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# Get the Most Out of Exhibiting at Trade Shows

Exhibiting at trade shows can give you the following benefits:

- ◆ sales
- ◆ leads to new customers and qualified prospects
- ◆ contact with professional colleagues
- ◆ professional development
- ◆ scrutiny of competitors
- ◆ a morale boost for staff.

It can also be a significant waste of money, time and resources if you don't make a commitment to full participation. Make the most of your investment in trade shows by seizing opportunities before, during and after the show. This article gives suggestions for preparing for a great show.

Before the show, it's important to look after three main aspects:

1. organize your registration details
2. create an effective booth
3. develop news releases, promotion and advertising.

**Register as an exhibitor early.** You might increase your chances of getting a prominent booth location.

**Meet all deadlines set by show organizers.** Providing complete information when asked can ensure that you get listed properly in the show guide, on the floor plan in the right location and in such other forms of show publicity as the list of registered

exhibitors to date. Take advantage of free promotion by providing the organizers with news about your company. Late registrants may miss all these vital opportunities.

**Build a better booth.** If you have a logo and corporate colours, use these prominently. Prepare clear signage that presents your company name and what you offer. Visitors should have a clear impression of your services just from passing by. Display information that answers basic frequently asked questions that you may not want to have to repeat. If you advertise, design your booth with the same colours and images. Repeating your advertising in your booth or showing actual ads in publications can help people connect you to what they've seen before.

**Release your news.** Have some real news for your exhibit, and distribute your news to your industry's trade publications in Canada and the U.S. if applicable. Do not hold back the news for an unveiling or announcement at the show itself. Pre-show publicity can start the sales inquiries as well as draw interested visitors to your booth.

**Promote your participation in the show.** In the months before the show, announce that you'll be exhibiting in all your communications, including on your Web site. With permission, use the show logo or graphics. Email customers and prospects that you'll be exhibiting and that you can provide free passes to the show. Some shows distribute passes to exhibitors, but you could buy them as needed. Announce a benefit to key visitors to your booth, for instance, a tour of your facilities or a special reception.

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My novel is now completely online at [my site](#). It is interesting having it "published" in this way. Below is an article about it written by [Sue Horner](#), a colleague of mine, for the newsletter of the Halton-Peel Communications Association (HPCA). Sue is also the editor of that newsletter. Her article is reprinted here with her permission.

## Gloria finds another use for a blog

by [Sue Horner](#)

Gloria Hildebrandt wrote a novel called *Stonyfields* around 1997, but was unable to get it published. What she describes as a love triangle with a twist (a woman, a man and some land) sat on her shelf until July 2006. "When I heard of the idea of publishing a novel in blog form, I thought it was one way to get my fiction out and possibly read by people," Gloria says.

Calling it "an interesting experiment," Gloria admits she wasn't sure if she was indulging herself online or actually communicating with anyone. In March 2007, she Googled "novel in blog form" and there was *Stonyfields* in the number one spot.

"I am learning that more people are reading it than I realize, and it's a thrill just to get strangers knowing about my work," says Gloria. "The ultimate goal is to get this novel published in 'real' book form, but if that never happens, it is still being read, which is the whole point of why I spent years writing it in the first place."

People tell her they don't feel it's appropriate to comment on a novel, but Gloria welcomes feedback. "Just a note that something worked or didn't, or they like this character or that one is a bore, could start a discussion

that I would greatly appreciate," she explains.

"Having people comment on the structural aspects of my novel is having the unexpected result that I get to think about their suggestions and reply with my reasons for having written it as I did," she adds. "Because I did not write this novel lightly, I believe I can explain every choice I made. And sharing the reasons for those choices allows me to reveal my deeper thinking about why I wrote it the way I did. This is usually not done unless your book is published, a success, and you get interviewed!"

Gloria attributes the success of her experiment to advice given during an HPCA panel discussion in 2006. "What [members] Rob Clark and Donna Papacosta said oh so long ago seems to be true. Continuing to blog, reading other people's blogs, commenting on them, discovering more blogs, and doing this daily, does increase your exposure."

Contact [Gloria Hildebrandt](#) or catch up on *Stonyfields* [here](#).

