

■ **Fragrances & Cosmetics**

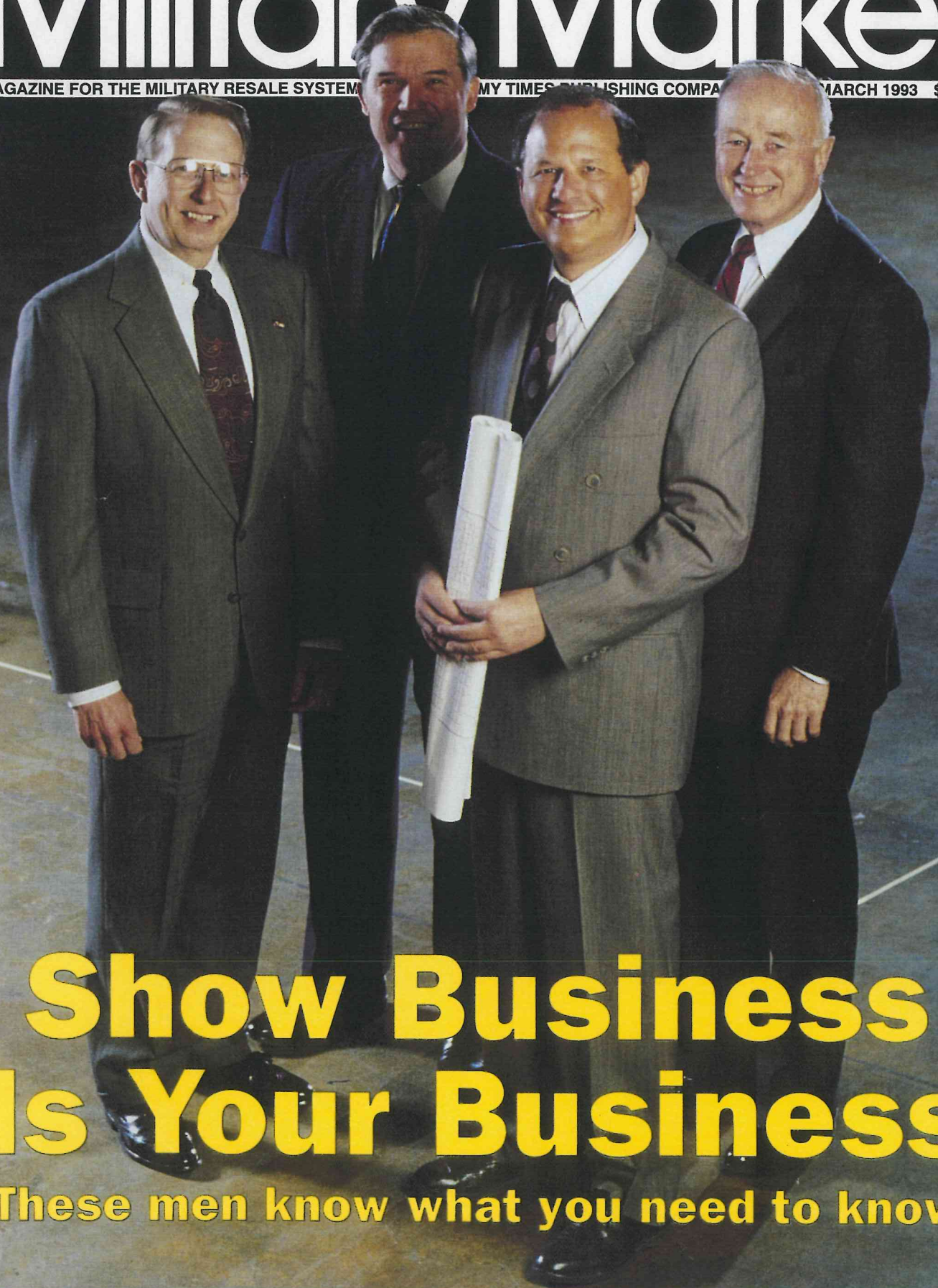
■ **Beverages**

Military Market

MAGAZINE FOR THE MILITARY RESALE SYSTEM

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Show Business Is Your Business

These men know what you need to know

EXIT





**Welcome
to
Show Business:
Your Business!**

Harve Horowitz knows show business. And when Harve Horowitz talks show business — trade show business — you'd be wasting your company's money not to listen. The show manager for the American Logistics Association's Trade Expo '93, Horowitz, along with ALA executives Dick Murray, Bill Irwin, Dick Tessier and the ALA staff, have made the upcoming April show in Dallas one of the largest in the United States: more than 1500 booths sold — a sellout — with nearly 1700 representatives of the military resale system planning to attend. A year ago, skeptics said a show of this magnitude could never happen.

As president of Exhibit Promotions Plus, a company he founded in 1969, Harve (pronounced *Harvey*) Horowitz has organized and managed hundreds of trade shows. His clients include associations as diverse as the Latin American Studies Association, the National Fire Sprinkler Association, the National Council on Aging, and the American Gas Association, among others. He has managed shows throughout the United States and in Europe.

Horowitz was not born to the trade show world. As an attorney in the early 1970s, Horowitz began reviewing association clients' contracts "for legal efficacy. It got to the point," he recalls, "where, instead of reviewing the contracts for them, we were writing the contracts."

In time Horowitz began negotiating contracts, beating the bushes for hotels and convention centers, and even drafting promotional copy. He flat out took a liking to the business, and he has engendered respect throughout the trade show industry. His very first show was a 15 table-top book exhibit for the Society for the Scientific Study of Religion, a client that has retained his services for the past 24 years.

In early February, MILITARY MARKET visited with Horowitz in his Ellicott City, Md., offices. We asked him to discuss his "show business" philosophy, specifics of Trade Expo '93, and to offer advice to exhibitors.

POISED ON THE SHOW FLOOR — Harve Horowitz (center), Trade Expo '93 show manager, and behind him (left to right), ALA executives Dick Tessier, Dick Murray and Bill Irwin.

Photo by DOUG PENSINGER

MILITARY MARKET — *You seem to have made this a very personal business, a life.*

HARVE HOROWITZ — I remember my roots, where it all began. It's been a very personalized thing that has evolved over the years with each of these client associations.

I remember my first client back in 1969. I took a train to New York to speak to the woman in charge to see what was involved in putting their book show together for them. She said, "Give them service and attention to detail." That stuck.

In a sense, every booth at every show where I have a role is my own booth. We're all colleagues with a common goal: to increase sales and to educate the visitor about new products and services.

I have never regretted becoming associated with the trade show industry.

MM — *How did you come to be involved in ALA's Trade Expo '93?*

HH — I was looking for something different. I've done academic shows, social awareness shows ... Well, I figured the military, why not.

Basically, I did some homework. I started tracking and cross referencing. Through [trade show] industry publications, I picked up on the fact that this one particular trade show had been in a decline, that it had a huge audience in 1990 — over 1000 booths — and that now it was down to 400 or so. It was strictly fortuitous: I looked at it and said, "Maybe the sponsors can use some help. Maybe we can boost it back up to where it was."

I knew my own experience — being in the military, having worked for the federal government — might lend itself to a natural marriage. So I wrote a letter, including a proposal, and I explained that we view trade shows as a membership service. It's a source for new members — that's the vitality of an association, that's your lifeblood. If you don't get new members and you don't provide services to the old members you'll wither. Professional associations are like trade shows: both are dynamic industries. We view a trade show as a tremendous opportunity and vehicle for any association to make a statement in the industry while being of further service to its members.

MM — *We realize that you're new to this industry but, based on your work to date with this show, how would you assess the health of the resale industry?*



Photo by DOUG PENSINGER

Bobby Rispoli generated floor plans almost overnight...

HH — I've gotten an education in a hurry! I've asked questions. I've listened. I've tried to listen.

What I'm hearing is that the exchanges are having to compete with the Wal-Marts of the world. There's a lot of this consolidation being discussed, and there's a lot of uncertainty with the new [Clinton] administration. However, I read with great gratification in a recent ALA newsletter that membership was up 11 percent. There are a lot of suppliers who did not know this industry even existed. They didn't know that ALA existed, that there was a vehicle, a spokesperson to access into the military exchanges and commissaries. When you see that kind of potential for growth within an organization, that's a healthy picture.

MM — *Including buyers and MWR personnel, you're looking at an attendance of nearly 1700 people from the military. You've sold over 1500 booths for this show, a sellout. Can you tell us about some of the logistical problems that you encountered with setting up a show of this size? And what were some of the factors that made getting this particular show off the ground unique?*

HH — When you say "American Logistics Association" ... this is TRULY a logistical experience, to organize something of this magnitude. Close to 1.5 million pounds of freight will be brought into the exhibit hall starting on Thursday and Friday [April 8 and 9]. This show could be among the top 150 shows in the whole United States. When you think about the tens of thousands of trade shows and industries, that's big time.

Eight and ½ days from the time we signed our contract with ALA to market and manage this show, ALA being our client, we entered over 3000 names into our data base. We — my office, including Nadine Hines, Kelly Bean and my wife Eileen, who works full time in handling accounting and who has tolerated my workaholic habits — wrote, typeset, printed and circulated to the entire industry a show prospectus. We lined up the five hotels in the city of Dallas and booked over 4000 rooms for peak nights. In addition, we had to clear dates with both the military and the supply side as to other shows they go to so there would be a minimum of conflict.

When I talk about being educated in a hurry, well, I did have some very able instructors. The support at the top by Dick Murray was reassuring; and the rapid fire information provided by Bill Irwin, Dick Tessier, Lisa Strauss ... All of them helped immeasurably when we first started to draft promotional copy.

And the supplier contract lists provided both by ALA and the military, plus the invaluable input from military representatives who voluntarily serve on the show's steering committee ... And then there's Brede Exposition Service, our chosen show decorator, whose representative, Bobby Rispoli, generated floor plans almost overnight ... An unanticipated source of support was the manufacturer representatives/brokers who have helped in organizing a major marketing presence on behalf of the manufacturers they represent. The Dallas Convention Center and Housing Bureau. And on, and on ...

And Dallas wasn't a foregone conclusion, either. We had to consider: Do you want to go where AAFES is?

Do you want to take it to other cities that might have better rates? So we had to investigate what other dates and cities would be available while, at the same time, negotiating with Dallas to see if they could deliver.

A floor plan had to be created. Then we had to create a new exhibit space preference priority system. That's an undertaking unto itself — how you assign space. You've really got to know what you're doing or you could offend a lot of people.

All this was done in eight and 1/2 days from the moment we signed the contract with ALA. I kid Bill Irwin about this, that it's a MIRACLE that we were able to get the convention center with the dates we wanted and get the number of sleeping rooms that we needed one year out. That size. A city-wide event. So, it's almost fate: this show was meant to be.

MM — *You've said that all of the military agencies in attendance will have complimentary space in the central island of the show. What other considerations were made in order to marry the military and industry?*

HH — The branches [of the military] were invited to act as an overseer in full partnership with industry to organize the show. The two of them sat, literally, at the same table and we — show management and ALA — said, "What do you want to get out of the show that will make it a success for you."

It was fascinating, really, what suppliers were hoping to achieve and what the military was hoping to achieve from the show. Then we tried to bring the two together, and that's where the idea to focus on training first surfaced. That was the common denominator for everybody and which ultimately translates into sales for both sides.

MM — *In your more than 20 years in this business, surely you've developed a philosophy on trade shows. What makes a trade show unique as a sales and marketing environment?*

HH — Unlike any other sales environment, in a trade show you actually have your customers coming to you. So, you have to create in that exhibit booth, that exhibit area, an office away from your office, where everything's right at hand. Where you can instantaneously get answers for someone who is more sophisticated now.

The buyers who go to these shows are not there for candy canes, they're not there for song and dance ... Those days are history. Their budgets are just as limited as those of the suppliers. Whatever agenda they've laid out for themselves going into that show, they're there to do business.

In effect, every trade show is viewed as a selling environment or a selling show, where you can close a deal either on the floor or shortly thereafter. And I've seen it repeatedly for 20 years now, where the companies that go there with a singular message — a new product, this new pricing structure, or whatever image they want to establish for credibility in the industry — and follow it up are going to succeed.

A trade show is like no other marketing tool in their arsenal to consummate, ultimately, a sale. In terms of the results, there's just no comparison ...

“

If I'm going into this show . . . I'm going to teach you how to sell the hell out of this product when you come into my booth.

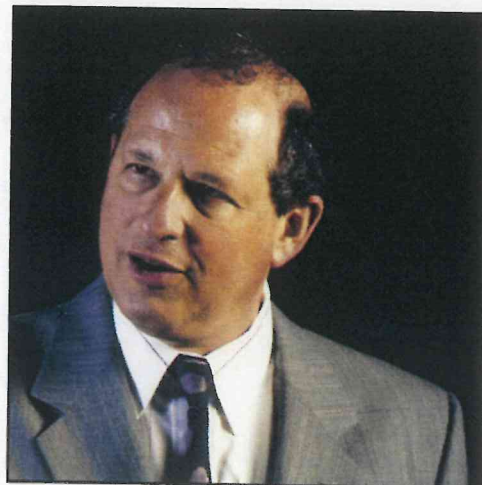


Photo by DOUG PENSINGER

MM — *OK, but how does an exhibitor put this into effect?*

HH — Something like 54 percent of every contact you make — if you've got your act together — is going to result in a sale. When someone walks into a booth you have to have the boothsmanship in place, where one person's a captain and he knows how to break the ice to stop them, to engage the prospect in conversation.

You have to know what questions to ask. You don't ask, "May I help you?" That's the fatal question. That's department store mentality.

You ask, "Who are you? What's your affiliation? Are you in your buying cycle?"

Studies have reflected that the first 20 seconds are critical in terms of what you say to that person, as to whether you're going to have a captured buyer or potential buyer in that booth. And within one minute you should have your whole pitch out. It's that fast, that simple, that concise, and that precise. It's that rapid fire, and you've got to be ready for it. You can't stumble, because you're competing with hundreds of other vendors in that hall.

The flip side is that you've got to be prepared for the lingerers who tie you up. You've got to know how to release a person, to graciously get out of a conversation and move on to that next customer who might be walking right past your booth because you haven't engaged him.

You've got someone who's there with a specific agenda. When that buyer, whether it's a military buyer or any other industry buyer, is going through an exhibit hall, he's there for a reason. He's not there for free samples. He's got to report, in this case, to a commanding officer who wants to know: What are the results, guys? What did you learn in the training end of it? What kind of show specials did you unearth? What kind of new products did you find that we think we can sell and that will make us more competitive?

I think exhibitions are still viewed as a vestige of the '70s or '80s. Years ago shows were viewed as part of the "good-old-boy network": We'll show up, we'll have a few drinks, we'll throw our wares out there and we'll go play golf. Or: I've got to show up there, because my competition is there. That mentality. That's not a reason to go to a trade show, because your competition is there. That's totally irrelevant to why you should be going to a trade show. You should have your own fixed agenda.

MM — *What are some typical agendas that suppliers bring to a trade show?*

HH — A trade show is just one vehicle in your total

At Bose Booth, Theater Lives . . .



turbing neighboring exhibitors. An added benefit is that the company can provide merchandising and sales training outside the theater.

The main focus of the Bose theater presentation will be the Bose 901 speaker, which Pine calls "legendary in the military." Other products include the Acoustasmass 5, Series Two, a popular seller in AAFES stores, and a new, user friendly music system featuring radio frequency remote control and two source zones, i.e., two people can listen simultaneously to separate programs.

The Bose Corp. will be going theatrical on the floor of the Dallas Convention Center for ALA's Trade Expo '93.

The speaker-manufacturer is setting up a theater to showcase the sound and sight of its wares. The self-contained room — ceiling, walls and floor — measures 16' by 30' and will be the setting for a computer-controlled audio and video show. The theater can seat 30 to 40 people.

According to Jerry Pine, military accounts manager with Bose, the theater show is designed to provide both product knowledge as well as to entertain. Sessions will be held every half hour.

The theater, which Bose has used in past trade shows, allows the company to present the potential of its line in an ideal listening environment without dis-

integrated marketing program. You might be there to introduce a product to that industry, to scope the competition, to meet the competition, to recruit a new salesperson, to meet that one "special" buyer.

There can be a whole variety of hidden agendas and more obvious agendas, of what can happen in the dynamics of a trade show. To make your agenda successful, you've got to sort all these out. You've got to go there with one message, one marketing message. Rehearse it. Instruct your staff on this primary goal of your being in the trade show. Assign tasks in advance, not on-site.

And buyers, as I indicated before, have their specific agendas. In the military, buyers are segmented within product categories of what they have to buy and what they have to look for. If an exhibitor shows up and doesn't have the answers, that buyer will move on to the next booth in his product category that does have the answers.

MM — *What about follow-up? How important is following up on the contacts you make at a trade show?*

HH — Studies have shown that a lead you generate at a trade show is dead after two weeks if you don't have the mechanism in place for the follow-up. You have to get a commitment before [a buyer] ever walks out of your booth.

This is the other point of conversation, and it's critical: how you close the conversation. You have to establish the next step to be taken: We'll be in touch with you by such and such a date. Or, When is your buying decision to be made so that we know precisely when to be responsive to you? Or, Would you like to schedule an appointment now?

Then, following the show, if you don't have the literature in hand quickly, or if you don't have someone on the horn, calling them to follow up their interest, or, if it's a really hot prospect, you don't deliver the premium right to their doorstep . . . you blew it. You threw your money away!

MM — *You talked about the decorum, the protocol of working*

a booth, what you call "boothmanship." What are the do's and don'ts of behavior in a booth?

HH — Dress properly, conservatively. Don't chew gum. Don't sit down. Don't read a newspaper. Know how to stand. Know how to smile. Don't put your furniture in the front of the booth, where it's a barrier to entering; your booth has got to be an inviting environment. Train your staff to show enthusiasm and teamwork; yes, they're going to get tired, but they shouldn't show it.

There's a lot of rehearsal that should go into these things before you ever show up at a trade show, a lot of planning. Yet despite this, 80 percent of all exhibitors come unprepared.

There's no excuse for being unprepared.

MM — *You've said that although floor location is not as important as people commonly believe, a critical factor is the size of an exhibit, that bigger IS better, because size draws traffic and allows you to accommodate more prospects. How can an exhibitor maximize space when his or her budget is limited?*

HH — A lot of exhibitors focus on the supporting things in the booth: What the booth looks like, how the product looks . . . That's subordinate, it's glitz. It may catch the eye, but you've got to train your staff. They're the ones who will sell your product: the booth's not going to sell the product, the furniture's not going to sell the product, the models aren't going to sell the product.

You've got to have somebody in there who knows how to sell the product, to give product knowledge information to the prospective buyer visiting your booth. And if you're restricted because of budgetary reasons and you can't show a lot of your lines or you can't bring all of your pricing information, you CAN have a fax machine or a telephone to give the buyer the exact answer he's looking for.

Remember, it's a work environment, an extension of your office, so bring the necessities of that office so that you can be immediately responsive to prospects.

MM — *Let's get back to the specifics of this show. From an exhibitor's perspective what makes Trade Expo '93 unique?*

HH — The added dimension to this show is the question: How do I do business with the government? The other unique factors are the authority, the tasks, the titles, the functions, the branches. Who are they? Who's coming?

There is also the unique structure of this industry, where you have brokerage houses or manufacturer's rep firms buying booths on their own, as their own offices. They then have their own base of operations, a trade-show headquarters where they can service a dual constituency: not just the military patron, but the manufacturers they represent. It's an extended office that they can operate efficiently to provide whatever additional support is needed.

MM — *We understand that pre-registration lists from this show are not available. We wonder . . .*

HH — That's true, but that's not to say exhibitors still can't be calling their buyers, customers, store managers and talking up the fact that they're going to be in this show. That's advance planning. That's marketing. That's being prepared so that you're not surprised by who you see when you get there . . .

MM — *Well, what about when you get there, before the show? This show will be installed on Monday and Tuesday, April 12 and 13. How can an exhibitor make the most of his time on these pre-show days?*

HH — The hall will be "black" on Saturday and Sunday, Easter weekend. We purposely scheduled it this way so that exhibitors don't have to pay double-time on the weekend for their own moving. Exhibitors will come in Monday and Tuesday. They'll have two days to complete their installation.

But, the question an exhibitor should ask himself is: Do I really have to be there during installation?

Isn't your time better spent networking with military who are already on site? If you've done enough advance planning before you show up you won't have to worry about your booth going up and standing there to instruct somebody.

If you write it out, in detail, you hire professional labor to do that. Even though it looks more costly, up top, in the long run it may be cheaper. Think about this: Where am I better off spending my time: standing here watching my booth go up or being in a hotel networking right now, immediately? Even before the show opens you can start the whole sales process going: stopping, engaging, dialoguing, committing with all those people who are going to be floating around the hotel lobbies.

MM — *One final question. You've said that many suppliers coming into this show are not picking up on the notion of an agenda. Knowing all you know about the potential of trade shows, and of this show in particular, what would be your agenda if you were an exhibitor at Trade Expo '93?*

HH — In this case, I think one of the major agendas that your buyers want is TRAINING. This is a hot issue. The services have gone on record that meaningful training is their major agenda. It's almost unprecedented in that you have a captive audience for that type of product knowledge training, where you have a whole sales force, in effect, coming into this show eager to learn how to sell your product.

Think of that! That's the end result! You've got all these people coming and asking, "Teach me how I can sell more of your product." There's no other industry that can offer that in a trade show. The military wants training!

They're going to be seeking out the booths for it. If you've got that product knowledge and you present technical information they're going to go back thinking, "I now can transfer that knowledge to the military patron and sell it."

Now you've got this tremendous sales force out there that you can link into your sales force. It's just such a logical extension. It's a marriage made in heaven, since this is what the military would likely need and want if they're to compete with the commercial world. This thing can really be an extraordinary opportunity if you really tap it and take advantage of it.

If I'm going into this show, that would be my agenda: *This is my product and this is how you can sell it, and I'm going to teach you how to sell the hell out of this product when you come into my booth!*

MM

Training to Sell

The American Logistics Association has provided the following schedule of events for Trade Expo '93 at the Dallas Convention Center.

Tues., April 13, 1 p.m. – 5 p.m.
Educational program, theater;

Wednesday, April 14
8 a.m. – 10 a.m. — Educational program, theater;
10 a.m. – 5 p.m. — ALA Trade Expo '93 open, Exhibit Hall;
5 p.m. – 6:30 p.m. — Reception, Convention Center

Thursday, April 15
8 a.m. – 10 a.m. — Educational program, theater;
10 a.m. – 5 p.m. — Hall open

Friday, April 16
9 a.m. – 12 noon — Hall open

Educational program topics — *Analysis of Retail: Where do Exchanges Fit In?; Customer Service: Wal-Mart Style and Nordstrom Style; The Mature Market: Selling to Retirees; IBM on Retailing; Stew Leonard, Jr: Store Excitement and The Customer is Always Right.*

Training Presentations

Exhibitor training presentations are hourly in exhibit booths beginning 11 a.m., Wednesday and Thursday, and 10 a.m., Friday. Presentations should last approximately 15 minutes each. Exhibitors are limited to 14 presentations.

Exchange services will conduct off-floor presentations, in addition to training sessions at their booths.

Sales and Orders

Manufacturers are permitted to sell products and to take orders on the floor.

Hotels and Transportation

Show hotels: The Anatole (AAFES delegates); The Stouffer Hotel (NEXCOM and VCS); Hyatt Regency (Marines, Coast Guard, DeCA); Dallas Grand Hotel (Army MWR); and the Southland Hotel.

Additional Information

Pat Ojo, ALA (202) 466-2520;
or Exhibit Promotions Plus
(410) 997-0763

SEE APRIL ISSUE

The April issue of MILITARY MARKET will contain a complete listing of all Trade Expo '93 exhibitors, military representatives, and a floor plan.