

From Table Top to Backdrops: Budget Trade Show Booth Ideas

Monica Pitts 0:00

Hello again, and welcome back to marketing with purpose. My name is Monica Pitts, and with me today, I have my chief wearer of many hats at mayecreate. Stacey Brockmeier, hey friends. So Stacey and I are going to hang out today, and we are going to talk about trade show booth ideas for small budgets, everything from tabletop to backdrops. We're problem solvers, right? And so we have been to many, many trade shows, and what we have found is that the booths that stand out are the ones that break the pattern. There are lots of patterns at trade shows, from the tablecloths to the way that they print your name at the back of the booth, the piping, the flooring, all of it's the same. And so today we are going to break down for you all the different elements and all the different patterns that you notice at these booths that are consistent and give you budget friendly ideas to break them. So let's get to business. You're on a mission, and you just need more people to know about it. And whether you're brand new to marketing or a seasoned pro, we are all looking for answers to make marketing decisions with purpose. I'm Monica Pitts, a techie, crafty business owner, mom and aerial dancer who solves communication challenges through technology. This podcast is all about digging in and going digital. I'll share my marketing know how and business experience from almost 20 years of misadventures. I'll be your backup dancer so you can stop doubting and get moving towards marketing with purpose. This episode is sponsored by mayecreate design. Yeah, that's right. We sponsor ourselves and brought to you with love by our Marketing on a Shoestring mini course. Now our free beginners mini course is all about marketing on a budget. And contrary to popular opinion, you don't have to spend a million dollars or do something that you hate to market your business, get ready to challenge traditional marketing assumptions, because this 101, mini course is designed to give you a rock solid foundation so you can make the right decisions for you with total confidence. You can check it out at youmayecreate.com that's Y, o, u, M, a, y, E, C, R, E, A, T, e.com, and the link, of course, will be in the show notes. Okay, now back to business. So for years, Stacy and I have went to trade shows, and we've walked up and down the aisles trying to learn exactly what calls us into a booth. Like, what is it that makes these booths stand out because we get tasked with doing this for other people. Some of our clients are national clients that are like, what? While we build their website for them, they then come to us and they're like, Hey, will you put together our booth display? And we're like, Sure,

Stacy Brockmeier 2:56

uh huh. We've been to trade shows before.

Monica Pitts 2:58

yeah. And we actually did take ourselves and have repeatedly gone to national like huge level expos, just just to take it all in and and learn from the experience of going there. And we like to look for patterns, right? And the things that we have found that will set a booth apart from another booth, are anything that breaks the pattern. So when you walk into the trade show, you notice that it has all the same flooring. You'll have the same piping, the same chairs, tables, even the way that your name is written on the back of the booth. It's all the exact same thing, right? And so, yeah, and so you want to change the change the game and draw attention to yourself. You just need to be different, and you can do that in a number of ways. And today, we are really focused on how we can do that cost effectively, because we are like proverbial coupon clippers and thrift store shoppers over here. And so we are going to talk about ways that you can set yourself apart that are great for small budgets. Okay, so we're going to look at areas like your backdrop, your flooring, tabletop, making reasons for people to come in, and then also adding movement to your booth. So we're going to start at the top with backdrop. Now, this is something that we end up designing, like a lot, and sometimes it's fun and sometimes it's really weird, depending upon the client. Gigantic towels are kind of weird, I'm not going to lie,

Stacy Brockmeier 4:37

especially ones that you've hand drawn.

Monica Pitts 4:40

Yes, Rebecca has actually illustrated cattle, and then we were tasked with putting them on these enormous, like 10 foot trade show banners. And it was like sketches, but they were seven feet tall, and it was life size, life size cows. Yeah, that were hand drawn. Okay? It's a good thing she can draw. I'm not talking about like, comic cattle. I'm talking about like, literal, yeah, it looks good. Yeah. They were good. Okay, so when you're talking to people about their backdrops, what are some things that you advise them to do that will set them apart from others?

Stacy Brockmeier 5:18

Well, the first thing we always talk about is how they're transporting them, and that sometimes dictates it, but then oftentimes people don't want to spend a ton of money on this, like backdrop, and so the first thing that I often tell them is like, make sure your logo or your name is at the top, and make sure the top is taller than the people next to you. Because if you're walking through a trade show and you like, look out over the sea of people and the sea of booths, and you see one name that's above it draws attention, right? And so if everyone else's backdrops are eight foot, maybe yours is 10 foot. Or if there's some you know, that makes sense. You just want to be a little bit taller. But there's lots of options for inexpensive or like cost effective. Let's call it cost effective backdrops.

Monica Pitts 6:12

So one that you see a lot is it's like a, I don't know it's like an expandable thing. It's interlocking parts, and it has this big sleeve that goes over the top of it, and that, I feel like, is one of the more expensive ones that we have printed for people. If you are on a budget, you might consider like a backdrop that's almost more like a photography studio backdrop. So it has a pull on each side. You're going to have to screw all the poles together. It has a sturdy base, and then it has a pool that goes between the two vertical poles, and it just slides through the top of your backdrop, and it hangs like like the background of in a photography studio. And those are way less expensive because they're way more work to put up, but they do have some benefits, because they don't take up as much space, like floor space in your booth, and you can easily replace that banner, and it's not super expensive to do it, and

Stacy Brockmeier 7:16

they're very easy to travel with, because everything comes apart and fits in a little bag.

Monica Pitts 7:21

Yes, and they're not super heavy. I load mine in on my own, so it's not bad. It doesn't it's not going to break your bag to carry it. So that's a very positive thing, too. Another thing that you could do if you don't have the ability to get like that big, tall banner stand is just replace the sign that's hanging that has your name on it. Just get, like a vinyl sign printed. And if everybody else is going to be white, you could have it printed on another color, hot

Stacy Brockmeier 7:50

pink. What bright green, something, whatever your company accent color is,

Monica Pitts 7:56

and so Stacy, when we're designing those big backdrops drops for people, or even just a smaller vinyl banner, like we were just talking about, that would hang over and in place of the name at the back of your booth. What are some of the things that you advise them?

Stacy Brockmeier 8:14

Less is more. That's the first thing, like I already said, to put your logo big and at the top. But this is not the place to write a book. It's not the place to like, tell everybody your company history. It's you're looking for, like, a few key services, like very short, succinct key services and your logo. So not a lot of information goes here. Sometimes there's a picture, sometimes there's not so things like that that are less is more.

Monica Pitts 8:47

Yeah, so for us, we ours is huge. It goes from the floor all the way up above everyone else's, and it has our logo and like, four services on it, and then some pretty artwork. And that's it, because it's a backdrop, it's not a focal point. But if you have lots of stuff to say there, there's another option for you as well. And we design a lot of these for people, right? Stacey,

Stacy Brockmeier 9:14

yeah. So if you have a lot of things to say or you want something more modular than the big backdrop, I would say, pop up banner stands so things that you can use one. So a lot of times we'll design like sets of three. So company will have three different banner stands, and maybe one or two have more information. And one is just a logo and some pictures, and they can put those up and take them down and use them in different arrangements, if you will, yeah,

Monica Pitts 9:43

and if you're smart about how you design them, that's how you save money, because if you have three primary services, for example, but sometimes you go to an event where you only want to promote one service, well then you just pull out that one back, you know, one. Banner stand, whereas if you were just having a backdrop, you would have to have three backdrops made. And so it's nice to keep that backdrop design really basic, and then have your banner stands be more specific and design them intelligently, so that way you can break them apart and use them the way that you want to use them, right? And one other thought on those banner stands, another way that you can save money is if you go to a lot of career fairs, and I know career fairs, they they don't give you that huge booth. It's more like a table, and you just decorate your table. You know you can design that banner stand to have, like, cool stuff at the top, cool stuff at the bottom, but only display it halfway up on top of your table at a career fair. So if you don't want to have two banners printed, just be smart about the way that you design it and make sure that the important stuff for the career fair is at the top of the banner, so that way you can just not display the stuff at the bottom, and then it becomes like a multi purpose, thinking about bobber.

Stacy Brockmeier 11:06

Yeah, many times those banner scenes have an adjustable pole. So you can show it full size, you can show it half size. You can show it somewhere in between. So again, if you're being really intelligent or really intentional about your design, you can use them in multiple facets, and

Monica Pitts 11:23

there's so many different types of these banner stands. If you're going to use them all the time, you probably need to get a nicer one, because the less expensive ones, I know from experience, are not made to come up and come down all the time. They're just not as sturdy. But if you're only using it once a year, you're going to want to replace it in a few years anyway. So you don't need to have, like, the fanciest thing, you know, out there. You can go with the the low model,

Stacy Brockmeier 11:54

yeah, if you're going to use it multiple times a year, spring for the deluxe model, yeah, one with the nicer base that actually retracts nicely and goes up easily and all of that fun stuff.

Monica Pitts 12:06

When we transitioned to doing more at trade shows and events, versus just going to networking events and doing chamber functions, we had to invest in some nicer banner stands, because we were like, blowing them up like we were hearing them, scratching them, bending them. They weren't even standing up. At one point we had to shove a chair

Stacy Brockmeier 12:28

there. There was that one time where I used it outside in the wind, and then it never stood up again. That was fun. I think we used a bungee cord for a while

Monica Pitts 12:38

if you plan on putting something up out in the wind. Might I suggest that it is not a banner stand. Instead, just have a vinyl banner printed and use bungee cords to hang it, put it on a fence or something. Okay, it's safer.

Stacy Brockmeier 12:55

They do now have outdoor banner stands. They This is not something they had back in the day when I set that up in, like, the Lowe's parking lot at my BNI groups event. But they now, they actually do have banner stands that are made for outdoors. Do they have stakes? I don't know. You know, I haven't printed them, but I, I am assuming, yes, I'm assuming it's more like a tent, like, you know, you have stakes. Yeah. Okay,

Monica Pitts 13:23

that's good. So that was a lot about backdrops and signage, and we have even more information about backdrops and signage in our vlogs, so you can hop on over to me create.com and we'll tell you what to include on it and what to think about as you're designing it, so that way you don't forget anything and and it turns out beautiful in the end. Okay, so next up, flooring, my favorite. So we came about this really organically. Stacy tell the story of how we figured out flooring.

Stacy Brockmeier 13:56

So we went to a trade show. It was a national trade show. It was massive, probably the biggest trade show I'd ever been in. I was newly pregnant at this trade show, so my feet hurt, my body hurt, I didn't feel good. And so we are walking through all of these, like trade show booths, and I'm like, we kept noticing, like we wanted to stay in some of them, like they felt very comfortable. They made your body feel better. It was the flooring. They all had nice carpets in them. So instead of like being like the concrete or the tile floor, like these, would have like a plush rug or something like that. And so that's how we came across. My very, most favorite topic for trade show booths, buy a rug and change up your flooring. Our

Monica Pitts 14:43

first mayecreate rug was from Walmart, yeah, and it was fine. You don't use it for that long and you don't it doesn't get stood on that much. I don't think it has to be like a super high quality rug. Rug, our new one, Stacy, you got it on Amazon. I

Stacy Brockmeier 15:04

think, I can't remember if it came from Amazon or IKEA, but regardless, it was very inexpensive. And the biggest thing is, you want to have a rug that will actually, like, lay down so immediate, like, you're going to keep it rolled up in the closet, and you don't want people to trip over it. So, like, while ours doesn't lay down immediately, after like, 30 minutes of being unrolled, it lays down. So if it's the difference in like, \$30 rug and a \$40 rug, that's actually gonna lay down spring for the \$40 rug, I'm pretty sure I've never spent more than \$40 on a trade show rug, because why closet? Most of the time

Monica Pitts 15:44

do you see them professionally printed with logos and that kind of stuff on them? And you totally can do that, but I just don't know if you need to having one that is your company colors, that kind of fits your vibe, that works. I don't know that you need anything different than that. And if you find it rolling up, you're going to want to duct tape it down. Yeah. And if you're wondering what else you might need to pack, we have a whole packing list for you also on our blog, so definitely you can get the whole list, but, yeah, make some friends with some duct tape.

Stacy Brockmeier 16:17

The other thing that I like to do with our flooring, like, whatever we have at that trade show, usually a rug. I like to put it out in the path of like, people walking. So it's like, just, you know, even if it's just a foot, it'll get people like, come on in and see like, come on into my home for the week in my trade show booth. So just kind of disrupt the pattern of movement there, as long as it's not a tripping hazard, yeah, don't trip anybody. That's bad, yeah? But if it's not a

Monica Pitts 16:49

tripping hazard, then yes, because you're like, making your booth feel bigger, which is good, because we're Americans, we like space. Okay, so moving on to tabletop. That's another thing they always provide you with, is a either the table cloth or the piping around your table. So there's actually two pieces of this, of this, though, like you have your table cloth, but then you have the table itself. It's always the same for everyone. So what do you what advice do you have for us on this Daisy? Well, I'm

Stacy Brockmeier 17:26

gonna go on a tangent, so just like, get on my soapbox with me for just a minute, and then we'll get off. And I promise it won't be a really long like tangent, but do not leave this, like, eight foot table in the front of your booth and then sit behind it. It makes you feel like people can't come and talk to you. And for me, the entire reason I'm at a trade show. You've heard me say this already today. I want people to come talk to me. I want to have a conversation. I want them to come into my booth. I want them to hang out there. So do not put this table across the front of your booth and like, cut you off from the people that you're trying to talk to so often, the very like, literally, like, before I even bring all of my stuff in, I will turn that table and, like, shove it up against the side of my booth. So if somebody's gonna come in and take something off my table, it'll be like, they have to actually, like, come into my booth, and that opens an opportunity for me to have a conversation with them, even if it's not about my service or my product or anything like that, it's just building a relationship with them. So don't put the table in the front of the booth. Now. I'm getting off the soapbox. I've like spent enough time on top of the box like we're out now, but other things you can do for your table top are, like a lot of people will do a table cloth. I don't necessarily think you have to have a table cloth with your name on it. Some people are really married to that idea, and that's okay. But you can just even have a table cloth that has that's your company color, or you can skip a tablecloth altogether and just like decorate your table, but keeping it pretty simple, easy to transport, it's probably not the most noticed thing in your booth.

Monica Pitts 19:17

Well, not when it's turned sideways, and that's just that our clients that use them are more likely to either have them over the top and have the logo on the top of the table, so you might see this the brand that way, or they might have a different shape table that, like some of them, have, kind of like a podium style table. And so then we will design something that, you know, shows on the front of the podium, and then that's another place that the logo might be. But yeah, I agree, for us, it doesn't make sense to have a designed table cloth, because we don't want people sitting behind the table, because it feels like you're you're approaching the like the teacher's desk. Risk. It's intimidating.

Stacy Brockmeier 20:02

I oftentimes will bring a like a cocktail table and put that kind of more at the front of the booth where people can, like, stand on it or lean on or put their arm on it, but that way it's more again, just like inviting that conversation or inviting people to hang out.

Monica Pitts 20:21

It is nice to have some type of table at the booth. You got to have something to put your giveaways on, or very least

Stacy Brockmeier 20:27

set, yeah, make a note, yeah, and let people ride on something, yeah. And

Monica Pitts 20:32

it's also but you have to put all of the bags for everything someplace. And so if you don't have a backdrop. You have to have a tablecloth over your table, and you have to have some type of table in your booth, or you're gonna have to haul all your stuff out to the car and put it in your car, and then haul it back out of your car, so you can pack it all up to haul it back to your car. So, like, just think about how that's gonna go, because sometimes it's really freaking cold.

Stacy Brockmeier 20:59

It's a really great place to hide stuff, hide it underneath that table.

Monica Pitts 21:05

There was one show I go to. It's in February, and the way the place I have to park is a gravel lot that's, like, almost a half a mile away, I swear, from the doors that you have to load in and load out of. And if I do not want to go back and forth between that over and over again to get my stuff. Yeah, I just really like a tablecloth very

Stacy Brockmeier 21:28

similar to that and that it's like, almost been canceled the last two years because the weather is so bad that week every year. Yeah.

Monica Pitts 21:37

So I like the tablecloth because it lets me stash everything from my winter coat to my snacks and my lunch and all the bags that I keep all the stuff in right underneath the table. It's like an attic, yeah, in my booth. Okay, so you were kind of alluding to the table, right, that people can gather around, and so the way that you have your booth arranged can really give people a reason to come in. So you have some ideas. My

Stacy Brockmeier 22:09

goal is always to get people to hang out. Like I want people to come in and sit down and hang out. And so I often will take some kind of like fold up chair, so we have directors chairs, and they're tall, so people don't feel like they're imposing, like, or a lot of people I see bring like stools, so just something somewhere somebody can, like, lean on or sit in, that doesn't feel like they're just like, lounging around. But people will come in, sit down, have a conversation, eat some candy, all the things, those are really candy. Great way for people to get into the booth and hang out. Candy

Monica Pitts 22:49

is the best giveaway. It's the best giveaway. It's the best one people and try to get the candy that not everybody else is going to bring, because everybody likes a different kind of candy. And if everybody like, you know what I'm saying.

Stacy Brockmeier 23:05

I'm telling you, Skittles and starbursts, like other people, almost everyone brings chocolate candy. If you have sugar candy, you will get a whole nother crowd of people. Some Yeah, usually I try to take chocolate candy and sugar candy because I want all the people. I

Monica Pitts 23:21

want all the chocolate. Yeah, and if I have the sugar candy, I'm not gonna eat my own candy. And that means that I can go make new friends, because I'm gonna steal their candy. Yes, it's very smart. It's strategic. I'm telling you my candy eating. But if you're not gonna bring candy or other giveaways, one really inexpensive thing that you can do, if you have a tangible product, you can bring that like you can have a show and tell, basically, for people to be able to touch right? So, yeah, I have, we have one client that's they do, like siding, roofing, doors, windows, and they can bring in samples of siding and samples of, like, different roofing materials. And it's like, show, tell, right? And, yeah, other examples, Stacey, well, it's

Stacy Brockmeier 24:10

kind of bringing what you do inside, or bringing what you do to the trade show. And often it's really inexpensive because it's something you already have. So for like our asphalt like testing labs or asphalt companies, they might bring pucks or, like asphalt samples we have seen, like greenhouses that will bring in plants and stuff and fill their booth. And so if you can bring the things in that you use or do on a daily basis. Like, I love to walk around and, like, stick my hand in whatever gravel or whatever somebody brought at these trade shows and see how it feels. And so it's just a way to get people's attention. And a lot of people are super tangible at those things. And so if you can bring what you do into your booth, but. That's really cool.

Monica Pitts 25:01

And then you're a web designer, and

Stacy Brockmeier 25:04

we can't bring anything because we don't do anything that's tangible. No, that

Monica Pitts 25:08

what we do. Bring our work into our booth. We do. We have, you know, printed pieces of paper and banners, yes, bringing our work into our booth. It just feels like everybody else's stuff that they have in their booths. We do have some giveaway advice, though, because we've bought all the different kinds of giveaways. We got the really expensive ones, and you know what we still have in some of our closets at the office. They're really expensive giveaways because we, like were afraid to give them out. They were so expensive. But there are a few things that give away really well. Yeah,

Stacy Brockmeier 25:45

so the I would say the like, biggest giveaway that from this past year is we printed these little holographic stickers. So they're really inexpensive, but they were really shiny and pretty. And they say you are somebody. Start acting like it. And people like that. They have a quote on them and that it's not just a like sticker of our logo. If you're gonna print stickers, it can't just be your logo. They don't want the sticker of your logo. But you can

Monica Pitts 26:15

put your logos really cool on. Some people have really cool logo,

Stacy Brockmeier 26:19

yeah, you can put your logo on it. But then also just include something else really fun that people will want to put on their laptop or want to put on their water bottle or something like that. I agree. Always pens and notepads, like things that are useful. People always are like walking around looking for a pen or walking around looking for a notepad. So those are super useful. One of the other, like, really good giveaways that we did this year was, like the glasses or like screen cleaning cloth, like the lens cloth, and people keep those. That's really, I mean, your goal with your giveaways to get something that people keep. And honestly, those like we ordered them off of Amazon and uploaded a design. I Before, I had never ordered something custom like that from Amazon, but you can, and they're pretty inexpensive. You can also get those from, like, your promo products companies too. But if you're looking for something really

Monica Pitts 27:16

easy, when we talk about notepads. We're just talking about like the simple cut paper glued on one side, like notepads. When you get into like, full bound notebooks, those are more expensive. They're really cool, but they are more expensive. And so we we've done both for sure, and they both give away fine, like there's not a right or a wrong answer, but I do find that the the non bound, non actual notebook, more like Notepad, those, those work better. But also, I don't really think that you have to have giveaways. I think that you can just have business cards, and I mean, or candy. Candy is good. And I saw people last year that had they made really fun popcorn At Home and covered it in sugar and chocolate, and then they put it in these cute, clear bags, tied them with ribbons, and put their logo sticker on the front of them. And that was their giveaway. And so you could do something like that. We've done it with cookies before when we're feeling ambitious. But yeah, it doesn't have to be something expensive. It can be simple and yes, and if you're if you're not sure what you're going to put your candy in or something else in, don't go to the office supply store. Don't do it

Stacy Brockmeier 28:40

the most expensive place on the planet, like it and Disney World, I swear, it probably

Monica Pitts 28:46

costs the same amount for a soda at the office supply store as it does at Disney World. Yes, I don't know, actually,

Stacy Brockmeier 28:54

but it feels right. But you could totally raid the dollar store. I mean, like, there are neat little bowls and stands and fasteners and just different stuff at the dollar store. And so I'm always a fan of raiding the dollar store for just the handy things that you you're gonna break it, like you're traveling with things, and you're gonna break it. So don't spend a gajillion dollars on, like, some really nice bowl or some really nice bucket or really nice stand, like, it's okay, braid the dollar store.

Monica Pitts 29:30

All of ours are from the dollar store, and they look just fine. Yeah? Nobody has

Stacy Brockmeier 29:34

ever been like, Oh, is that from the dollar store? Nope. They're like, and

Monica Pitts 29:37

you know what? They may not be microwavable, but it doesn't matter, because they're just holding candy, yeah, and business cards and stuff, yeah. Now, one of the things we've done a few times is host a game, and if you can figure out a cool game to make in your booth inexpensively, I think that's a great way to bring people in. It could be, I mean, I've seen. Like the Plinko, and then also people play bags. People will have putting, and those are not expensive. You might even just have those things at home. We've done surveys which are kind of fun. Any other ideas? Stacey,

Stacy Brockmeier 30:15

I was gonna say the putting, but yeah, I think I mean anything you can do that your audience is drawn to that way is really good. One

Monica Pitts 30:25

of my favorite ones was they had these huge pieces of paper hung up on the back of the booth and markers, and you just signed your name on the pieces of paper, and you were signing saying that you would not use a certain word in your vocabulary anymore, and it was for people with disabilities, and it was a nonprofit that did it. And I thought this is the coolest thing ever, because you got people into your booth, you got us to change a behavior that you feel is important for us to change, which it really is. And I don't let my kids say that word either. But you know, I was like, this was good and it was not expensive. It was those long sheets of paper and some like, markers, and so you could do the same thing, you know, take a pledge, um, put your phone down when you're driving it, buckle up, whatever it is.

Stacy Brockmeier 31:16

We've seen people do photo booths, things like that. I mean, like anything that draws people in is a fun game to do.

Monica Pitts 31:24

Yeah. Okay, so last but not least, movement is the last thing, because movement catches your eye, it draws you in. So give us some ideas. Stacy, well,

Stacy Brockmeier 31:37

I think the movement's especially easy for people who don't have a tangible product. So for us, we have a really nice slideshow. We made it in Canva. Anybody can use Canva and make a slideshow, and then you can display it on a TV from your office or just a monitor and your laptop, or even just your laptop. So if you have an intangible product or something that could look really good on a slideshow, like making your own slideshow is probably the like, most cost effective way to add some some judge or some like, fun movement to your trade show booth. Yeah,

Monica Pitts 32:19

and they're not hard, like when I made ours earlier this year. We had it in Adobe Premiere Pro. It was a full on developed video. And I was like, Girl, I don't have time to make this. I knew, we knew we needed to change it, but I was like, I don't have time to do this. And Stacy was like, check this out. So what you do is you just start with a presentation, and now with AI and Canva, it will automatically apply all of the animations to your presentation at one time. And it feels like you have a fully developed video. It is nuts. And I was blown away. You literally

Stacy Brockmeier 32:59

download it as a video, and so then you just put it on your laptop, and you hit play and put it on repeat, and it just repeats and plays forever.

Monica Pitts 33:08

Yeah, and if you have internet access, you can just play it from Canva too. That's true, though. I would totally download

Stacy Brockmeier 33:13

it, download it, play

Monica Pitts 33:14

it for sure, download it. Don't, don't risk it. People don't risk it. And you can play we have, like, a big TV with a stand, and that's our choice, right? But you don't have to have a big TV with a stand. It could sit your TV, could sit on a table, or you could just bring a monitor. You could just play it on your laptop. It's fine, yeah, it's not just use

Stacy Brockmeier 33:39

what you have, like, especially if you're on a budget, using what you have, is going to be totally fine. You're not going to be the least stressed person there. There's always going to be that one person with, like, the you remember when we were kids? I don't know how old you are when you're listening to this, but when we were little and like, at the elementary school, they would have, like, the felt backdrop, like felt board, and you could, like, put your stuff on it. There's always going to be at least one person that has a felt board with like, pictures velcroed to it. So, yeah, you're good.

Monica Pitts 34:13

Yeah. They might have even written all of the information about their company, like, on a piece of notebook paper and cut it out and then stuck it to the felt board. You don't know. You don't know. Like, who does everybody have access to a word processor these days? I don't know. It's surprising sometimes. Um, yeah, so Stacy's right, and it's really easy to make a video. It's man, don't be scared of it, because it's way easier than you think. And I mean, if nothing else, last year, I walked past a booth six people deep. There were six people in this booth, and it was not a big booth, and they were all wearing fluorescent pink shirts. I. It's hard to know. I left over there. There's nothing else in the booth, but these six people in their fluorescent pink shirts, so just wear something white. Ultimately, too. I think if you just smile,

Stacy Brockmeier 35:13

yeah, that's good smile, and eye contact is pretty great.

Monica Pitts 35:18

Smiling. It's a thing. People should do it more well. And then, Monica,

Stacy Brockmeier 35:22

you used to like have a conversation piece. Do you remember what that was?

Monica Pitts 35:27

Yes, I So now everybody paints their fingernails bright colors all the time. But I'm old, not that old, but 10 or 15 years ago, that was not a thing, right? Women did not paint their fingernails super bright colors. And so I would paint mine bright green, and some or one nail each, like a different color, and wear it. And everyone would be like, Oh my gosh, your fingernails. And it was just a conversation starter, yeah, now I wear obnoxious earrings that my kids made at a fuse beads.

Stacy Brockmeier 36:07

Just be original. Make your own conversation piece, anything to build a relationship with people. Get them in your booth, spend some time. Talk to them about what they do, yeah,

Monica Pitts 36:21

and just remember too, that the whole conversation isn't just about selling something, it's about meeting someone. You never know what they're going to need from you. The the people that I end up doing business with out of a trade show are not necessarily the ones that told me that they needed a website when they stopped by the booth. It's often the people that you see three times, and then they need the website, and that's when you end up doing the business with them. So it's about making friends, really, more than anything, yeah? So hopefully today, friends, you feel a little bit more empowered to go plan a trade show booths, right? So from tabletops to backdrops, trade show booth display ideas for small budgets, remember what you're trying to do is shake up the pattern. There's a pattern and it's really consistent between all the booths. You need to break the pattern with things like your backdrop, your flooring, the tabletop give people a reason to come in, maybe put some movement or smile if, if you just stand up at the edge of your booth and smile, it might be the pattern breaker, right? So you don't have to spend a ton of money, but if you put some thought into it to begin with, you can totally go and have a very successful trade show on a very limited budget. So thank you so much for joining us today. We appreciate all of the thoughts and energy that hopefully you're feeling rolling through your head as you're planning your next trade show. And if you enjoyed this episode, please subscribe. So then you won't miss the next episode. In our next episode, Stacey and I will be hanging out together again, because you may have heard we ran a four day work week experiment in our office in 2023 and now in 2025 we are still running a four day work week, and we've learned some stuff along the way. And we were asked to give a presentation to a group about how we like came about and modified our business to be able to work a four day work week. So we're going to be taking some of the content from that presentation and sharing it with you guys in our next episode. So definitely

subscribe so you don't miss it. And before I let you go, I want to give one more shout out to our mayecreate resource sponsor Marketing on a Shoestring. It is the free beginners mini course to marketing on a budget. It lays the foundation of creating the right messaging to connect with your potential customer and prime them to buy. It unlocks the four part framework for making confident, budget, conscious marketing decisions, so you can stop second guessing and get a clear path forward, and it outlines the highest converting tactics that I know of for new marketers, so you don't have to waste time on strategies that will never reach your goals. Hop on over to you. May create.com for instant access. That's y, o, u, M, a, y, E, C, R, E, A, T, e.com, you.

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