



UPDATE

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Nick Nicholson DVC-AL
DISTRICT LAISON
dsopad7@ucnsb.net

"BOOTHS" THE REST OF THE STORY

A few months ago I wrote an UPDATE on Safety Booths. I got lots of feed back from you. Here are some excellent suggestions to add. And one (I stand corrected) Item.

The **correction** was from Terry Ewing, OS-PS 24-02 08E ewing@localaccess.net

Terry says: *"My wife and I have worked professional trade shows for 30 years, and suggest you think out-of-the box in your presentation at Boat Shows. I quote from a recent UPDATE, "Face the chairs behind the display table toward the front of the booth (backs to the audience looks bad." This whole concept creates a negative image."*

"First off, the fewer chairs in a booth the better. There are usually chairs in the food concession areas for sitting. A prospective customer should be greeted by a standing enthusiastic Auxiliarist. And remember 100% of the people attending a show are qualified boat enthusiasts. Sitting in a booth is a no no, and should be discouraged unless filling out an application."

"The tables for literature should never - never block the front of a booth. You are placing a barrier, which tells the public we don't want you to enter. Not so, we "do" want the public inside our booths. Place your tables along the sides of the booth, and not so many that they take up more than 1/4 of the floor space. If you're only interest is getting rid of literature, than leave literature on a table outside the show area."

However, if you are interested in creating a professional image and getting new customers and members, than create an atmosphere that works towards this goal."

Thanks Terry, I couldn't agree more. At a recent show, we tried this in our flotilla. It works much better. We put a couple of folding chairs behind the booth for those on break. The folks on duty in the booth were standing. Amazingly this gave us a whole new attitude. We were more open and anxious to get future customers in. I guess if we were standing, we might as well be doing something.

Kay Lori SO-PA 7 D7 says: *"It doesn't hurt to get out and mingle. **Slow attendance? Drum it up!** Walk around with handouts for kids (coloring books, stickers, etc.) and tell them there's more if Mom and/or Dad brings them over to the booth."* Jean Stolsmark DIV 15 D7 made lifejackets for Teddy Bears and put them in an inflatable pool toy. Never underestimate the KID POWER to get their parents to stop at the booth.

Speaking of **eye-catching displays**, Mel Borofsky mborofsky@skylineinternet.com "our friendly SITREP Editor" suggests: *To get folks to stop, how about using a lap top computer? Down load some pictures from SITREP at: www.teamcoastguard.org or from any other AUX website. Try the new National PA Website at: <http://www.auxpa.org/> There are lots of pictures out there and all you have to do is plug in, click the pic and change it from time to time. I suggest you use action shots with nice bright colors.*

From the PB side of the "A" Department came this article on PA Booths.

PEOPLE WATCHING by Jeannie Brenner, ADSO-PB, 5NR

Being an avid "people watcher," manning a PA Booth provided me with a multitude of subjects to observe. After a time, my imagination became activated and I began to categorize some of the people as they passed by.

One type is the *"I don't know what you're selling, but I'm not interested."* *They totally ignore the booth, staring dead ahead, for fear you'll catch their eye."*

Another is the *"Oh no, don't inspect my boat, I don't know if I'm legal."* *These people think we are law enforcement so they shy away, but they're curious and may even come back and ask what's required on their boat."*

My favorite are the people with a friendly smile who approach your booth asking questions about what branch of the service you're in. These people are easy to talk to and they want to learn all about the Auxiliary and our activities.

Then there's the bored people with the *'oh, someone to talk to'* gleam in their eye. These people just want to chitchat, not caring who you are or what you're doing; you're a captive audience.

We mustn't forget the *'been there, done that, and no one can do it better than me'* group. These people stride up to the booth and try to trip us up by asking leading questions, then they proceed to tell us how wrong we are and what's wrong with the world.

We also have those that amuse us with *"Oh! There's someone who works here... i.e. would you get my luggage; when does the next bus, plane, cab or cruise leave?"* These people (though they're a little confused) will remember that you were courteous and didn't embarrass them but steered them in the right direction for help.

Last, but not least, we have those actually interested in Safe Boating, who are the most difficult to detect and/or categorize.

No matter what type of people appear at your booth, you need to make a positive impression. Have pamphlets/items of interest visible and be ready to explain and/or clarify. Above all, be honest and friendly. You are making a first impression on a perspective member!

OK, Now you see what The UPDATE is supposed to be. This one was all yours. Your ideas. Your innovations. Your good works. I need more of your thoughts for upcoming issues. Send the to Nick at: dsopad7@ucnsb.net