

Goal Setting: Consider Needs and Wants

by Robyn Davis, When I Need Help

In the initial planning stages of any event, I encourage my clients to set two goals and I would encourage you to do the same. These particular goals are especially important during the planning process because they can help you in selecting appropriate events for your company, facilitating your team's understanding of why you are exhibiting and what is needed from them, and determining which marketing methods should be employed to maximize your results. Specifically, the two goals I encourage my clients to set are a "needs goal" and a "wants goal."

First, a "needs goal" is what you must accomplish in order to break even at an event; this is the objective you **need** to complete so that the event does not hurt your company nor is it remembered as a terrible failure. To set this goal, take a few minutes to consider what you have (or would have) invested in your event (time, money, energy, etc.) and how much that is worth to you (it may be your total financial investment plus a small percentage to account for the time, energy, and other intangibles invested).

The main benefit of identifying a "needs goal" is in better understanding your investment. Sometimes, professionals decide to exhibit at a new event or implement a new marketing strategy because it's "fresh" and the "only way to stay ahead of the times" or continue a tradition of exhibiting at an old event with the same marketing techniques because "it is what has always been done" (neither of which, in and of itself, makes a sound business decision). Regardless, evaluating what you need to accomplish can help in finding the events and approaches that are the correct fit for your company today.

If you cannot reasonably expect to accomplish your "needs goal" at your next event, there is a problem with the fit of the event itself or the approaches you have selected for that event.

Next, a "wants goal" is what you would like to accomplish if you were exhibiting in a near-perfect world; this is the objective you **want** to complete so that the event exceeds your expectations and is remembered to be a great success. Sit back and dream a little to determine your "wants goal" – this may be a financial goal, but is also likely to have some intangible components (better connections with current/future clients, greater team morale, improved visibility in your industry space, etc.). Don't forget, even with intangible components, you still want your goals themselves to be measurable.

The main benefit of identifying a “wants goal” is in motivating yourself to start thinking bigger. Exhibiting brings a world of possibilities to those involved but if you haven’t started dreaming about specific areas within which your company would like to improve, you may not be able to see the opportunities available to maximize your overall results. Brainstorming creative methods to accomplish your “wants goal” is one way to include your team in the event preparations and begin building team ownership of your collective results.

If you can reasonably expect to surpass your “wants goal” at your next event, your problem is that you haven’t started thinking big enough yet.

If you are just starting your planning for an upcoming event, I would encourage you to personalize these goals to your situation and refer back to them as you make each major decision along the way. If your event is past the early planning stages, you can still incorporate these goals into your remaining planning and on-site efforts. So, wherever you are in your preparations, get started today in taking the necessary steps to ensure that you surpass your “needs goal” and continue striving towards your “wants goal.”



ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Robyn Davis is an accomplished event hostess and experienced marketing consultant... she is here when you need help! Robyn has more than ten years of leadership experience and a well rounded background. Offering on-site sales and marketing support to exhibitors and pre-/post-event consulting services, Robyn is definitely not just a stereotypical “Booth Bunny.”

Learn more about Robyn Davis and When I Need Help by visiting her website (<http://www.whenineedhelp.com>) today.

Published by Salesopedia and Sales Gravy, distributed in the TSNN ExpoFiles Newsletter on February 17, 2011, and nominated for Top Sales Article of the Month in April 2011
