

## Take Your Business On The Road

How To Reap the Benefits of Summer Events

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Summer is finally here! Now is a perfect time for you to take your business out into the community and promote your services and products at events and festivals. Most types of businesses can benefit from going “on the road.” Whether you own a bakery, salon, or make jewelry and crafts, participating in events brings you closer to your target audience and allows you to make more personal connections with your current and prospective customers. Getting involved in events also allows you to test the market without incurring a lot of additional expenses or overhead costs. There is great potential for a successful event; however, there are some key points to keep in mind before you decide to participate in an event or festival.

### 1: What is your target audience?

Before you decide on participating in a particular event, think about who your client base is. Not every event is suitable for promoting your business and many business owners make the mistake of advertising or marketing to the wrong crowd. For example, if your business specializes in high end cookware it would not be in your company’s best interest to sell/market products at a fair or local community event. Home shows or other more specialized industry events would be a more suitable match for your products/services.

### 2: How much are you able to spend?

One of the most common mistakes of business owners is underestimating their budget. If you are going to participate in an event, make sure you understand all of the costs involved before committing to a space. Remember that space rental is not the only cost associated with participating in an event. Travel costs, time, marketing, extra equipment, signage and permits are just a few of the additional costs you may incur in addition to the space fee. Don’t expect that the majority of attendants will purchase your products or services; keep a realistic estimate of sales so you can properly determine the profitability of the event. If you think you will spend more than you will sell at a particular event, it may not be the right match for your business. In addition, if you are considering an outdoor event, find out about the event’s weather policy—will the event be delayed, cancelled, will your money be refunded?

### 3: Has this event been successful in the past?

Granted there are a lot of new festivals and events starting up each year that you would not be able to get much information from, but if the event you’re interested in has been in existence for some time, it’s a good idea to get some background on the event’s success. More established events, such as trade shows or business expos, should have an information packet available for you that outlines their demographic (such as the age, income, and interests of the attendants). In some cases you can even ask for references who can give you more honest feedback on the event.

### 4: Do you have a back-up plan?

Although you may not physically sell the majority of your products or services at an event, there is still a great amount of potential for future sales. Always be prepared with marketing materials that the customer can take away with them. Business cards, postcards and brochures are a great way to give the customer a means of contacting you in the future. If you are computer savvy, you can have customers sign-up for an e-mail list so that you can keep them up-to-date with any future changes to your business (i.e. news, coupons, specials, new products). *Constant Contact* is just one of the many email marketing companies out there that can help you keep in touch with your customers and prospective clients. If you use Facebook or Twitter, let clients know, so that they can follow your updates.

### 5: Reach out and have fun!

If you have a positive attitude and actively engage with your customers, you will have a much more successful experience. Sitting at your booth is just not enough. Avoid the “in your face” method and instead approach clients in a natural and inviting way—make sure to address their interests, not your own. Remember, you must believe in your product in order to sell it. So get out there, have fun, meet new people and make it a success!

For more information on how to prepare your business for an event visit our website at [www.vipccs.com/resources](http://www.vipccs.com/resources)