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5 WAYS TO MAXIMIZE YOUR TRADESHOW PRESENCE



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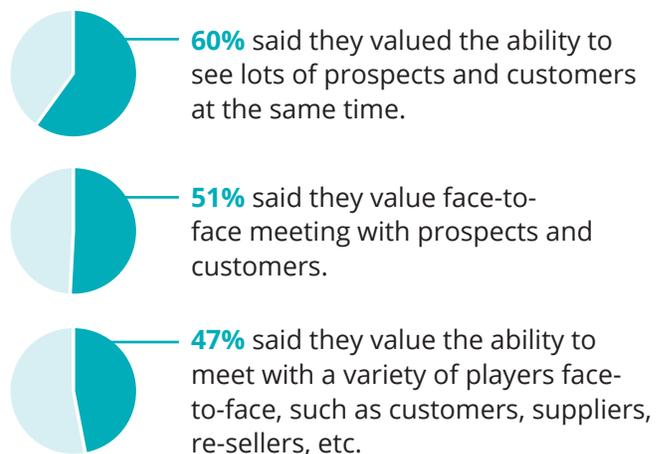


With the onslaught of virtual reality, in-person connections are still, if not more important for business owners and entrepreneurs. Tradeshows, industry conferences and other F2F (face-to-face) gatherings continue to drive sales, spread awareness, and engage audiences worldwide. But as a business owner, how do you make the most of this dynamic marketing channel?

At the National Association for the Self-Employed (NASE), we recognize that entrepreneurs and small business owners are faced with a slew of unique challenges in today's global marketplace. Your marketing strategy is constantly evolving and likely includes a range of tactics both in-person and digital.

As reported by CEIR: The Changing Environment of Exhibitions, 99% of marketers find value in exhibiting at tradeshows. The graphic to the right lists other key value-adds great for starting a business or growing to the next level.

99% of marketers said they found unique value from trade show exhibits they did not get from other marketing mediums. Their 3 most valued aspects of trade shows were:



Source: **CEIR: The Changing Environment of Exhibitions via Proposify**



Done right, tradeshows can be quite fruitful. But without proper planning, business owners are prone to wasting time and money. Whether you're an attendee or exhibitor, below we discuss **5 Ways to Maximize Your Tradeshow Presence:**

1. Define your goals

As any business owner knows, setting clear goals has substantial benefits all around. That's no different for event marketing. Whether you are exhibiting or attending, it's important to spend time before the event to consider: *"What is your desired outcome?"* or *"What would need to happen for me to consider this a success?"* The answers to those questions should inform all your other event prep activities.

Vendor vs. Attendee

Understanding what you want to achieve from the conference will help you make one of the first big event decisions: Should you exhibit as a vendor, sponsor a workshop, or simply attend as a guest?

The answer depends on your goal(s).

You may want to exhibit if you're:

- Announcing a new product
- Looking to spread awareness about your brand
- You want to gather audience feedback

On the other hand, attending is probably best if you:

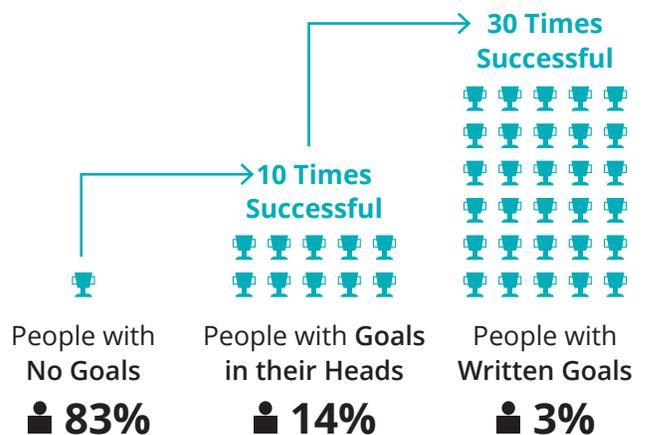
- Want to hear a particular speaker
- Are there to gain knowledge
- Seeking an update on industry trends

▲ PRO TIP: *As an attendee, be cautious not to overly promote yourself. Don't bring anything more than a handful of business cards. And pass them out casually, ONLY if requested. Most event organizers and exhibitors will NOT appreciate if you're outwardly promoting something without paying.*

Eye on the Prize

During the event, people can feel overwhelmed with the flurry of conversations. That's where those previously defined goals come in handy. They help you stay focused amidst all the activities.

It's been shown that people who think about their goals are ~10 times more successful than people with no goals. When people write their goals down, the stat jumps to ~30 times!



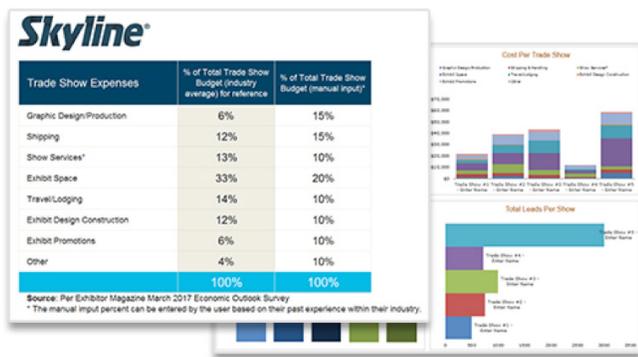
Source: [Finances Online "How To Increase Productivity at Work"](#)

Not only will goal-setting help you to prepare in advance, but having your goals already flushed out and top-of-mind, will empower you to make the most of unplanned interactions during the event.

The Bottom Line

Most entrepreneurs know a goal must be measurable, and tradeshow objectives are no different. When defining a goal, consider how you will measure it. Be sure you can quantify the results you hope to achieve.

If tradeshows are an important role in your marketing plan, there are even **tools to calculate your event's return on investment (ROI)**:



Source: [Skyline Trade Show Exhibits ROI Calculator Tools](#)

When striving to achieve a certain goal, you may realize you need a system or mechanism in place to capture the data required. For example, if you're going to base success on increased website visitor traffic or app downloads, be sure you have Google Analytics in place and tested before the conference.

▲ PRO TIP: Depending on what you're measuring, you may need to take a baseline measurement before the event, so you can easily compare your results afterwards. Be sure to document it. And to optimize analysis later on, always gather more data than you think you'll need.

2. Do your homework

Another step before the event day arrives, is to make sure you've done some advanced networking, and we don't mean IT work. Whether you're a sponsoring vendor this time, or just attending to work the room, there are ways to stoke the conversation before event day arrives.

Who's Who

Review the attendee list and sponsoring companies. Consider who you know at those organizations and reach out with a friendly "see you at the conference!" note. Then, make a point to find them and connect onsite.

▲ PRO TIP: If you're exhibiting, most event organizers will provide you with a list of attendee names and/or business names. And if you're attending, check the conference website and social media profiles to see who is sponsoring and presenting.

Conversation starters

Make note of mutual connections or other common topics. These are great conversation starters for when you meet face-to-face. Think about how these connections can help achieve the goals you previously defined, or maybe a common interest will spark some new ideas. Be open.

▲ PRO TIP: Create a 'Study Guide' document, that includes the name AND a photo of any key people you want to engage with. The photo helps you identify them in person. Scope their LinkedIn profile or check the company's "about us" webpage. Include key highlights or connection points that you'll want to remember on the fly.

If you're an exhibitor, think about your audience and what are some of the challenges they face. Then, consider how your product or service can help them solve that problem. This helps you visualize a conversation path, so you can share about your business without being too generic or overly promotional. In other words: Seek to help, first.

Join the social conversation

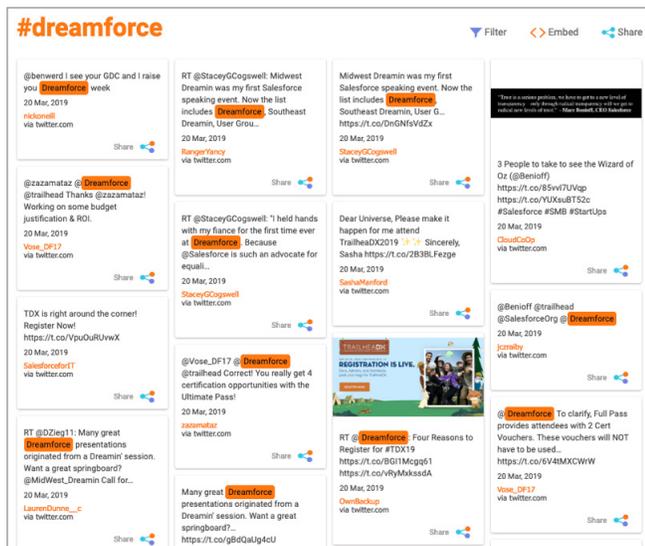
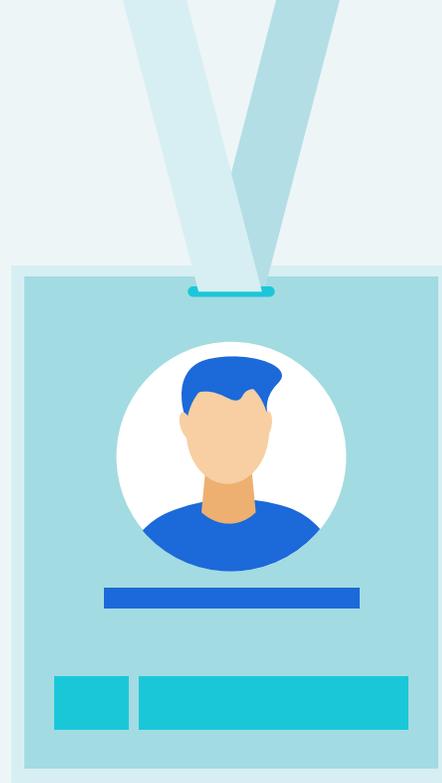


Often vendors and host committees will engage on social media in the days or weeks leading up to a big conference. Introduce yourself and your growing business. Other tips:

- Ask questions
- Offer information
- Be enthusiastic
- Stay open-minded

A huge player in the tradeshow space is Salesforce with their massive annual gathering #Dreamforce. Their event team has created substantial online buzz by leveraging social media to engage their audience. But beyond advertising, it enables social and business connections to occur pre, during and post conference.

Depending on the event team, the pre-event chatter can get lively so don't miss out.



Source: [Hasatit.com](https://hasatit.com) search results for #dreamforce

3. Have a contingency plan

Whether you're growing a business, or sustaining a long-time family business, you already know things don't always go as planned.

Many exhibitors have lost sleep worrying about the slew of details involved, from power delivery to printed materials. Even attendees run the risk of facing travel delays, illness, or schedule changes.

It's important to stay flexible and agile because you can't plan for everything. However, considering what might go wrong can help you prepare for what to do instead.

For exhibitors, preparing for the worst means:

- Backup power sources
- Files on USB
- Extra printed materials & giveaways
- Wi-fi hotspot
- Extra power cords & chargers
- Spare shirts in case of spills
- Carry-on any items you can't easily replace

Forbes wrote an article on [improving tradeshow performance](#) which includes a great list of other planning items, such as early arrival to track down packages and locating a nearby printer in case you need materials produced.

▲ PRO TIP: *If conferences or tradeshows are part of your ongoing strategy, create a Checklist Template for your "pre-event" and "post-event" activities. Then, if you're at the event and you realize something was missed, add it to your Checklist Template for next time. By creating a continuous feedback loop, you can optimize the process every step of the way.*

4. Get excited

Enthusiasm is contagious. So is a bad attitude. If you go into an event with a preconceived notion that it's going to be negative in some way, then that will permeate into your interactions with others.

Huddle up

As Business.com highlighted, small business owners should make sure event team members are enthusiastic about the business, approachable and knowledgeable. Consider what training might be needed before hand. Align your team on key messaging and talking points.

▲ PRO TIP: *Develop your Elevator Pitch: Describe your business in 30-seconds or less. Focus on how you help your customer. Be sure to practice aloud beforehand so you're comfortable with your pitch. Focus on having a casual, conversational tone of voice.*

Don't badmouth

It can happen when more seasoned professionals are amongst newer recruits. If you're new to the scene, and you overhear negative chatter, that can have a bad influence on motivation and morale.

Those around you will feel that from you and it will put a dark cloud over your time spent and the potential to achieve your goals. Stay focused on the bright side and your positive energy will spread and act like a magnet, attracting new people and opportunities your way.

5. Keep the dialogue going

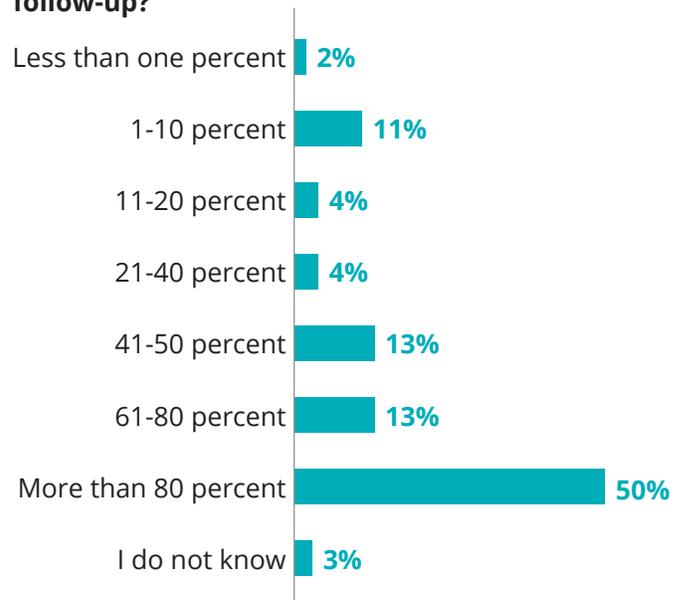
Even multi-day conferences can seem to quickly fly by. Smart business owners and entrepreneurs make a plan to keep the conversation going.



Consider what specific actions or offers will give you a reason to stay in touch.

Creativity counts when it comes to follow-ups. Marketing Week reports that over 80% of tradeshow leads get followed up on after the show. That means in order to stand out, your contact should be personalized, unique and include a specific next step that is approachable and realistic.

On average, what percentage of leads collected at tradeshows receive any sort of post-show follow-up?



Source: [Statista.com](https://www.statista.com) via [Marketing Week](https://www.marketingweek.com)

▲ PRO TIP: *When someone gives you a business card, as soon as you can, write down a few key details about the encounter. After the event, this will help you recall next steps to pursue. Beyond exchanging business cards, download LinkedIn's mobile app and suggest a connection. This social media platform is still alive and well, dedicated specifically to business networking.*

About the National Association for the Self-Employed (NASE)

At the National Association for the Self-Employed (NASE), we offer entrepreneurs and small business owners a wide range of resources and tools to help you run your business successfully.

NASE Members are automatically e-mailed every issue of the NASE's monthly e-newsletter, Self-Informed. Members can access even more articles and resources online through the NASE's Learning Center. NASE Members also have unlimited access to the NASE consultants to ask tax, finance, retirement and/or operations questions. [Learn more about the NASE](#)



Member Benefits

Visit [NASE.org](https://www.nase.org) to learn more about the following benefits!

Members Save More!

Up to **80% OFF**
on preferred products!

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Office DEPOT
OfficeMax

Office Depot and OfficeMax are now ONE company! NASE Members can save up to 80% on over 93,000 products. Great for your printing, hardware, software and all of your office supply needs. Shop online or in any Office Depot or OfficeMax store. Enjoy FREE next-day delivery when online orders over \$50 are placed. [Click Here](#) to shop online or print a FREE store purchasing card.

NASE Program Benefits Include:

- Up to 80% off preferred products
- 93,000 products discounted below retail price
- FREE next-day delivery on online orders over \$50 (excludes furniture)
- Conveniently shop online or visit one of our local stores
- Exclusive low printing costs
- 100% satisfaction guaranteed

Protect your business with cyber and data breach insurance.

360°
CoveragePros

**You can't afford the risk of a
cyber or data breach.**

Is your business covered?

A lot can go wrong when running your business. Having the right business insurance coverages in place can ensure that when problems arise your business can weather the storm.

National Association for the Self-Employed members have exclusive access to a Cyber and Data Breach Insurance Program through 360 Coverage Pros.

This cyber product offers comprehensive coverage options and is also affordable and easy to purchase. Visit <https://www.360CoveragePros.com/nase> and get your cyber insurance quote and coverage in less than five minutes.

[Protect my business today.](#)



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Visit NASE.org to learn more about the following benefits!

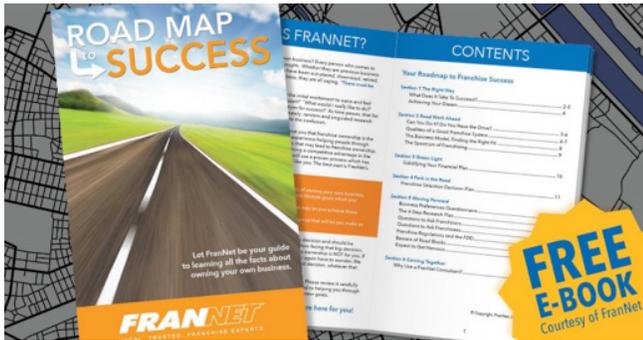


FLAT RATE DISCOUNTS ON SHIPPING

NASE and UPS took the guesswork out, and put the easy in. Members now have access to new and improved flat rate pricing with savings of 45% on Domestic Next Day/Deferred, 25% on Ground Commercial / Residential and up to 50% on additional services. In addition, members can take advantage of UPS Smart Pickup® service for free.

Open a new account, or if you are already taking advantage of our UPS savings program, re-enroll and apply the new discounts to your existing account by visiting: www.savewithups.com/nase or call 1-800-MEMBERS (1-800-636-2377), M-F 8 a.m. – 5 p.m., ET.

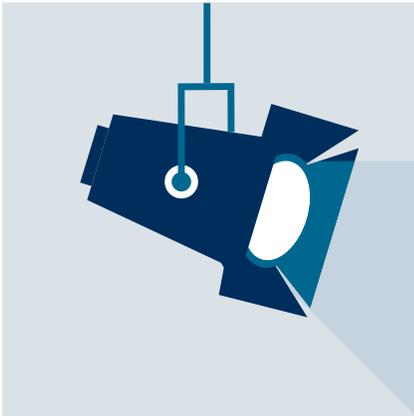
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FranNet has been introducing entrepreneurs and business professionals to the top franchises for over 30 years. It's because we have a strong reputation of integrity and leadership in the franchise consulting industry that we have continued to grow serving the needs of our clients.

In Case You Missed It!



How to Increase Your Company's Visibility

If you are looking to grow your company, the first thing you should do is figure out how to increase visibility. Company growth is essential if you want to be successful in today's business world, and you cannot grow your company without first increasing its visibility. If people don't know that your company exists, then it is impossible for your company to grow. This simple concept often times gets overlooked by new company owners, and as a result, many new companies fail. According to the Small Business Association (SBA), 30% of new companies fail during the first two years opening, while 50% fail during the first five years of being open. In this article, I will discuss three ways in which you can increase your company's visibility so that you can effectively grow your company.



Self-Care and Mental Health: Tips for Small-Business Owners on Riding Out Financial Stress

As a small-business owner, you have to wear many hats and bear heavy responsibilities. Ultimately, the success or failure of your venture comes down to how well you manage, delegate, attract new business, and handle finances. Finances are a huge stress for any business, big or small, and it's important that you manage your stress levels and quality of life through it all. That's difficult when there's an endless array of tasks and details to tend to every day, and important matters like diet, exercise, sleep, and stress management are apt to fall by the wayside. It's important to provide for your own care despite the chaotic nature of your role and the responsibilities that are on your shoulders.



NASE Celebrates National Small Business Week

In recognition of National Small Business Week — a week dedicated to recognizing and honoring the outstanding entrepreneurs and small business owners located across all 50 states and U.S. territories — which was Sunday, May 5th through Saturday, May 11th, the National Association for the Self-Employed (NASE), the nation's leading advocate and resource for the self-employed and micro-business community, "applauded the entrepreneurial spirit of our nation's small businesses who help strengthen our nation's economy every day."

"Millions of small business owners from every single State and from every demographic you can think of contribute each and every day to providing a critical boost to the overall American economy," said Keith Hall, President and CEO. "The main reason our economy is strong and prosperous is due to the millions of hard-working small business

owners who have chosen self-employment, not only to support their own families, but also the families benefiting from the new jobs they create.

"Over 30 million self-employed and small business owners — from accountants to builders and bakers — operate throughout every corner of the country. These unique and creative entrepreneurs, including the budding independent entrepreneurs of the sharing economy, are ensuring our country and economy remain strong."

In celebration of National Small Business Week and in partnership with AARP, NASE CEO and President, Keith Hall participated in a tele-town hall on the **opportunities of being your own boss**. Keith Hall was joined by the Jones Sisters, made famous on the Netflix show, *Queer Eye!* ■

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