

## HOW TO HANDLE THE FIVE DIFFERENT TYPES OF VISITORS TO A TRADE SHOW BOOTH

*by Dr. Allen Konopacki*

Every trade show attracts an assortment of different types of attendees. Here are five types of visitors you might see in your booth, and now you can best address their needs.

1. **EDUCATION SEEKER** - Education seekers just want to browse, look, and learn. They're in "tell me about your company" mode, not in buying mode. Provide information about what's on display, and encourage them to browse about your exhibit, but keep yourself available for serious prospects. You can't afford to spend a lot of time with browsers.
2. **REINFORCEMENT SEEKER** - These are typically existing customers who want reassurance that they've made the right decision to buy your product. If possible, provide a space for reinforcement seekers to talk with marketing or R&D people. Introduce them to other customers. These visitors want to find out if anything is changing. The best thing you can do is to brief them on future plans
3. **SOLUTION SEEKER** - These visitors are in a buying mode. They're looking for solutions to specific problems. They're willing to spend the time to get specific answers to questions. They are typically from five to fifteen percent of the audience. Solution seekers first want to tell you their needs. So talk less and listen more, and you'll win their business.
4. **BUYING TEAMS** - 50 to 60 percent of booth visitors have other people involved in their decision-making process. And 80 percent of these teams will select their vendor while at the show. Ask visitors if they are part of a team. Since they are VIP buyers, put them in touch with senior management.
5. **POWER BUYERS** - Be on the lookout for power buyers. They are typically upper management or key buyers with major authority. Many times they don't wear badges. They do not want to attract unnecessary attention. To catch them, you must be alert, and approach people without badges or that have badges turned over. Greet them; introduce yourself, and welcome them personally to the booth asking what prompted their interest.

*Allen Konopacki is president of the Chicago-based Incomm International; a trade show research and sales training centre.*

*Reproduced with permission by Dan Joyce.*

*Copyright 1999 CAEM (Canadian Association of Exposition Managers).*