

Trade Show Secrets

LOOK, LISTEN AND LEARN

BY EDITH G. TOLCHIN

I have participated in and attended inventor trade shows since 1997. In addition to speaking on various topics and consulting with inventors on issues ranging from product safety to manufacturing, I have walked trade show floors to see the newest, strangest, cutest, most complex and innovative ideas conceivable—ideas that exceed the imagination of the average Jane.

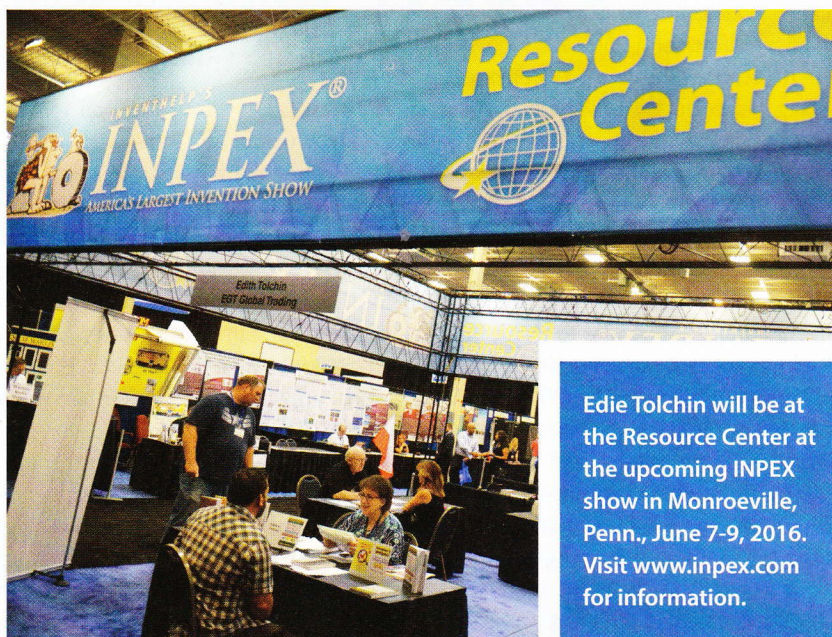
Of course, inventors are not average Janes. Inventors take risks. They research. They often put aside a good portion of their nest eggs and take second mortgages on their homes. They make “kindergarten-style” prototypes (practice makes perfect), learn new software and contact reputable industry professionals to help get them started on their vastly unpredictable journey to the top.

They also attend trade shows, which offer multiple opportunities to learn and test the market. This knowledge is provided courtesy of the cost of an exhibitor booth and travel expenses.

Promotion and Pricing

Trade show attendees are quick to offer opinions on the various features of new products, so be sure to take your prototype. I have found CAD drawings or videos alone are not as effective as prototypes; however they can be used productively in conjunction with your prototype.

A sell sheet is a must, as are any other handouts you can create. These should be printed professionally and look as esthetically pleasing as possible. Don't forget to bring packaging samples, so your prospective buyers can envision stocking your product in their stores.



Edie Tolchin will be at the Resource Center at the upcoming INPEX show in Monroeville, Penn., June 7-9, 2016. Visit www.inpex.com for information.

Know what your wholesale and retail pricing will be and do not pre-sell your product if, one, you plan on manufacturing and importing your product from overseas for the first time, or two, you do not have inventory ready to sell. Understand that if you plan on manufacturing your invention overseas, after researching product safety regulations, studying U.S. government regulations, finding a capable and reputable offshore factory, negotiating prices, production testing, quality control and making shipping arrangements, it can take anywhere from four to 12 months to get your new product on the shelves.

Stand Out in the Crowd

Try to make your booth unique. How can you make it stand out among the hundreds of other booths? Flashing holiday lights? Wearing a gorilla suit? What type of gimmick would go naturally with your invention?

PHOTOS COURTESY OF INPEX

You have already taken time away from your day job, so why not take full advantage of the show's entire agenda? Find time to participate in seminars and panel evaluations offered before the show floor opens. Through these you will get additional ideas on almost every aspect of developing, publicizing, marketing and selling your new idea. Take an hour or so to walk the show floor while your co-worker watches your booth, if only to get ideas about how you might better exhibit your invention.

Golden Opportunities

Be sure to network at the evening, after-show functions, where other weary exhibitors will be relaxed, less inhibited and more likely to give you their true opinion of your invention. You might even meet a famous inventor who could offer invaluable advice based on his/her experience of what it took to get to the top. In

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fact, I once had dinner at a trade show with the inventor of Post-it Notes.

Also, latch on to any prospective PR opportunities that might come your way. Members of the media and TV production crews often attend, and your invention may be just what interests them. After a recent show, I rode to the airport in the same limo with the producers of *Shark Tank*. Keep those antennae up for golden opportunities.

After the show is over, be sure to thank your hosts. Make an impression by being gracious, even if you only won the third-place award. You never know when they may hear of retailers seeking new products or someone looking to license a product just like yours.

Enjoy the trade show experience. Camaraderie rules, and many beneficial liaisons are forged. It is exhausting, intriguing and eye-opening, to say the least. Look, listen and learn. ☛

2 Critical Steps to getting your NEW PRODUCT "out there"

1 GET IT MADE

Contact Edie Tolchin – "The Sourcing Lady" (SM) for sourcing, China manufacturing, product safety issues, packaging assistance, quality control, production testing, final shipment inspections, freight arrangements, import services and delivery to your door!

www.EGTglobaltrading.com

EGT@egtglobaltrading.com

P.O. Box 5660 - Hillsborough, NJ 08844

845-321-2362

2 GET A WEBSITE!

Contact Ken Robinson – While your order is being manufactured, you need to start working on your WEB PRESENCE! Get people talking about your product on Social Media (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Google+), get good search engine placement (SEO)!

www.widgetsontheweb.com

kenrbnsn@widgetsontheweb.com

614 Van Liew Court - Hillsborough, NJ 08844

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combined total of over 60 years of experience!**

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MAY 2016 Volume 32 Issue 5

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