

TRAQ-IT Software Newsletter

October 2009

About TRAQ-IT:

TRAQ-IT®, the industry standard in trade show and event management software, offers a Desktop and an Online solution for the exhibit manager. TRAQ-IT allows users to plan, organize, manage and report on all activity without re-entering information into complex spreadsheets. Web access enables coordinators, as well as attending personnel, to communicate 24/7 so lost emails and miscommunication is a thing of the past. With 10 years of customer input, it's easy to see how TRAQ-IT always puts the Exhibitor First™.

Letter From the President:

Just a note to all our TRAQ-IT friends. You are probably working your typical 12 hour day or weekend show with even more time commitments. I appreciate your time in taking a few minutes to relax with our newsletter.

The year 2009 has been a busy year for us which we hope was to your benefit. Also, we have to date (September 28, 2009) added 37 NEW enhancements to TRAQ-IT. These enhancements are 90% from your input to us. We have also added 14 new reports – again with your invaluable input. Your referrals to friends and colleagues represented 50% of our new clients for 2009. Thank you for your confidence in us.

In addition, we are proud to note in the last 3 years there has been no 'down time' on our system. Our security and back up are untouched in the industry. We are the only company that has a SAS 70 security compliance audit.

We were able to visit with many of you at Exhibitor Show, HCEA & TS2 conferences. This year we had Patrick McCarthy from our IT development department and Marina Ellis from operations at some of the shows so you could also put a name with a face. Many of you came by to see them and they loved every minute of it.

Over the last 10 years we have become friends with many of you and that makes our company that much stronger. We look forward to meeting more of you personally in the future. If any of you are coming to, or are in Kansas City, please let us know. If nothing else we can be a personal concierge for you while you are in our city.

Thank you for being our client, customer and friend.

Dr. Robin Potter
President, TRAQ-IT Software

FAQ of the Month:

Q. I can't find a report that I need in my TRAQ-IT account. Can TRAQ-IT create a report for me that meets my specific needs? **OR** My company/department has a report that they require us to use for all events and trade shows. Is there a way we can re-create that report in our TRAQ-IT account?

A. TRAQ-IT has numerous reports that are available to you and your full right and view only users. But if there is a specific report or form that you don't see in your TRAQ-IT account, we can custom build what you need. This way you avoid redundant data entry and your executives

receive the information they requested on forms they are used to. There is a small fee for custom reports, but give us a call or send us an email and we will get a quote to you.

Tip of the Quarter:

There are so many steps to planning a trade show. How do you break it down to make sure every aspect has been completed and to everyone's satisfaction before you ship everything to the show site or to a warehouse?

I like to break it down to about 5 meetings. Each meeting covers a specific area and each meeting will have a different group of people to help you meet your objectives/agenda items. This makes your meetings more effective and efficient giving you more time out of the conference room and more time at your computer doing what you do best...planning and executing your trade shows.

The first meeting is what I like to call the Strategic Meeting. Here is a list of items to go over and also a list of things to have ready and available for your meeting attendees so they have a good idea of what the show is going to be like. Schedule this meeting at least 12 weeks before the show.

- Booth size (This should have already been determined and reserved)
- Booth #
- Demographics of show attendees
- Estimated attendance at show (can use the show attendance from previous year)
- Last year's show results (if attended last year)
- Who is attending and what is their role going to be while at the show?
- Objectives (make these quantifiable goals, such as: 10 Qualified leads, 5 private demos etc.)
- Solutions or Products to be featured at event
- How many demo stations or platforms will you want/need?
- Any special equipment needed (list items wanted)
- Budget
- What do you want show attendees to see as your messaging. A slogan, branding, is there a tagline?
- Communication/marketing tactics – such as: will there be new graphics made? What booth are you sending? Do you want a flash graphic to help grab attendee's attention? Brochures – what ones are we sending, do we need to create new ones?
- Hospitality events – are we going to host a breakfast, reception, dinner event?
- Notes – what came out of this meeting? Who is doing what before the next meeting?

Attendees of the strategic meeting usually include you (the trade show coordinator) and a marketing manager/solution specialist. The marketing manager usually has a good idea of what they want to do with the show and how they want to market your company and the solutions/products you have to offer the show attendees.

Next up: the Marcom Meeting! This is the fun one, I think. This is where you get with your graphic team to discuss how you want to look visually to show attendees, and of course, look better than your competitors who will be at the show. Graphics for the booth, promotional giveaways, brochures, flash animation etc. Here are some things to go over in your Marcom meeting.

- Booth size
- Booth layout (how many graphics will a specific booth need?)
- Go over each booth graphic with wording/pictures/layout.

- Promotional items: are you giving away an item that you can put a company logo on? Your graphic designers will have to lay out how it needs to look and send you a file to send to the promotional company. Maybe you are giving away gift cards and need a card/envelope for the card to slide into.
- E-signage: This is usually done with bigger shows/bigger booths. Do you put up flat screen LCD panels and display a flash animation with information about your solutions/products?
- Invitations to your hospitality event
- Notes: what came out of this meeting and who is responsible for what items

Make sure you put due dates on some of these items. As an example, a rush order on printing could cost you lots of money. Also the graphic artists are probably not just working on this one trade show only for you. They need a time line to make sure they get to your project with the amount of time dedicated to your show.

At this meeting you should invite yourself, marketing manager/solution specialist, and graphic artists. The graphic artists may be a couple of people since one may specifically do just booth graphics and invitations while the other might specialize on the flash animation.

Okay, now we are on to our Tactical Meeting. Do you show your solutions/products on a computer? This is a meeting where you talk about what and how many computer monitors you need. Are you a medical company and need extra equipment like hand held devices to scan barcodes? Now is the time to talk about what technical needs you may have.

- Booth size
- Booth # (since these guys will probably pack and ship for you)
- Shipping Address
- Installation Dates and Hours
- Exhibit Dates and Hours
- Dismantle Dates and Hours
- How many demo/product stations will you have?
- Equipment needed (3 – 27" monitors, 3 PC's, Extension cords etc.)
- Electrical and Internet needs (how many plug-ins do you need, what type of internet speed) This is a great time to bring your internet and electrical order forms as they may fill them out for you.

This is the meeting where you invite your IT crew that are in charge of trade shows. They know what is best for each solution/product that you will be featuring at these shows and understand what you need to bring. You also need to bring your marketing manager/solutions specialist to this meeting.

So you have planned what you want to feature and how to get that done at the show. Next you need to have a pre-show meeting with everyone who has been invited to staff your booth. Schedule this 1-2 days before people will start traveling to the show. Go over the following:

- Objectives (determined during the Strategy Meeting)
- Solutions/products to be featured
- Dress code
- Rules of staffing a booth
- Does anyone have any questions?

The show was a complete success, so now is the time to plan a post-show meeting to listen to all the great compliments from the people who staffed the booth. Go over the following as this is great information to have when you are planning the show the following year. Schedule this meeting 2-3 days after the show ends.

- Projected vs actual attendance
- Demographics of show attendees
- Booth size
- Solutions/products demonstrated
- Booth traffic (light, heavy, steady)
- What competitors were there and what size of booths did they have?
- Projected vs actual lead count
- Projected vs actual number of private demonstrations (if applicable)
- Booth staff (who was there and what was their role)
- Booth messaging – was it effective or ineffective? Why or why not?
- Graphics – did they gain any attention? Did they say the right thing about our company/solution/products?
- Technology – did we bring the right things, did we send enough?
- Promotional activities – pre-show mailer/email – did that get people to our booth?
- Collateral – did we send the right amount of brochures/cds? Did we send the right pieces?
- Strategy for following up on leads
- What questions were you asked most?
- Reception/breakfast/dinner – how did those go? Well attended?
- Would you attend next year? Did we sign up for booth space again for the following year?
- Feedback on the trade show planning process – what went well, what didn't? Would you do anything differently?
- Lessons learned – things you would consider if you attend the event next year.

Invite everyone who attended the show to this meeting. This is a good way to get an outside view from sales about how the show went. Also invite your marketing manager/solutions specialist to the meeting.

I hope this helps break down your planning process to make trade shows more efficient for you and the booth staff. I know it helped me during my years at the Cerner Corporation by enabling me to focus on specific items to make sure they were completed before the next meeting. Also, it helps to schedule each meeting in one shot. Schedule your strategy meeting, then a week later schedule your Marcom meeting and then a week later schedule your tactical meeting. However you decide to do your meetings, whether they are scheduled on consecutive days, get them on everyone's calendars so they know to look forward to the meeting and that they can start to plan and hopefully have some ideas before the start of your meeting.

Fun Facts:

Halloween is one of my favorite holidays. Not only is the weather cool and crisp with the leaves falling and a magical feeling in the air, but dressing up in fun costumes to transform into something out of a fairy tale book or some fun character from one of my favorite movies is something I looked forward to for weeks as a kid. I do admit that I am a little jealous of my kids being able to dress up as their favorite princess or something from the Star Wars Clone Wars cartoon series. I am still thinking of a costume for my 1 year old son. My husband and I want him to be Max from Where the Wild Things Are book, but no costume exists and that would mean I would have to learn to sew to create this character.

Speaking of costumes, can you guess what the number 1 most popular costume for kids is for 2009?? You got it if you guessed *Michael Jackson!* Number 2 is Barack Obama! What happened to Spongebob Squarepants or Scooby-Doo?

I know not everyone celebrates Halloween like I do, but Halloween is still an interesting holiday and worth mentioning for the thought of how much money goes into candy and costume buying and where the holiday even started, how and why traditions started with pumpkins and asking for candy.

Halloween, referred to as All Hallows Eve, was originally a pagan holiday in which they honored the dead. It was celebrated on Oct. 31 since this was the last day of the Celtic calendar. The celebration dates back some 2,000 years. It has been said that Halloween was brought to North America by immigrants from Europe who would celebrate the harvest around a bonfire, share ghost stories, sing, dance and tell fortunes. On Halloween, Irish peasants would bed the rich for food. For those that refused, they would play a practical joke. So, in an effort to avoid getting tricked, the rich would hand out cookies, candy and fruit. This would become what we would know as trick-or-treating today!

More Halloween Trivia Facts:

- Approximately 82% of children and 67% of adults take part in Halloween festivities every year.
- Halloween is the 2nd most commercially successful holiday, beat out only by Christmas.
- The U.S. consumer spends upwards of \$1.5 billion on Halloween costumes annually and more than \$2.5 billion on other Halloween paraphernalia, such as decorations, crafts, etc. More than \$100,000 of that is said to be spent online.
- The number one candy of choice for Halloween is SNICKERS!
- Halloween candy sales average about 2 billion dollars annually in the United States.
- Out of the pumpkins marketed domestically, 99% of them are used as Jack-O-Lanterns at Halloween.
- There are no words in the dictionary that rhyme with "orange".
- In the movie "Halloween" the mask worn by Michael Myers is actually the mask of William Shatner painted white.
- The movie "Halloween" was made in 21 days in 1978 on a very limited budget.
- Anoka, Minnesota is believed to be the first city in the United States to put on a Halloween celebration to divert its youngsters from Halloween pranks. When Anokans awoke to find their cows roaming Main Street, their windows soaped and their outhouses tipped over, they decided something had to be done.
- If you see a spider on Halloween, it is the spirit of a loved one watching over you.

Halloween is the third biggest party day of the year behind New Year's and Super Bowl Sunday, respectively. So whether or not you plan on celebrating Halloween, please have a safe day and evening on October 31st.

For any questions about information in this newsletter, please contact Julie Williams at 913-498-1221.