

# TRUNK SHOWS 101.

A beginner's guide to this time-tested tactic.

Whether you have some hot new frames that you just can't wait to share with the world; or are simply looking for a new way to promote your practice, a trunk show is a fun and exciting way to drive traffic through your doors.

A trunk show is a special sale where vendors present merchandise directly to invited customers, either at a retail location or special venue. A proven marketing tactic, trunk shows have been used by retailers for years and are typically a coordinated effort between a retailer and a vendor.

In the world of eyewear, a trunk show is an outstanding way to generate some buzz about a designer brand carried by your practice and an innovative way to lure existing customers back to your business. If a particular brand or style catches your eye at a trade show, a trunk show is an outstanding way to introduce the brand into your practice.

Planning is key. To ensure a successful trunk show, it's essential that you plan for the event well in advance of the show date – 6 to 8 weeks lead time is ideal. Line up a select group of vendors who represent the brands you'd like to showcase. Ask them about what kind of commitment they will make to your trunk show. How many brands or frames will they be showcasing? Will they help cover the costs of window and in-store displays, advertising, or gift with purchase items? ClearVision Optical offers qualified customers a co-op program that can be used to help defray the costs associated with a trunk show. Similar to a bank account, these co-op accounts accrue funds each year that can be used to offset advertising and marketing costs.

Once you have firm commitments from your vendors and a set date for the event, it's time to get the word out. At a minimum, you should create in-store promotions around the event; send invitations to customers in your database (either by traditional mail or e-mail) and place ads in your local newspapers.

Use this trunk show checklist as a guide:

- € Newspaper ads
- € Press releases to local newspapers
- € In-store promotions leading up to the show
- € Telemarketing
- € Window and in store displays

- € Signage about the trunk show
- € Coupons/discounts
- € Gift with purchase
- € Raffles/Prizes
- € Refreshments
- € Thank you notes

2 weeks prior to the show, reconfirm all pertinent details with your vendors (such as space requirements, display materials, special offers and product) and contact potential guests who have yet to RSVP.

Once the show begins, remember that the vendors are there to help you, so be sure to allow them the freedom to work directly with your customers. Play the role of host or hostess and ensure that all invited parties are comfortable and engaged. If you chose to do raffles, raffle entries are a great way to build an email database, so be sure to include a space for this information on any raffle tickets.

During and after your trunk show, it's important to get feedback from all parties involved and evaluate what worked (and what was less successful). Keep notes so that the next time you host a trunk show, you can learn from past mistakes and missteps. Lastly, send thank you notes with special offers or discounts to your guests (and even those who did not attend). Also, send follow-up press releases (preferably with photos) to the local press.

Remember, no two trunk shows are alike and there is no perfect formula for success. But through trial and error, you will discover what type of show works best for you and your practice and reap the many rewards they can offer.