

MARKETING

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REMODELING

How to Stand Out from the Crowd at a Home Show Event

For many homeowners the process of choosing a company to work with began months ago at home shows across the country. But how do you make them stick around your booth? And what are homeowners looking for this year?

By [Helena Okolicsanyi](#)



The birds are chirping, the sun is shining, and the high season for home improvement projects is in full swing—and homeowners are ready to turn their remodeling dreams into reality. One way many companies connect with homeowners for future projects is through home shows around the country; for some remodelers, a good portion of their revenue comes from these events.

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According to Martin Adras, CEO of Home Show Event, which produces home

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shows in the Midwest, businesses that exhibit at these shows can gain anywhere between 20% to 50% of their annual business from just these leads.

So if home shows are a way to meet prospects, how can you attract clients at the next home show you exhibit at? Offer giveaways (include your company's logo on them for maximum marketing impact), contests, and really invest in your home show booth.

"It blows my mind just how much work goes into the setup," says Shawn Huyser, retail sales manager at Pella Windows and Doors in Omaha and Lincoln, Neb. He says that exhibitions at home shows have gotten bigger each year.

And both Adras and Huyser say that long gone are the days when you could bring an employee just to sit behind the booth. "Companies are bringing in Frisbees, mugs, ice-scrapers, handing out popcorn, giving out balloons, and hiring balloon artists and face painters for kids that come to their booths," says Adras.

To stand out from the crowd, you want to make your booth engaging. But it's not all about style over substance.

"Consumers are becoming more educated in how they choose a contractor," says Adras. "Consumers have become so educated in how they are making a decision that they feel they've perfected the art of finding someone to do the service for them."

He adds that homeowners in the metropolitan Chicago area have used home shows as a way to find trusted, certified contractors. Displaying your certificates from the Better Business Bureau and companies like Angie's List, as well as association awards, offers homeowners assurance that you are a reputable business and that they can trust you to work on their home.

That's important, because as the housing market continues to recover, homeowners aren't entering home shows with the mindset of just browsing. Instead, Adras says they have concrete ideas of what projects they want to accomplish and which businesses they want to scout. Posting on social media is one way to let potential clients know which shows you'll be attending and pique their interest before the event even begins.

Adras says that because mortgage rates are low, more buyers are upgrading their homes not out of necessity, but out of luxury. They are purchasing the newest styles in kitchen countertops, leaning toward more attractive granite from places like Italy and India—products that you can't necessarily buy at Home Depot. Across the board, he says, homeowners are going for more stand-out, unique products, such as bamboo for wood flooring.

Other products that people's eyes are being drawn to include security features and home generators, Adras says. An increasing interest in sustainability is being felt as well.

“There’s ... a lot of focus on energy efficiency,” says Huyser, adding that homeowners are looking for ways to cut down on heating and cooling costs. “Given that we are coming out of a market decline, a lot of homeowners are feeling bullish about the market and wanting to replace their windows because they’ve been putting it off.”

That optimism bodes well for the remodeling industry—according to an April study by the Harvard Joint Center for Housing Studies, 2016 is expected to see one of the highest levels ever for home improvement spending.

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Helena Okolicsanyi is a staff writer for Remodeling Magazine.

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Rank	White	African American	Hispanics	Asian
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2	Energy Star-rated appliances	Exterior Lighting	Energy Star-rated appliances	Living room
3	Exhaust fan	Energy Star-rated appliances	Exterior lighting	Exterior lighting
4	Linens closet in bathroom	Energy Star rating for whole home	Patio	Energy Star rating for whole home
5	Energy Star rating for whole home	Both shower stall & tub in master bath	Ceiling fan	Laundry room
6	Exterior lighting	Living room	Dining room	Energy Star-rated windows
7	Ceiling fan	Energy Star-rated windows	Energy Star rating for whole home	Double sink
8	Energy Star-rated windows	Dining room	Living room	Exhaust fan

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