

Mark West Area Chamber of Commerce and VISITORS CENTER

BRINGING BUSINESS & THE COMMUNITY TOGETHER!



**The Lark
REPRINT**

SHOWCASE TIPS

*contributed by
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**23rd ANNUAL
WINE
COUNTRY
HARVEST
FAIRE &
BUSINESS
SHOWCASE**

**WEDNESDAY,
OCTOBER
32012**

4:00 – 8:00PM

**at WELLS
FARGO
CENTER FOR
THE ARTS**

*Download a
Tradeshow
Application:
www.markwest.org*

**WHY
PARTICIPATE?**

People - are you getting ready? Some of you may be thinking it is too soon to think about the **23rd Annual Wine Country Harvest Faire & Business Showcase happening Wednesday, October 3, 2012, 4:00pm – 8:00pm.**

In my mind we can make it easier and fun by planning ahead. When you plan ahead you are planning to be successful and have fun.

To begin with, having a tool box is essential. A tool box can be anything from a fancy tool box to a simple bag that has all the stuff in it you may need. First make a list of everything needed, such as decorations, name tags, promotional items, printed brochures etc. *Suggestion:* Get yourself a bright colored tool box or bag that has room for all the goodies you will be putting into it. Have some fun, stick on a Happy Face or find some stickers that have some fun sayings or make a sticker or two and put it on the tool box.

Here is a simple check list to help you get started. These are just suggested things you might need.

Tool Box Check List:

<i>Key staff business cards</i>	<i>Scissors</i>	<i>Extra extension cord</i>
<i>Bowl to collect business cards</i>	<i>Stapler</i>	<i>Facial Tissues</i>
<i>Pens</i>	<i>Staple Remover</i>	<i>Band-Aids</i>
<i>Pencils</i>	<i>Paper Clips</i>	<i>Aspirin/Pain relievers</i>
<i>Note pads</i>	<i>Rubber Bands</i>	<i>Sewing kit</i>
<i>High Lighter</i>	<i>Hooks for Banners</i>	<i>Glass Cleaner</i>
<i>Scotch Tape</i>	<i>Screwdrivers</i>	<i>Cloth or paper towels</i>
	<i>Shipping instructions</i>	<i>String</i>

Remember the most important thing to put in your toolbox is a positive attitude. Affirm to yourself that you are going to have a great time, have an opportunity to share your business with other business owners and generate lots of leads for yourself.

Am I participating or not in the Annual Wine Country Harvest Faire & Business Showcase - *is the question many of you have on your mind.*

A little bit of information, over 110 million people attend more than 4,000 trade shows in the United States and Canada every year. Why do people go? They are usually there to make contacts, find out information, see what is available and make purchases. Trade Show participation also influences the way people make buying decisions. Local Trade Shows are extremely important because of

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RESERVE YOUR BOOTH!

the **Go Local** movement that is happening across the country. People want to get to know the people who are local and can provide information and products to them.

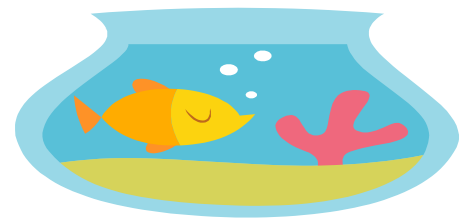
It is important to take the first step regarding the Harvest Faire & Business Showcase and that step is to make the decision to reserve your space by purchasing a table. Often money stops people from making decisions ahead of time, but because the Chamber wants to support and encourage it's members to participate, it is willing to provide a payment plan if needed. All you have to do is call the Chamber office and they will give you the information on how to arrange to do that.

We are a community of business people and we are proud to let our community get to know us and our products and services, and that is why I personally love these types of events. Also, once you make the commitment you can begin to plan your presentation. That's the fun part!

FIRST THINGS FIRST!

Getting Ready for the Annual Wine Country Harvest Fair & Business Showcase is both exciting and challenging. Here are some things to start looking at to help you have a successful, less stressful showcase. First of all remember this is going to be Fun and an opportunity to provide information about your products and services along with an opportunity for our community to get to know you and your business.

First things first, What's your budget? Included in the budget should be costs for staffing, literature and any special prizes you might want to give away. Be sure to include cost for a Fish Bowl, to collect business cards. This is important as it lets you know who stopped by and who you might follow up with. It is amazing how many know about that idea yet forget to bring the bowl.



Planning the booth design and signage sometimes takes more effort and is important to start exploring early. Are you going to offer special promotions and giveaways? How about Product demonstrations? High-tech displays and multimedia presentations are eye-catching but sometimes expensive and they may not be as cost-effective as a couple of well-trained staffers armed with fact-filled sales brochures, a useful give-away item and a smile.

Remember your toolbox, have some fun in getting it together. This is a great project to include your staff. This gives them a sense of excitement about participating and attending.

I know a lot depends on how much money you have to spend however I know from past experience the earlier you begin to plan the less costly it is. I don't have to tell you how much extra it costs when you wait until the last minute. Next let's talk about presentations.

Also if you have any questions or need additional support give the Chamber office a call or send them an email, they are happy to help.

GETTING
READY!

Before you know it, the doors will swing open to the Annual Wine Country Harvest Fair & Business Showcase. My vision is that the room will be filled with wonderful people talking and sharing all their services and products. For those already committed to participate let's explore some questions and ideas while preparing to get ready.

To begin with, **what is your motivation for participating?** Are you trying to extend your relationship with existing customers? Introducing a new product? Positioning your company within the market? Generating qualified leads for new sales? Countering a competitor's claim?

What is the message you want to convey? In asking this question it will help you in decide about displays and giveaways.

What do you want to get out of the show? Do you want to generate leads, sell your product/service, or create/improve/ build upon your company image?

Which staff will you be sending? Remember whomever you select is representing you and your company. Start thinking about what people will wear i.e. special shirts or hats. How about brainstorming on how to greet attendees and collect business cards or contact information.

What do you need to bring? Remember to review your checklist.

For those who are still thinking about participating, if finances are an issue, the Chamber is willing to take partial payments or perhaps you can share a booth with another member. Most importantly in these economic times it is important we get out there and network and what better place to do that than at the **Harvest Faire & Business Showcase at the Wells Fargo Center for the Arts, 50 Mark West Springs Road, Santa Rosa.**

In my mind, things are getting somewhat impersonal and events like this one are an opportunity to get close and personal (I like that). Looking forward to seeing everyone and having lots of fun.

Time to start planning your booth and the marketing message you are going to convey.

Here are a few suggestions to start the process:

Designate the people who are going to staff your booth and decide what their hours and responsibilities will be. Prepare an outline of what your expectations are while they are at the booth. Make sure everyone understands what the goals for the event are. Get your staff involved in planning the booth. **This helps develop teamwork and excitement!** Will they need badges and business cards?

If you plan to use giveaways in your booth, what's your strategy?

An effective promotional giveaway should reinforce your company's image and marketing message. With budgets so tight, no one can afford to waste money on a gift that doesn't fulfill their objectives.

So, before you order those coffee cups, pens or key chains, a quick review of the desired results is in order.

PLANNING
GETS
RESULTS!

**PLANNING
GETS
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**YOUR
OPPORTUNITY
TO SHOW OFF!**

**SEE YOU
ALL AT THE
TRADESHOW!**

1. Do you have a new product or service that you want everyone in attendance to know about? Choose a product or service branded giveaway that you can give to everyone you come in contact with. Be sure to include your business name and contact information on the giveaway.

2. Want to pull your primary prospects to your booth? Try sending a post card about 4-6 weeks before the Tradeshow which invites them to your booth. Let them know if there will be discounts for buying at the show, or special prizes if they mention their invitation.

3. Want prospects to buy on site? Provide a show special for on-site orders and display your discounts prominently.

4. How about lead cards? Offer a giveaway for those visitors who fill them out, drop their business cards into your fishbowl, or agree to sit through a future presentation or demonstration. ***A sign always helps to announce show specials.***

The Harvest Faire and Business Showcase is an opportunity for you to show off for your current customers and to meet prospective customers. It is also a time to have fun, to introduce new products and to actively participate in your business community. One never knows who they might meet or how many new customers will be generated unless they are part of the faire. If you have not secured your booth I suggest you do it now. Don't miss out on the **FUN!!!**

With time running out there are some things to consider, the most important thing is to participate. Often times money can be an issue; don't let that be an excuse - you also might share a booth with another business. This is a good way to get to know another Chamber member or business and cut your costs.

Select staff and identify goals and objectives. Alert the staff to the importance of greeting people and encourage them to get out in the aisle in lieu of sitting behind the table looking bored. Make final decisions on what people are going to wear i.e. shirts with logos, suits and ties. Remind your staff that they are representing the company and customers are the key to keeping the doors open. Do some role playing on how to greet and meet new and old customers. **Call and email your customers and let them know you will be attending and invite them to visit you. Let them know your booth number.**

Go over your check list to make sure you have what you need. Make sure everyone has business cards, materials to take orders. One thing many people forget is to prepare a sheet for people who stop by to fill out so you can have their information to send notices about specials or new products. Have a giveaway and remember to bring that ole fish bowl to collect business cards. This is the best way to get leads. Another thought is to have a show special and have signs letting people know about it. Decide who is going to do set up and break down.

Remember despite the outlay of time and money a trade show is still an economical way to build your business. Come to the show with the idea of having fun, meeting new people and talking with customers and potential customers face to face. In our technological world this is still by far the best way to generate business. See you all at the Tradeshow!