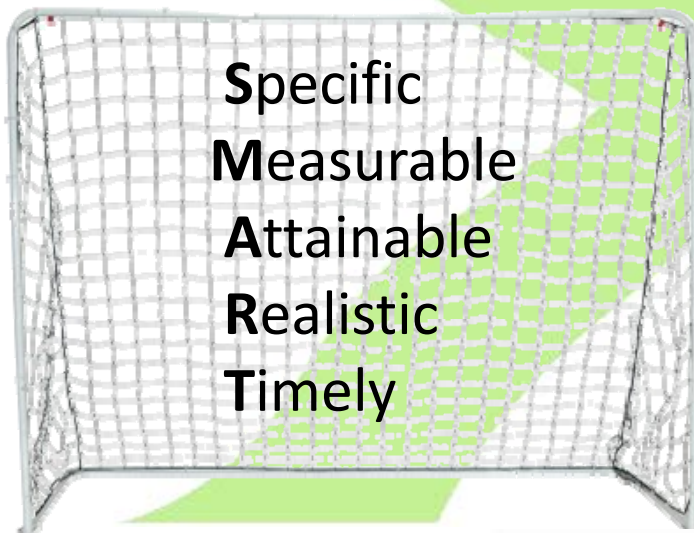
## Some Common Goals

Without a predetermined set of goals how can you know what objectives you are working towards, or whether or not you truly accomplished anything? Your goals can be anything you want them to be, if you do not have a pre-determined goal, take a look at some common goals and see if any fit. Some common key goals are:

- ✦ Gaining General Exposure or Awareness
- ✦ Introducing New Products or Services
- ✦ Entering a New Market
- ✦ Generating Immediate Sales
- ✦ Lead Generation
- ✦ Competitive Analysis/Customer Need/Industry Research
- ✦ Retaining Current Customer Base

## Creating SMART Goals

If none of the common goals above seem to fit with your organization then you will just have to come up with your own. One common method to setting goals is by using the **SMART** system. **SMART** is an acronym for:



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## 2. Pre-Promote the Show

If you have joined one of our great shows, then you have already invested your hard earned time and money in order to accomplish your goal(s). Don't underutilize that effort and expense by failing to do some very simple things before the show. You are already going to be at the show, now you need to tell everybody why they should be at the show. Completing these three easy steps can help you do just that.

1. Get the word out
2. Let everyone know why they should care
3. Ask us what we will be doing/Sponsorships



### Get the Word Out

You have a larger marketing arsenal at your disposal than you might think. Getting the word out does not necessarily mean you need to take an ad out in the paper, although you certainly can. Some affordable and simple ways to get the word out are:

- ✦ **Inform your personal and professional networks.** Tell your friends and family and ask them to tell their friends and family as well. This may mean picking up the phone or sending an email. Social Networking Sites like Facebook and Twitter are great tools to send a message to hundreds of your friends.
- ✦ **Inform current client databases.** Most businesses have some sort of client database, if you do then send out an email or pick up the phone and let them know that you will be at the show and what you will be doing there.
- ✦ **Put up a show poster.** If your business runs out of a physical location put up a show poster and be sure to tell everyone that comes in to look for you at the show. Canwest Trade Shows happily provides show posters to all of our partners.
- ✦ **Include information in your website, blog, or social media platforms.** Place information on any online forums you can that you will be at the show. If there is a particular blog or forum that pertains to your business, go on and let the other users know you'll be at the show. If you do not have enough room on your site or online forum to include all the show information, you can place a Canwest Trade Shows logo & URL on the site. See [www.canwestshows.com](http://www.canwestshows.com) for all sites. If you ever have any questions on how to do this, feel free to contact our media team at [media@canwestshows.com](mailto:media@canwestshows.com).

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## 2. Pre-Promote the Show

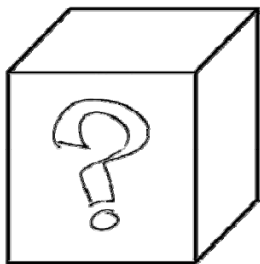
### Get the Word Out Continued

- ✂ **Write a press release.** If you feel that what you are doing at the show is newsworthy, then let the local media know about it. If you are not fully comfortable writing the press release or would like a list of Local Media, contact our Public Relations team at [publicrelations@canwestshows.com](mailto:publicrelations@canwestshows.com) and we may be able to include your information in one of our releases or can always provide the list of local media outlets.
- ✂ **Use some traditional advertising.** If you believe the benefit is greater than the added expense, then take out an ad in a local paper, radio, or television station informing the public that you will be at the show and anything special that you will be doing there.

**Did you know? 23% of attendees come to a show because of an exhibitors direct invitation!**

### Tell People Why They Should Care

Telling people that you will be at the show is great, however unless they are personally invested in you or your business it is just as important to tell them why that should matter to them. Take a moment and think about it, why should people care that you are at the show? If you cannot think of any special reason why your current or potential customers will really care that you are at the show, then you have a little work to do. The good news is that it is easy, if you do not have a reason for the public to care, than just create one. Some common reasons people will care that you are at the show are:



- ✂ You are doing something new and exciting
- ✂ You have a new product that you want to share
- ✂ You are offering special show prices, prizes, coupons, or discounts
- ✂ You are entering a new market
- ✂ You will be giving a seminar or performance

Determine why people should care that you are attending the show, then look at your own marketing arsenal and let everyone know that exact reason.

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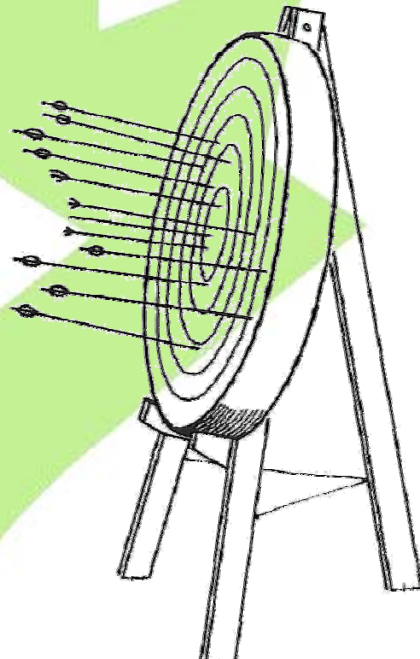
### Ask Us What We Are Doing to Promote the Show

At Canwest Trade Shows we pride ourselves on our marketing initiatives. Marketing plans are available for most shows that outline exactly how and why we plan on promoting the show. The marketing plans are available at <http://canwestshows.com/Canwest---Exhibitor-Support>. One great and easy way to ensure you are being properly promoted before, during, and after the show is to partner with Canwest Trade Shows as a sponsor. There are many sponsorship opportunities available. To view specifics on sponsorships visit <http://canwestshows.com/Canwest---Sponsorships> or email us at [sponsorships@canwestshows.com](mailto:sponsorships@canwestshows.com).

### Benefits of Sponsoring the Show

One of the great unique properties of exhibiting at a trade show is the ability to reach a large targeted audience in a short period of time. As mentioned before; due to the fact that each show caters to a specific industry, you can assume that each individual that walks through the door is at least interested in your industry, if not your organization. Sponsoring a show allows you to reach this targeted group of potential clients with greater frequency and effect before, during, and after the show.

Canwest Trade Shows exhaustively markets each show across many marketing platforms. By becoming a sponsorship partner, you are able to receive much of the benefit provided by Canwest Trade Shows and its other media and sponsoring partners. By working together we can all accomplish more and the sum is certainly greater than its parts.



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## 3. Prepare Your Team

### Hire and Train the Right People

Now that you have a clear set of objectives that you are hoping to accomplish by coming to the show it is imperative that your team has a clear understanding of what those goals are and how you hope to accomplish them. If your goal is to generate leads, whoever is tending your booth will need to know exactly how to do so. Likewise your booth-tenders will be seen as a direct representation of your business, so you want to make sure that they are reliable and willing to promote your product or organization in the manner that you request. Current employees and stakeholders of your company are the obvious choice if they are willing and able to lend a hand.

### Make Things Easy on Yourself – Read Your Exhibitor Kit

Canwest Trade Shows will always supply an Exhibitor Kit for all shows. Within the kit there should be all the information you will need to understand exactly what time restraints, expenses, and other specific details you will need to work with. Understanding this information can save you and your staff a lot of time and money as well as help to avoid foreseeable problems. Read the Exhibitor Kit carefully and contact your sales representative if you have any questions. Some key things to look for in the exhibitor kit are:

- ✂ Move in dates and times
- ✂ Show deadlines
- ✂ Required show service forms
- ✂ Booth accessory options and costs
- ✂ Parking instructions
- ✂ Where and when to pick up your exhibitor badges



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## 4. Increase Booth Traffic

Now it is show day. You have done all that you needed to ensure that you are prepared for a very successful show. The next few steps are to ensure that you receive the maximum benefit from all that hard work.

### Booth Display

Your booth is your bait, it needs to stand out and attract the customers that you are looking for. Some tips on properly utilizing your booth space are:

- ⌘ 3 Second Rule: an attendee should be able to tell who you are and what you do in 3 seconds.
- ⌘ Ensure your booth space is open and inviting. Don't block the entrance unless you want attendees to stay out of your booth.
- ⌘ The display of your booth should reflect your organizations brand as well as any literature or promotional materials you have brought.
- ⌘ Have on-site reasons for attendees to enter your booth such as contests, prizes, informational materials, and interactive items.

### Booth Signage

The purpose of your booth signage is to attract qualified prospects and repel unqualified ones.

- ⌘ Typeface should be legible at 30 feet and your message should be short, clear, and easy to understand.
- ⌘ Use headlines that have worked well in your other marketing efforts.
- ⌘ Stress Benefits with words such as Proven/Easy/New.

### Boothmanship

The most important aspect of your booth will always be the people factor. Follow these simple suggestions and increase your teams Boothmanship.

- ⌘ Be sure to have salespeople that are enthusiastic and knowledgeable about your organization.
- ⌘ Have marketing and promotional materials visible and readily available.
- ⌘ Don't sit in a chair in the back of your booth. Stand, smile and make eye contact with attendees, don't be afraid to invite them into your booth.

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## 5. Gather Prospect Information

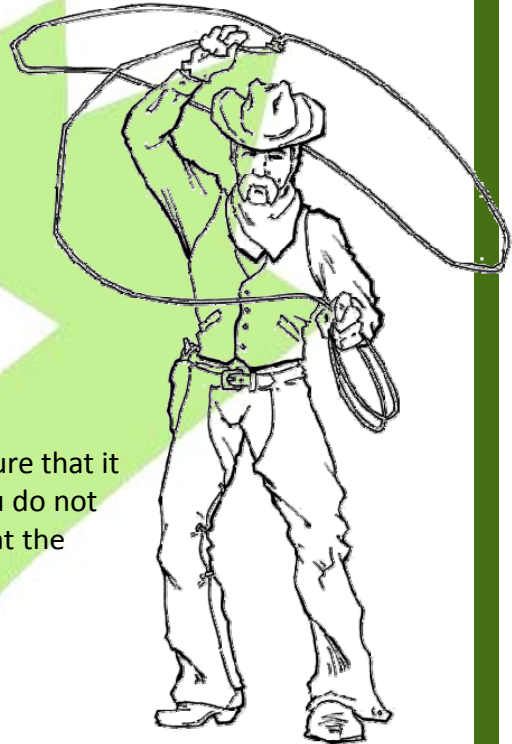
Whether you are trying to accomplish sales goals, marketing goals, or a combination of both, chances are you will not be able to accomplish all of your goals over the course of the weekend. It is important that you capture information on prospects throughout the course of the show in order to follow up and nurture your leads. Typically you will have only about 30 seconds to engage a prospect and gather their information so try to go for quality over quantity. How much time you spend with each prospect is a personal choice, just make sure that it is in line with your goals. Making as many sales as possible over the weekend will naturally require more time per prospect than a goal like lead generation.

### Methods

There are many methods to capture prospect information, whichever you find works best for you is your decision. You will want to ensure you start off your relationship with the prospect on the right foot, so make the information gathering as easy on them as possible. As mentioned above, try to get the right information rather than all the information. Some key minimum elements are:

- ✂ Contact Information
  - ✂ Name
  - ✂ Email
  - ✂ Phone Number
- ✂ Which Products/Services they are interested in
- ✂ Qualification Assessment (next section)
- ✂ Important notes on the conversation
- ✂ Name of the rep
- ✂ Show name, date, and location

Whichever data collecting method you decide to use, ensure that it is convenient, clear, accurate, quick, and easy to read. You do not want to be sorting through thousands of business cards at the conclusion of the show.



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## 6. Qualify Leads

Depending on your business it may take hundreds of prospects to find one qualified lead or it may take only one or two. In any case, it is usually a wise choice to do some qualifying to avoid wasting your hard earned time and money. Below are some methods and criteria you may want to implement or add to your current qualification process.

### Methods

At a trade show there are basically two main methods to qualify leads; during the show and after the show. If your qualification process is simple then you will most likely be able to qualify during the show. For more complex qualification, you may want to leave that part of the process until immediately after the show.

#### At the Show

If you are going to be doing your qualification at the show then simply add your qualification assessment into the minimum informational elements that you are gathering from prospects. For business to consumer trade shows like ours, this is the norm.

#### After the Show

Qualifying after the show is fairly simple as well. Typically, email will be the best method, however the traditional approach of picking up the phone can add a personal touch.

Whether you are qualifying during or after the show, you will need to determine which criteria you are basing your qualification on.

### Criteria

The criteria you use to qualify your leads will depend greatly on the nature of your products and services as well as your personal opinion. Below are some basic criteria you may want to consider for your qualification assessment.

- ✦ Budget
  - Can your prospect afford your product?
- ✦ Fit/Needs Assessment
  - Is your product right for your prospect?
  - Do they have a need for it?
- ✦ Timeframe
  - What is their readiness to buy?
  - When will the purchase most likely happen?



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## 6. Qualify Leads

### Lead Scoring

Now that you have selected your method and criteria, use them. Once you have you will need to be able to determine the strength of each lead. We suggest using a simple 4 category lead scoring system to do so. An example of a simple lead scoring system is:

- A - The prospect is ready to buy or close and needs to speak to a sales rep.
- B - The prospect is still in need of some nurturing; but a sales rep should handle it
- C - The prospect still needs to be nurtured; not ready to take up a sales rep's time
- D - The prospect does not match your criteria and is not worth nurturing

Assign each prospect to one of the 4 categories and then process accordingly. You will want to go after the money, so address the "A" group first. For groups "B" and "C", you may want to place them in a nurturing program.

### Nurturing

If the lead is not ready for your sales team then you may want to consider placing them in a nurturing program. Whether or not a nurturing program is warranted for you business will depend on your sales and marketing structure as well as the type of products or services you are offering. If you are not sure whether or not you currently have a nurturing system there is a simple rule to tell. A nurturing system will always be some kind of outgoing communication that gives you the ability to continually or periodically make contact with prospects. The larger the prospect list, the more automated you will want your system to be. Some simple nurturing systems are:

- ✂ Email Newsletters
- ✂ Picking up the phone
- ✂ New Product announcements
- ✂ Event invitations



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## 7. Timely Follow Up Leads

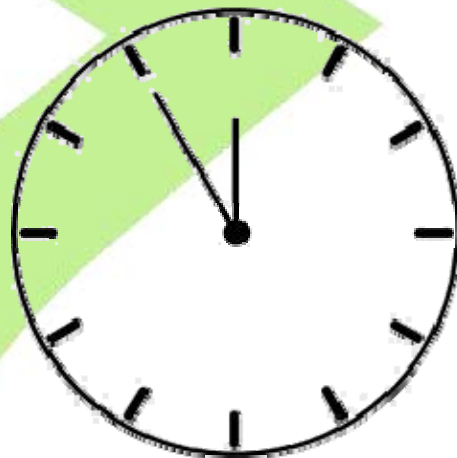
Following-up with your prospects after the show is crucial. Think of all you accomplished in the fast paced environment of the show. Now imagine all the additional benefit you can cash in on now that you have had a moment to take a breath. Don't rest too long though, timeliness is essential to stand out from the other exhibitor at the show. In most cases, you may want to start contacting your "A" category prospects within 24 hours of the end of the show. If you made any promises that you would contact a prospect within a certain period of time, make sure that you do, they will be expecting it.

Decide how you will run your follow up process before the show so you are fully prepared to begin at it's conclusion. You should include things like post show deals, coupons, or promotions, to re-generate interest. If you include physical materials, send them in packaging that encourages the prospect to hang onto the material such as a branded file folder.

### Some Great Ways to Follow Up

- ✂ A personal email from the staffer who met the prospect at the show
- ✂ A phone call from a Sales Representative
- ✂ A personalized letter from the staff contact, sales department, or management
- ✂ An invitation to sign up with your organizations newsletter
- ✂ Send a post show press release telling them how you succeeded at the show
- ✂ Send a reminder of the expiration date on your special show offer
- ✂ Put a note on your website's homepage thanking everyone who came to the show
- ✂ Send some marketing materials

Whichever method you choose to follow up with your prospects, be sure to check your database for any specific notes from booth staff. Be sure to honor any agreements to send specific information.



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## 8. Evaluate the Show

The show is over. The time that you have allotted for post show performance has come to an end. It is now time to take a close look at the magnitude of your success. When determining whether or not the show was a success do not forget to reference your SMART, quantifiable goals. There are many methods you may decide to use to determine your level of success, just ensure that they are measuring what you set out to accomplish in Step 1. Consider whether your goals were quantifiable or qualifiable, this should help you determine a method.

### Evaluate by Gross Revenue

Simply add up your total revenue for your show and post show sales.

#### Caution

- ⚡ Revenues can mean little without historical revenue or expense information.
  - Bringing in \$1000 in revenue may not be so great if last year you brought in \$2000, or spent \$3000 in expenses.

#### Benefits

- ⚡ Extremely easy to calculate.
- ⚡ Easily compared to historical revenue data

### Evaluate by Net Revenue

*Net Revenue = Total Revenues – Total Expenses*

#### Caution

- ⚡ Only determines your financial net gain from the show, but completely ignores additional potential benefits.

#### Benefits

- ⚡ Extremely easy to calculate.
- ⚡ Is a clear representation of net financial gain.

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## 8. Evaluate the Show

### Cost per Lead

$$\text{Cost per Lead} = \frac{\text{Total Expenses}}{\text{Total Qualified Leads}}$$

#### Caution

⚡ Include in the denominator any leads that are still in the nurturing process that you expect will be converted into qualified leads.

#### Benefits

⚡ Can be benchmarked for evaluating competing marketing investments

### Cost per Contact

$$\text{Cost per Contact} = \frac{\text{Total Expenses}}{\text{Total Contacts}}$$

#### Caution

⚡ Ignores some key considerations such as cost and conversion ratio

#### Benefits

⚡ Extremely easy to calculate.

⚡ Is a clear representation of net financial gain.

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## 8. Evaluate the Show

### Evaluate by Return on Investment (ROI)

$$ROI = \frac{\text{Total Revenue} - \text{Total Expenses}}{\text{Total Expenses}}$$

Most event marketers like yourself need to see a return on their investment to rationalize the expense. Calculating a ROI will do exactly that. Your ROI will be valued as a percentage, with a zero meaning you have broken even and a negative percentage representing a net loss.

### Evaluate Based on Activity

Activity based methods can be quantitative or qualitative and can be almost anything that you determine as a success. Before the show your goal may have been to give 50 presentations for example. Some examples of these types of methods are:

- ✂ Number of RFP's received
- ✂ Hits on your website during and following the show
- ✂ Lead mix by product type
- ✂ Number of appointments
- ✂ Number of presentations
- ✂ Actual costs versus budget
- ✂ Number of samples or marketing materials taken

The most important thing is that your evaluation of the show takes into consideration your pre-show goal(s) that you have set for yourself. You may fail at your goal but still consider the show a success, however assuming you set the goal because it was important to your business means that you should not ignore your original goal. Even if your determinates of success change over the course of the show.

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## 9. Make Changes and Prepare for Next Show

You've done a lot of hard work to ensure that you had the most successful show possible. You set your goals, promoted the event, prepared your team, put together a great booth, captured and qualified leads, followed up in a timely manner, and evaluated the show.

If you determined the show was a success (which we are sure you did) you can still improve upon your performance for next time. You may want to try setting some new and more ambitious goals or attempt different tactics within your set plan. Take a look at what you think worked well and what could use some tweaking and act accordingly. In this day and age, the times change more rapidly than ever before so what worked for you this time may not work as well next time. This is nothing to worry about, you know your business and industry better than anyone else, just keep your eyes and ears open and be willing to change when you see the need.

If you determine the show was not a success, try to figure out the reason why that is so. Maybe your goal was unrealistic, maybe you are using the wrong method to determine success. There are so many factors that go into having a successful show that it can be overwhelming running through it all to determine the problem. Sometimes the best thing is to start from scratch (turn to page 1).

If you feel that we at Canwest could have done more to help you succeed at the show, please do not hesitate to contact your sales representative and express your opinion. Our success is completely dependant on your success and we will always be more than willing to help wherever we can.

**One more thing to do – Relax! You've earned it!**



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## Contact Information

Thank you for taking the time to read “9 Steps to Trade Show Success”. We hope you found it valuable and helpful.

If you have any questions about the content or would like to speak to a sales representative please do not hesitate to contact us.

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