



Going Social with Exhibit Marketing

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Research has shown “85% of business buyers believe companies shouldn’t just present information via social media—they should also interact and engage with them.” (Source: [Cone Inc.’s Social Media in Business](#))

How can you use social media to interact and engage with your target audiences at tradeshows and events? Below are 5 ways to go social with your programs.

1. Create a Facebook Event

With more than 500 million active users, and over 700 billion minutes spent per month, take advantage of the existing Facebook community to quickly and inexpensively promote your event. Starting several months out, create an event on your business or fan page, and send invitations to have participants RSVP. You can also ask for pre-event input via posts and polls, and upload past event video and photos to offer a glimpse of what the event is about. Once the event is over, extend reach to those who couldn’t attend by posting commentaries, and creating photo albums or adding video taken during the event.

2. Have a Tweetup

A Tweetup is an offline meet-up organized via Twitter, providing a great way to meet people and enhance an event program. For example, consider an event Tweetup that provides participants an exclusive opportunity to meet and greet a company executive or industry celebrity. Pick a venue that can accommodate more than you expect--after all, word could spread quickly if the Tweetup topic is hot. And have a defined purpose/agenda, whether it is a social or professional gathering. To ensure the Tweetup is a success, help make introductions and facilitate discussions among guests.

3. Check-In on Foursquare

Location-based social networks, like [Foursquare](#), are growing in popularity, especially among young males. Foursquare allows users to “check in” at a given location, and share a sentence or two about what they find. Consider experimenting with this trend by offering special deals or giveaways for those who check-in at your event. You can also gain even more exposure by promoting your Foursquare participation on Twitter.

4. Host a tinychat

[tinychat.com](#) is a free service allowing you to easily host live video chats for up to 400 participants, with 12 simultaneous live video streams. After creating a chat-room at the tinychat site, promote the shortened URL in your event materials--including sharing it with your Twitter followers and Facebook fans. Then, with a simple webcam set-up, you can host live video chats during your event. For example, use a tinychat chat-room so non-attendees can interact with key opinion leaders or product experts speaking at the event. Or, use the tinychat chat-room to give real-time product demos from your booth.

5. Go Guerilla with QR codes

A Quick Response (QR) code is a two-dimensional code scanned by smartphone cameras to automatically pull up text, photos, videos, music and URLs. Create a QR code for your event (search online for resources to generate barcodes) that directs scanners to your website, Facebook page, a Foursquare check-in or anything else relevant. QR codes can also be part of your event promotion efforts. For example, scanning a QR code could be an entry in a special prize giveaway at an event. Or, guerilla marketers could distribute small handouts or wear t-shirts with the codes printed on them, with the information that is pulled providing booth location details. For success, be sure to provide instructions with how to scan the QR code, along with where scanner apps can be downloaded if needed.