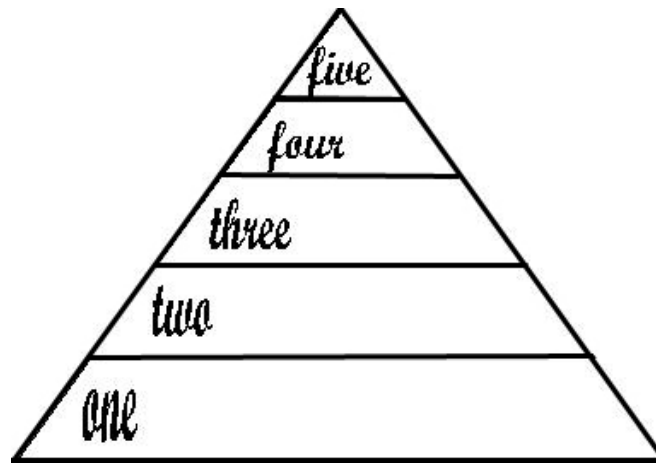


## Pyramid of Staffing Competencies

by Robyn Davis, When I Need Help

Your booth staff represents your company during events. So, before we continue with this article, I'd like you to take a minute to think about how you being represented... If we were to create a pyramid to illustrate what attendees are looking for from the staff they find your booth, it may look like this:



*Just as with any pyramid, this one is built from the base to the top.*

### **Tier One: Is anyone there?**

As an exhibitor, at a minimum you must ensure that someone is in your booth for any hours the exhibit hall is open for two reasons. First, this is required (or “strongly encouraged”) by show management and, second, this affects your company’s image. When your booth is not staffed, it appears that your company doesn’t care enough about their prospective clients to show up and meet them in person. To accommodate the meetings, sessions, and other responsibilities your representatives will have to deal with during the event, consider scheduling your team for shifts of “booth duty” and/or hiring a capable hostess to maintain your presence while everyone else is away.

### **Tier Two: Is anyone engaging attendees?**

Once you have scheduled adequate coverage for your booth, you’ll want to consider how the staffers you have chosen are representing your company. Their attitudes, demeanor, and apparent interest in interacting with attendees will impact the volume of visitors who come into your booth. Remind your staff to smile and follow the “be a

good booth staffer” tips you have all read before. Then, if all else fails, remove the chairs for a little extra motivation (and, to inspire their cooperation even without chairs, spring for the double padded carpet).

### **Tier Three: Can anyone speak intelligently about your offerings?**

After ensuring that your representatives will be facilitating positive interactions in your booth, you can shift your focus to their ability to converse with your visitors in a clear and confident manner. Attendees come to the exhibit hall to learn about the offerings available to them, so it is important that your staff is capable of clearly conveying your value proposition. To prepare your staff, teach them what you do, who you help, and how that applies to the attendees they will meet. To support their encounters on-site, be sure to provide applicable literature as well.

### **Tier Four: Can anyone answer questions?**

Talking about your offerings is one thing, but answering questions about them is another. Select booth staff who can answer questions patiently and competently so that attendees feel their needs are important to you and that your company is qualified to assist them as clients. To accomplish this, your staff will require additional training (you may consider role playing a variety of frequently asked questions to help them prepare). This is very worthwhile because another benefit of answering and asking questions in the booth is that your staffers can then learn enough about your visitors’ needs to qualify them for your sales team – properly qualified leads commonly translate to a solid return on your investment after the event.

### **Tier Five: Will anyone keep their promises after the event?**

In the business world today, it is becoming more and more difficult to find salespeople who actually keep the promises they make. Your company, however, can prove you're different by instructing on-site representatives to record notes along with the contact information of qualified leads. As long as there is a plan in place to sort through the leads and follow up according to the notes taken, you will be able to keep any promises that were made (for example, requests for additional information, demonstrations, or specific pricing). This will help to prove to attendees that you are reliable (consistent reliability is a good step to being seen as trustworthy). Create your follow up plan before the event so that all promises can be fulfilled as quickly as possible after you return.

This pyramid should serve as a guide for sorting through your booth staffing options according to the needs of your attendees and the way in which your company is represented. If you are involved with the staffing for your next event in any way, think again about those who have been selected, into which tier they would best fit currently, and how you will improve your booth presence for next time by helping your staff to progress through any remaining tiers.



**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.

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