



## About Face: The Power of Face-to-Face Contact at Trade Shows

By Jefferson Davis, *Competitive Edge*

Here are two important questions:

1. How important is face-to-face contact in how your company opens doors, build relationships and ultimately brings in customers?
2. How important is face-to-face in how you maintain and expand customer relationships?

Most of us would answer critical to both of these questions.

Ask your sales staff if they are finding it easier or harder to get face time in the field, and the odds are good they'll tell you it's harder than ever before.

Consider these two facts:

1. The average cost of a field sales call in North America is \$596. The average cost of a tradeshow interaction is \$227. Tradeshows reduce the cost of a face to face contact by \$369 or 62%.
2. In the field, the average salesperson gets face time with 2.3 people per day. At a tradeshow, they can see 3 to 8 people in a single hour. Multiply that number by the number of people staffing your booth and the number of hours in the show and you begin to appreciate the efficiency factor of tradeshows.

Combine those two statistics with the fact at a tradeshow, the customer comes to you, with a relatively open mind, on your turf, in an environment hyper-conducive to talking and doing business and now you really start to see why tradeshows are one of your most effective sales and marketing media.

When it comes to tradeshows, however, ask the *unsuccessful* exhibitor what they are buying and you'll hear phrases like; "concrete", "real estate", "floor space", "visibility" and "leads". Sometimes you'll even hear things like "it's a necessary evil" or "our absence would speak louder than our presence".

Ask the *successful* exhibitor what they are buying and you'll get a whole different set of answers like, "great opportunity", "our most effective marketing and sales media", "industry access" and "face time."

This may sound simple, but when it comes to tradeshows, being absolutely clear about what you are *really* buying is the first step to making them more productive and profitable for your company. When you strip a show down from all the big, pretty booths, the lights, images and sounds, what do you really have? You have an industry specific marketplace where the supply and demand sides of the industry meet face to face to talk and do business.

We need to face this fact... any meaningful results we achieve from tradeshow will be in direct proportion to the quantity and the quality of the face-to-face interactions we have with show attendees.

You can get more done in three days at a tradeshow than you could in weeks or even months in the field – if you approach and execute the show properly.

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Since 1991, his consulting and training services have helped clients improve their tradeshow performance and results to the tune of over \$500M. Mr. Davis can be reached at 704-814-7355 or

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