

Trade Show as a Tool for the Exhibitor Corporate Image Development

Kirill SIMONOV

Lomonosov Moscow State University

1-46 Leninskiye Gory, 119991 Moscow, Russia

kirill.simonov.msu@yandex.ru

Abstract

Business spends a lot of resources to ensure a positive perception of their image by the business community, the target client audience, representatives of the authorities, and the public. The purpose of the study is to investigate the role of trade shows in creating the corporate image of the exhibitor. Methods of the investigation are based on obtaining primary empirical data through field research. A questionnaire survey of visitors to the company's booth at a B2B trade show was carried out. Data analysis was performed using statistical and econometric methods. The results of the study consist in confirming the following research hypotheses: visiting the booth of the company exhibiting at a trade show positively affects the perception of its corporate image; digital content of the booth helps to strengthen the corporate image of the exhibitor; several factors related to the company's exhibition activity are particularly important for a positive perception of its image; professional skills of booth team have the greatest impact on the corporate image of the host company. Also, the primary influence of some factors associated with the exhibition activities of the company (and in particular of some details of its booth management) on the corporate image of this company is justified. All these findings lay foundations for a better understanding of the role of trade shows in the development of the corporate image of the exhibitor company.

Keywords

Corporate image; trade show; exhibition booth; exhibitor's staff; B2B marketing.

Introduction

In the situation of a slowing economy and a reduction in consumer demand every business organization whether it is a large enterprise or a small firm is more than ever faced with the problem of finding the most effective ways to recreate a stable positive idea of the goals and results of its existence and activity (Cvetkova & Sivolap, 2016). The task is to firmly establish itself in the minds of target customers, potential partners, industry experts, main competitors, as well as representatives of government and public structures, influencers, and opinion leaders as a solid economically significant company and, thereby, increase the degree of customer recognition and commitment, take a stable position in the market and strengthen its corporate image (Leaniz & Rodríguez, 2016; Wilkins & Huisman, 2014; Furman, 2010).

Today, when the image share of the value of some businesses reaches 85% and an increment of 1% of positivism in the business image of the company gives up to a three percent increase in its value all kinds of marketing directions and types are maximally involved in working on the corporate image (Tran, Nguyen, Melewar, & Bodoh, 2015; Gusev, 2020), including:

- marketing communication channels - first of all, advertising and PR (Ershova, 2018);
- relationship marketing - service activities, partnerships with the customer, customer orientation (Gajdarenko, 2019);
- social and ethical marketing - environmental principles, investments in the development of territories, charitable activities of the business;
- internal marketing - corporate culture and personnel policy (Ko, Hwang, & Kim, 2013);
- digital marketing, digital technologies and devices, mobile devices and applications, Internet systems, and everything that indirectly confirms the company's innovation (Kelejnikova & Chiranova, 2019).

In addition, event marketing can be used to manage the perception of the corporate image (Kozhombierdieva & Abdyisaeva, 2018) and in particular - exhibition activities and exhibition marketing as one of its areas. Using event marketing to promote the image it is possible to achieve an increase in the effectiveness of the organization without any additional financial investments, as well as to increase the importance of the organization.

The purpose of the study was to show the possibility of effective influence of the company's exhibition activity on the perception of its corporate image. To this goal leads the sequential implementation of several stages:

- carrying out field research to identify opportunities and patterns of influence on the positive perception of the company's image through the intensification of its exhibition activities;
- performing computational and empirical analysis to determine the key conditions for a successful "performance of the company in the exhibition genre" from the point of view of improving the image characteristics;
- issuing practical recommendations to improve the perception of the corporate image based on innovative technological capabilities and with the help of a set of marketing tools provided by the exhibition format.

Literature review and research issues

Motives and image goals of the exhibitors

In the 2nd decade of the XXI century, the exhibition activity of business as a whole retained its scale. According to the Global Association of the Exhibition Industry, about 32 thousand business-format trade shows with a total area of over 125 million square meters were held in the world per year (in 2020 the number of the events has significantly decreased but today there is already a recovery growth (UFI, 2021)). The integral indicator of their attendance exceeded 300 million people per year. The total annual number of exhibitors approached 5 million. Trade shows were attended by citizens of 180 countries (UFI, 2020).

Exhibition activity is understood as working as an exhibitor at trade shows - B2B events that take place on a fixed date and with a certain frequency, where goods

(services) are demonstrated and special information is distributed. During the trade show the exhibitor displays and promotes its products engaging specially trained personnel for this purpose and using an exhibition booth - a single complex of leased space and structural elements that are being built and equipped for the duration of the event. The target visitors of the booths are specialists who arrive at the trade show for visual acquaintance with the exhibited product samples, obtaining technological and economic information, *F2F* meetings and commercial negotiations with representatives of exhibitors, procurement planning, etc.

Various authors with varying degrees of detail but uniformly determine the intentions of exhibitor companies entering the trade show: obtaining information, promotion and sales, expanding communications, strengthening the corporate image (Kirchgeorg, Springer, & Kästner, 2010; Simonov, 2015; Drotsky & Wiese, 2017; Adams, Coyle, Downey, & Lovett, 2017). Thus, participation in the trade show is not limited to commercial or informational motives. In addition, exhibitors are aimed at improving their corporate image, which in the future can be materialized and monetized in the form of contracts and investments, state and public support, the loyalty of counterparties and partners, other benefits and preferences.

Conceptual and semantic interpretation of the category "corporate image"

The corporate image is based on a set of images and messages transmitted by the company to the external environment. Many concepts are related in meaning to the term "corporate image": business image, reputation¹, rating, as well as brand², style, publicity, fame, status, the credibility of the company, etc. However, all these words are not synonyms (Okmazova, Magomedova, & Nazhmutdinova, 2018). Corporate image is a business asset that is not legally registered and the financial interpretation of which is to some extent conditional. Image characteristics are difficult to quantify. They are quite ephemeral and along with the purely rational have a sensuous-emotional nature.

Speaking about the structure of the corporate image the following components are usually identified as the key ones:

- *visual component of the image* – the design, corporate symbols, graphic objects related to the company;
- *social component of the image* - the reflection of the company's role in the socio-cultural life of the society;
- *business component of the image* - an idea of the company based on its business reputation, market share, production capabilities, degree of innovation, demand for products, management level, etc.

Some researchers pay attention to the tangible and intangible as well as to the internal and external aspects of the corporate image:

- *tangible element of the image* are products that can be viewed and tested; production facilities, retail outlets, an office that can be visited;
- *intangible element of the image* is customer orientation, service, reputation;

¹ *Reputation* is an opinion about a company that has developed among the business community in accordance with evaluation criteria important for them

² *Brand* is an established set of expectations and emotions associated with a company and its products

- *internal element of the image* is the situation in the work team, the loyalty of employees;
- *external element of the image* is the perceived value of goods and services, advertising, PR, GR, public activities, etc.

Having considered the content and structure of the corporate image it can be assumed that most of its components (primarily visual, business, tangible and external parts of it) can be strengthened by the company's participation in events and especially in trade shows. That is, trade shows can become an effective solution to the "image problems" of business. Moreover, the fact of presence at them, as well as the thorough preparation of the accompanying elements and actions, will be of decisive importance.

Exhibition activity and corporate image of the company in the context of research hypotheses

Events and promotions that can affect the perception of the image of the exhibitor company cover several areas including an advertising and information campaign before the trade show; participation in ceremonies and celebrations related to the trade show; PR and GR at the trade show; activities in the information field, interaction with the media, involvement of media personalities; work with the client audience and the industry community after the trade show, and much more. However, within the framework of this study, the main focus was set on those factors that are directly related to the exhibition booth, namely, convenient location, optimal equipment, and proper organization of its operating (Table 1). The following research hypotheses were put forward:

- H1: The attitude towards the company as a whole improves after specialists visit its booth at the trade show.
- H2: The positive perception of the company increases when using digital content at its booth.
- H3: The favorable attitude towards the company mainly depends on six factors related to its participation in the trade show, namely: advertising materials, booth location, relevance of information, gift products, booth team, the interactive component, and digital content of the booth.
- H4: Among the factors associated with participation in the trade show the greatest influence on the corporate image of the exhibitor company comes from the team of its booth.

Table 1. Exhibitor company image factors related to its booth operating

Factors	Components	Sources
Booth	Favorable and prestigious location within the exposition.	Addis, Miniero, and Soscia, 2018
	Size, shape, type.	Bloch, Gopalakrishna,
	Zoning, design, and type of development.	Crecelius, and
	Booth equipment, placement of samples, and exhibits.	Murarolli, 2017
	Attributes of complex influence on visitors: light, color, sound.	CEIR, 2016
	Availability of digital devices (interactive content).	Gilliam, 2015
	Provision of the booth with advertising and	Salem, Lino, and
	information materials (posters, booklets, leaflets, etc.).	Rauterberg, 2010
		Skyline Exhibits, 2016

Booth team	Customer orientation, activity, manageability, responsibility Professional competence, awareness of the industry and the market problems, booth staff experience Stylish business appearance, the skill of working with status persons, competent speech, knowledge of languages Stress resistance, physical endurance Presence of the top management of the company at the booth	Haon, Sego, Drapeau, and Sarin, 2020 He, Li., Lin, and Liang, 2019 Skyline Exhibits, 2017
Events and promotions at the booth	Providing relevant commercial and special information to interested visitors Presentations, demonstrations, screenings, tastings, etc. Seminars, masterclasses, round tables, meetings, etc. Receptions, cocktails, contests, other actions Handing of souvenir and commemorative paraphernalia	Skyline Exhibits, 2014 Søilen, 2013

Developed by the author

Design and methodology of the research

Questionnaire survey

To test the hypotheses a survey method of research was used (Malhotra, Nunan, & Birks, 2017). In this case, it was filling out the questionnaire, which was carried out in two stages: before and after visiting the booth at the trade show. To participate in the survey professional visitors with professional ideas about the industry and the market were selected: specialists for whom the location, content, and entourage of the booth are not only eye-catching bright effects and external signs but also "food" for developing a qualified opinion about the exhibitor-owner of this booth.

Statistical and regression analysis

The methods of statistical and regression analysis as well as the cross-platform *Gretl*¹ software package were used to process empirical data and verify the hypotheses put forward.

To test Hypotheses #1 and #2 the data obtained through the surveys were averaged. Then, comparisons of sample averages were performed. The Student's *t*-test was used for independent samples. To test Hypotheses #3 and #4 correlation and regression analysis were carried out. When constructing the regression equation, a parameter reflecting the degree of approval of the exhibitor company activities by specialists was used as a dependent variable, and factors characterizing the booth and its team were used as explanatory variables. The degree of influence of a particular factor was judged by comparing the statistical significance of the linear regression coefficients related to various variables. So, if, for example, the significance of the coefficient for the variable

¹ *Gretl* is software for regressions, econometrics and time series. <http://gretl.sourceforge.net/ru.html>

describing booth staff is greater than that of other coefficients its importance is paramount and the corresponding hypothesis is accepted and otherwise, the importance is low and the hypothesis is rejected.

Field data collection and desk analysis

Survey research at the trade show

The surveys were taken at the booth of "*Kerama Marazzi*" company¹, the participant of the International Construction and Engineering Exhibition *BATIMAT RUSSIA & Global Design*² held on March 3-6, 2020 at *Crocus Expo* International Exhibition Centre (Moscow), where more than 800 brands were represented on an area of about 17 thousand square meters and which was visited by more than 25 thousand people. Surveys were carried out at the entrance and the exit from the booth. Of those who were leaving the booth only those who answered questions at the entrance were surveyed.

The respondents were specialists who visited the booth of the company. The vast majority of them (95%) were familiar with the "*Kerama Marazzi*" brand even before the trade show but only a third of the respondents already had the experience of ordering from this company. All participants of the study were informed in advance about its goals.

Respondents characterized impressions of their stay at the "*Kerama Marazzi*" booth with the score of nine factors:

- the degree of readiness to recommend the company as a supplier before (*VAL_before*) and after (*VAL_after*) visiting its booth;
- the fact of using the digital content of the booth (*Digital*);
- the demand for paper advertising materials (posters, leaflets, booklets, brochures, etc.) available at the booth (*materials*);
- the convenient location of the booth inside the exposition (*location*);
- relevance of the information delivered at the booth (*information*);
- the attractiveness of souvenirs and commemorative gifts (*souvenirs*) handed to the guests of the booth;
- qualification and professionalism of the booth team (*staff*);
- the effectiveness of the interactive component of the booth (*interactive*).

The fictitious *Digital* parameter was estimated according to the system "1 – yes" or "0 – no", all the other indicators were rated on a 10-point scale, where "1 point" indicates the extreme degree of denial and rejection, "10 points" express the highest level of approval and consent.

¹ "*Kerama Marazzi*" company is the large supplier of ceramic finishing materials operating in Russia and in Europe. <https://kerama-marazzi.com/ru/>

² International construction and engineering trade show *BATIMAT RUSSIA & Global Design*. <https://batimat-rus.com/media-tsentr/post-reliz-batimat-russia-2020.html>

In total, 274 people were surveyed when entering the booth, 258 people at the exit. The difference is explained by the refusal of some participants of the first survey from the second. After the culling of low-quality data, the sample consisting of 255 complex responses was formed on the results of a field study at the "Kerama Marazzi" booth. Based on its analysis, further conclusions are drawn.

Statistical processing of respondents' responses

Estimates of respondents' readiness to recommend "Kerama Marazzi" company to potential customers before and after visiting its booth are shown in Figure 1. A comparison of the answers received when entering the booth with the answers given at the exit (variables *VAL_before* and *VAL_after*) showed that as a result of visiting the booth the share of positive ratings (9 and 10 points) increased from 16% to 38% and the share of negative ratings (1 and 2 points) decreased from 29% to 17%.

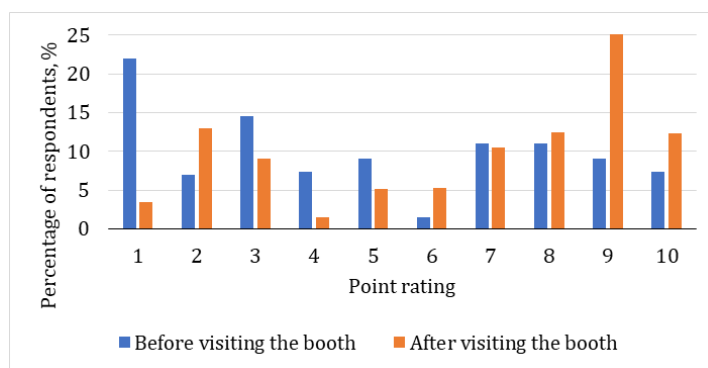


Figure 1. Willingness to recommend the company as a supplier before and after visiting its booth at the trade show
(Developed by the author)

The evaluation of the perception of the image indicators of "Kerama Marazzi" company by visitors of its booth was distributed as follows (Figure 2). The percentage of negative responses (1 and 2 points) is in the range from 15% (*interactive*) to 36% (*staff*). The difference in the proportion of responses "below average" (1-5 points) is more significant: from 38% (*interactive*) to 84% (*materials*). The share of positive responses (9 and 10 points) from 5% (*materials*) reaches 25% (*information*). The share of "above average" answers (6-8 points) ranges from 58% (*information*) to 49% (*materials*).

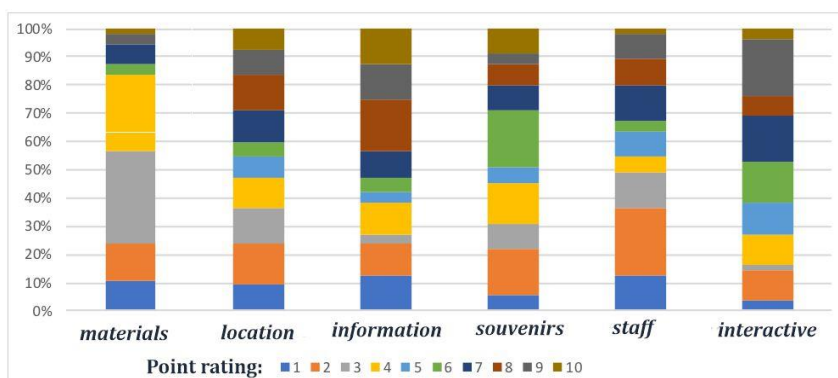


Figure 2. Distribution of assessments of the perception of the company image indicators by visitors of its booth at a trade show
(Developed by the author)

The average, minimum, maximum, and median values, as well as standard deviations of estimates of image parameters of "Kerama Marazzi" company, are given in Table 2.

Table 2. Descriptive characteristics of exhibitor's image factors

Variables									
Characteristics	<i>VAL_before</i>	<i>Digital</i>	<i>VAL_after</i>	<i>materials</i>	<i>location</i>	<i>information</i>	<i>souvenirs</i>	<i>staff</i>	<i>interactive</i>
Average values	4,84	0,49	6,56	3,67	5,22	5,91	5,16	4,49	6,05
Median values	4	0	7	3	5	7	5	4	6
Minimum values	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Maximum values	10	1	10	10	10	10	10	10	10
Standard deviations	3,11	0,50	2,94	2,04	2,90	3,15	2,65	2,81	2,51

Developed by the author

Respondents are most satisfied with the interactive part of the booth (average score: 6.05), the least satisfied with advertising materials (average score: 3.67). About half (49%) of respondents used the digital content of the booth. All parameters (except *Digital*) are evaluated in the widest possible range: from 1 to 10 points. The standard deviations range is from 2.04 to 3.15.

Correlation of tested hypotheses and experimental results

To test Hypothesis #1 a comparison of the sample means parameters *VAL_before* and *VAL_after* was performed, which respectively amounted to 4.84 and 6.56, which indicates in favor of confirming Hypothesis #1. To test Hypothesis #2 the average estimates given by respondents who used and did not use the interactive part of the booth were compared. These estimates were respectively equal to 7.52 and 5.68, which confirms Hypothesis #2. To prove the statistical difference between indicators

for both cases a Student's test was conducted, which also indicated the validity of Hypotheses #1 and #2.

The beginning of testing Hypotheses #3 and #4 was the search for a connection between variables *VAL_after* and *location*, *souvenirs*, *staff*, *interactive* using a correlation analysis performed using *Gretl* software package (Figure 3). It turned out that the perception of the company image is most influenced by variables that characterize the fact of gift delivery (*souvenirs*), the professionalism of the booth staff (*staff*), and the interactive part of the booth (*interactive*). The location of the booth on the exhibition site (*location*) affects somewhat less. The availability of paper advertising materials (*materials*) on the booth affects even less. The interdependence of the *staff* and *materials* variables indicates possible multicollinearity.

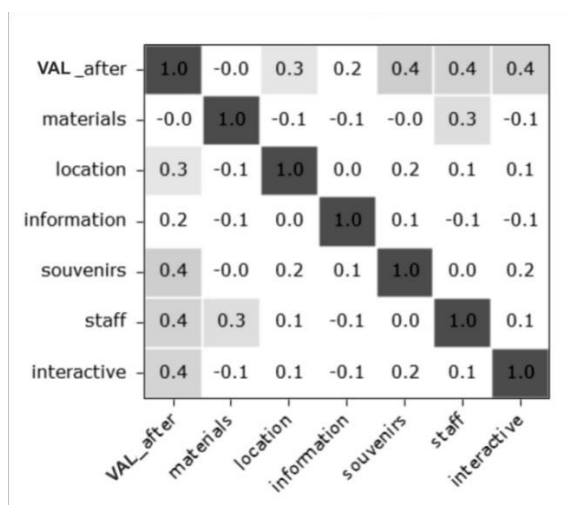


Figure 3. Correlation matrix of image indicators of the exhibition booth
(Developed by the author)

When constructing regression models the *VAL_after* estimate was taken as the dependent variable and *materials*, *location*, *information*, *souvenirs*, *staff*, and *interactive* in various combinations were used as explanatory variables. Screenshots of listings with the results obtained using the *Gretl* software package are shown in Figures 4-7.

Model #1 uses a complete combination of explanatory variables. At the same time, the coefficients of four variables were significant, which is consistent with the results of the correlation analysis: *information* is significant at the 10% level, *souvenirs* and *interactive* – at 5%, *staff* - at 1% (Figure 4). While variables *materials* and *location* are insignificant. At the same time, in the *t*-test, the largest *p*-value was obtained for the *materials* variable (without considering the constant).

Модель 1: МНК, использованы наблюдения 1-55

Зависимая переменная: VAL_after

	Коэффициент	Ст. ошибка	t-статистика	P-значение	
const	-0,302712	1,29610	-0,2336	0,8163	
materials	-0,124119	0,167148	-0,7426	0,4614	
location	0,172515	0,109061	1,582	0,1203	
information	0,194001	0,0986769	1,966	0,0551	*
souvenirs	0,287193	0,118953	2,414	0,0196	**
staff	0,404695	0,123843	3,268	0,0020	***
interactive	0,329239	0,129139	2,550	0,0140	**
Среднее зав. перемен	6,581818	Ст. откл. зав. перемен	2,941975		
Сумма кв. остатков	240,1823	Ст. ошибка модели	2,236917		
R-квадрат	0,486111	Испр. R-квадрат	0,421875		
F(6, 48)	7,567566	P-значение (F)	9,61e-06		
Лог. правдоподобие	-118,5784	Крит. Акаике	251,1568		
Крит. Шварца	265,2082	Крит. Хеннана-Куинна	256,5906		

Исключая константу, наибольшее p-значение получено для переменной 3 (materials)

Figure 4. Specification for Model #1

(Developed by the author)

To improve the regression equation Model #2 was tested, where *materials* variable was excluded in comparison with Model #1 (Figure 5), and Model #3, which did not include both variables with insignificant coefficients (Figure 6).

Модель 2: МНК, использованы наблюдения 1-55

Зависимая переменная: VAL_after

	Коэффициент	Ст. ошибка	t-статистика	P-значение	
const	-0,687963	1,18228	-0,5819	0,5633	
location	0,185539	0,107148	1,732	0,0896	*
information	0,190828	0,0981321	1,945	0,0576	*
souvenirs	0,290228	0,118337	2,453	0,0178	**
staff	0,365398	0,111453	3,278	0,0019	***
interactive	0,336009	0,128225	2,620	0,0117	**
Среднее зав. перемен	6,581818	Ст. откл. зав. перемен	2,941975		
Сумма кв. остатков	242,9415	Ст. ошибка модели	2,226654		
R-квадрат	0,480208	Испр. R-квадрат	0,427168		
F(5, 49)	9,053682	P-значение (F)	3,80e-06		
Лог. правдоподобие	-118,8925	Крит. Акаике	249,7851		
Крит. Шварца	261,8290	Крит. Хеннана-Куинна	254,4426		

Figure 5. Specification for Model #2 (without "materials" variable)

(Developed by the author)

Модель 3: МНК, использованы наблюдения 1-55
Зависимая переменная: VAL_after

	Коэффициент	Ст. ошибка	t-статистика	P-значение	
const	0,0470841	1,12529	0,04184	0,9668	
information	0,177061	0,0997451	1,775	0,0820	*
souvenirs	0,306413	0,120302	2,547	0,0140	**
staff	0,367673	0,113651	3,235	0,0022	***
interactive	0,372460	0,128989	2,888	0,0057	***
Среднее зав. перемен	6,581818	Ст. откл. зав. перемен	2,941975		
Сумма кв. остатков	257,8080	Ст. ошибка модели	2,270718		
R-квадрат	0,448400	Испр. R-квадрат	0,404272		
F(4, 50)	10,16133	P-значение (F)	4,24e-06		
Лог. правдоподобие	-120,5259	Крит. Акаике	251,0517		
Крит. Шварца	261,0884	Крит. Хеннана-Куинна	254,9330		

Figure 6. Specification for Model#3 (without "materials" and "location" variables)
(Developed by the author)

Judging by the determination coefficients "R squared" ($R^2 \approx 50\%$) all three models are characterized by a satisfactory explanatory ability. The models are generally significant. In all cases the F -test showed the inconsistency of the assumption about the joint insignificance (equal to zero) of the coefficients: the p -value is close to zero. The check indicates the absence of multicollinearity: VIF factor for none of the parameters exceeded 10 (Figure 7).

Метод инфляционных факторов
Минимальное возможное значение = 1.0
Значения > 10.0 могут указывать на наличие мультиколлинеарности

materials	1,251
location	1,078
information	1,040
souvenirs	1,073
staff	1,305
interactive	1,136

$VIF(j) = 1/(1 - R(j)^2)$, где $R(j)$ - это коэффициент множественной корреляции между переменной j и другими независимыми переменными

Figure 7. Checking for multicollinearity by the variation inflation factor (VIF) method
(Developed by the author)

The highest "R squared" (48.6%) is in Model #1 (Table 3). At the same time, the highest value of "corrected R^2 " is in Model #2 (42.7%). But since the latter in comparison with R^2 considers the "penalty" for a larger number of explanatory variables in the regression equation preference should be given to Model #2. As for Model #3, it has a lower "R squared" compared to Models #1 and #2. This indicates the importance of the *location* parameter for explaining the dependent variable, which is also confirmed by the significance of the coefficient for the *location* variable at the level of 10% in Model #2 (Figure 4). Therefore, in further analysis, Model #2 will be used. Thus, Hypothesis #3 is partially correct.

Table 3. Comparison of regression models quality

Criteria	Model number		
	1 (all variables)	2 (without materials)	3 (without materials and location)
Coefficient of determination, %	48,6	48,0	44,8
Corrected coefficient of determination, %	42,2	42,7	40,4

Developed by the author

Since the *t*-statistic is 3.28 and the *p*-value is 0.2% (Figure 4) the coefficient for *staff* variable in Model #2 is statistically significant at the level of 1%. Since the coefficient for *staff* variable equals 0.365 has the greatest value the level of booth staff training has the greatest impact on the perception of the corporate image of the exhibitor company, i.e. Hypothesis #4 is correct. Note that in Model #2 in addition to *staff* the coefficients for variables *information* and *location* (significance level of 10%) and *souvenirs* and *interactive* (significance level of 5%) are significant.

Thus, Hypotheses #1, 2, and 4 were fully confirmed, and Hypothesis #3 was partially confirmed.

Exhibition booth attributes as factors influencing the perception of its owner image: discussion, comments, and recommendations

So, it is shown that the favorable perception of the exhibitor company is primarily influenced by five parameters related to its exhibition booth operating. By managing them one can achieve the strengthening of the corporate image.

Booth team

To be effective at the booth it is necessary to easily and naturally communicate with visitors, to know the thoroughly exhibited product, and to be ready to provide comprehensive advice on it. Also, it is necessary to be well-oriented in the industry market, to know competitors, to understand customer requests, etc. But since a trade show is always only a short-term episode in the daily activities of the company there may not be relevant specialists in its staff. And here a comprehensive solution is required. First, hiring temporary employees with presentation skills and trade show experience, who, however, do not know the industry specifics and do not know much about the displayed product could be helpful. Secondly, the assignment of full-time specialists to the trade show, who although not sufficiently sophisticated in exhibiting issues are aware of all technological and commercial aspects and nuances. Having worked at the trade show such employees will significantly expand their professional horizons and enrich their experience, acquire related skills and knowledge, which will have a positive impact on their qualifications. Thus, the booth team should include both full-time specialists and temporary staff who will favorably complement each other. At the same time, not limited to instructing it is necessary to hold preliminary training of employees going to the exhibition event.

Booth zoning and equipment

When choosing a booth location in the exposition it is necessary based on several criteria to analyze the exhibition map. First, the booth should be located on the way of the main visitors' flows (for example, near the entrance to the exhibition pavilion). Due to this the probability of acquiring new customers increases and it is easier for invited visitors to find such a booth. Secondly, the booth should be perfectly visible. Third, there should be no stronger competitors in the neighborhood.

The exhibition booth should be equipped and designed so that everyone can easily understand what kind of product is displayed and having briefly assessed its advantages fix in memory the name, brand, and logo of the exhibitor. For this in addition to traditional signage exhibitors should use light, color, and sound effects, dynamic, suspended, and remote structures, eye-stoppers of all kinds, etc. The booth should look out favorably against the general background, have an attractive visual appearance and provoke a desire to enter.

Interactive component and digital content of the booth

In addition to increasing lead generation and intensifying sales one of the reasons for the use of digital technologies and interactive elements at exhibition booths is the desire of exhibitors to create an image of modern innovative companies. In addition to tablet computers, laptops, and computer system units with monitors are widely used at exhibition booths today as well as interactive elements: photos, videos, streams, broadcasts from the website. About half of trade shows participants prefer CRM systems. Among innovative digital solutions are touch screens and 3D animation (projection of a three-dimensional image). Relatively rarely used digital content is the following: QR barcode / RFID tags/ NFC technology, electronic games, QuickTime VR, interactive graphics. Among unpromising technical means are multimedia projectors that transmit an image from a computer to a large screen and video walls - modular blocks of screens that create a single visual picture or video series due to synchronization.

Souvenir and commemorative attributes

Souvenir and commemorative attributes with the exhibitor company symbols (pens, notebooks, bags, calendars, T-shirts, baseball caps, keyrings, and other accessories) handed to visitors at the booth are one of the time-tested images toolkits that should never be neglected.

Relevance of the information delivered at the booth

When preparing for the trade show the exhibitor should study the content of expected visitors and prepare in advance for the most complete and accurate communication with certain categories of target customers in accordance with the expected focus of their professional interest, the specifics of perception, and commercial value.

Advertising materials available at the booth

As it turned out the accessibility of posters, leaflets, booklets, etc. at the exhibition booth does not have a determining effect on the favorable perception of the corporate image of its owner. And there are reasons for this. Firstly, the development of advertising printing has led to the fact that today most market players are "armed" with a similar quality paper advertising product. Secondly, the increase in the share of online communications and the prevalence of electronic information exchange have shifted business preferences from paper advertising to digital formats.

Conclusions

Theoretical and managerial implications

It is proved that company presence at a large profile exhibition review has a positive effect on the perception of its corporate image. The method of measuring the dynamics of perception of the company image due to visiting its booth at a trade show is proposed and tested. A method of ranking according to the degree of influence of factors accompanying the company participation in the exhibition event on the assessment of its image was found.

It is confirmed that the corporate image of the exhibitor company is strengthened as a result of visiting its exhibition booth by specialists. It is also proved that the favorable attitude towards the exhibitor company to the greatest extent depends on several factors directly related to its booth operating, which the exhibitor can manage and control.

The application of the acquired knowledge and developed approaches will help businesses to increase confidence in their activities in the market as quickly as possible and with minimal costs and to achieve a positive perception of their corporate image in the professional environment and the public space.

Limitations and future research

The influence of only a few main factors related to participation in trade shows on the image of an exhibitor company has been studied. In fact, there are more of them.

It is required to prove that the findings of the study also can be applied to smaller exhibitors (small and medium businesses) participating in trade shows of smaller economic and geographical scale (for example, federal and regional exhibition events). In addition, the expansion of the range of influence factors considered in the study seems to be promising. As well as studying the image effect of trade shows in various industries and sectors of the economy: for example, automotive, textiles, food, tourism, etc. All this creates reasons and prerequisites for continuing the study.

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