

Rules of Engagement: *Win at Exhibiting by Adhering to the Rules*

By Jefferson Davis, *Competitive Edge*

It can be helpful to think of exhibiting at a tradeshow like playing a game. A game you really want to win. Every game has rules. Those who know the rules and play by the rules win more often than those who are penalized for breaking the rules.

Here is a list of key do's and don'ts that make a big difference in whether people notice your booth and want to stop and engage, or just pass right on by.

- Look and act like you want to be there
- Dress the part - look professional
- Stand up
- Smile
- Keep your body language open and facing the aisles
- Avoid standing near and talking to other staffers in your booth
- Make eye contact and greet people near your exhibit
- Greet people as they enter your booth
- Verbally welcome them to your booth
- Meet the person by introducing yourself - don't read their name off the badge
- Ask what brought them to the show and to your booth
- Guide conversations by asking thoughtful questions about their interests and needs
- Listen carefully and acknowledge what people are saying
- Identify and meet their information needs
- Ask about the visitor's familiarity with your company, products and services
- After confirming interest, briefly present the key features and benefits of your products and services
- Involve multiple senses visual, auditory, and kinesthetic in your presentations
- Ask them how they feel your products fit into their merchandising mix
- Offer compelling show specials that create urgency to act now
- Avoid eating, drinking, and sitting in your booth
- Do not use cell phones, text or work on your computer in the booth
- Don't leave visitors standing in aisle by putting a table across the front of your exhibit.
- Respect visitor's time and knowledge by asking good questions and being brief.
- Make it easy for people to get information and place orders in the booth.
- Thank people for their time.
- Be the kind of person you would want to do business with.
- Do what you promise. Always follow-up when and how you said you would.

Jefferson Davis, President of *Competitive Edge* is known as the "*Tradeshow Turnaround Artist*". Since 1991, his consulting and training services have helped clients improve their tradeshow performance and results.