

# ellcom Backgrounder

An e-newsletter from Ellenbecker Communications focusing on the PR, marketing and creative needs of B2B equipment manufacturers

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## Make the most of your pre-show marketing

You don't throw a party and then forget to invite anyone. In the same vein, one of the most important elements in tradeshow management is the pre-show marketing effort. We begin this process a year in advance in some cases.

We start by targeting pre-show marketing to a few hundred or few thousand people—both customers and prospective customers. Then we identify appropriate media to reach those people. Many reports have shown that most attendees know well in advance of the opening ceremony just which booths they will visit. Therefore, setting up a booth—no matter how attractive—and just hoping that someone strolls by and decides to drop in is simply not a viable strategy. And this is even more critical as corporate budgets are cut at the same time that tradeshow costs continue to climb!



We've noticed a trend in pre-show marketing that we find troubling. I call it the "spamification effect." What I mean is that budget-cutting is leading many companies to turn to massive eblast campaigns as their primary pre-show marketing tool. For a few hundred or a few thousand dollars, you can send an emailed invitation out to tens of thousands of potential attendees. Bam! Mission accomplished, right?

I'm not so sure.



We approach every eblast on a case by case basis. They can be caught by the recipient's spam filter and never get a chance to do their job. Even if they make it into the inbox, the email program may block any active content or the awesome graphics your artist worked so hard to create. Some of them get through, and some are actually read by the recipient, and this may well be worth the time and expense. Like an ad in a magazine, they are a way to get a general message in front of a lot of people.

I should probably add that I'm not talking about targeted emails here—we consider them to be something quite different from an eblast. A targeted email goes to one person at a time, or to a small group of people.

As any salesman will tell you, a lead is not the same as a qualified lead. And we strongly suggest that our clients focus on targeting their pre-show marketing as much as possible to the hundred or few hundred or few thousand people who are the most important to their success. That includes current customers and your top prospects for new customers.

Your salesmen know who those people are; get their addresses and email addresses and make sure that these key people receive a targeted invitation to your booth.

And finally, you may consider actual phone calls to invite a few dozen or even a few hundred special customers or prospects. Either the salesperson for an area or a marketing person may make these simple calls. This is an unusually personal touch that can help your message stand out from all the background static that surrounds a major tradeshow.

A longer version of this article appeared in two parts on our blog at <http://www.ellcom.us/blog/>.



Jenny Ellenbecker is the Tradeshow Manager for Ellenbecker Communications. She has planned and executed tradeshow strategies for clients for over a decade, including for some of the biggest expos in the mining, construction and oil and gas industries.

## See you at the show

We'll have staff at the following shows, and we'd love to make arrangements to talk with you if you're attending one of them, too! Just send an email to Matt, at [matt@ellcom.us](mailto:matt@ellcom.us), and he'll make the arrangements.



## Preview of upcoming issues

In this new year, we plan to share a number of articles with you that will deal with the intersection of sales and marketing. In some companies, these two departments do not always "play nice," and I'd like to discuss why this happens—and why it shouldn't. We also have plans to run several "nuts and bolts" articles about press releases and other forms of PR. And I am especially excited about an upcoming guest editorial discussing the wide-open field of apps for equipment manufacturers that is being written up by our agency's App Partner.

From our crew to yours— here's to a profitable 2014!

—Matt Fueston



Matt Fueston is an Account Manager for Ellenbecker Communications, is responsible for new business development, and contributes as a staff writer. He believes in the intersection between Sales and Marketing.