

QR Code Tradeshow Marketing Guide



What is a QR Code?

Invented in 1994 by Toyota subsidiary Denso-Wave, the QR (Quick Response) Code has graduated from a simple two-dimensional code used to track parts in vehicle manufacturing to much larger use. More and more companies are finding ways to use them in tradeshow marketing by including codes on booth graphics and handouts, along with brochures, flyers, banner stands and business cards. One main use of the QR code seems to be to direct the viewer to a website where they are introduced to company-related information – more than can be easily included in a brochure, banner stand or business card.

Here's Wikipedia on the QR Code: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/QR_Code

So how to “DO” a QR Code and do it right? First, you need to obtain a QR Code.

Where to get a free QR Code:

- <http://qrcode.kaywa.com/>
- <http://zxing.appspot.com/generator/>
- <http://www.qrstuff.com/>

Then you need to come up with a great way to use the code.

Ways to Use a QR Code:

- *Tradeshow rugs or flooring:* easy to put a graphic on a custom piece of flooring. Putting it on a rug will inspire people to pull out their smart phones and capture the QR Code to see where it leads.
- *Business cards:* have too much information to put on your business card, like Twitter/Facebook/LinkedIn/YouTube links, and more...? Create a web page on your blog or website that has all of that, along with a bio, photo, or whatever else you deem appropriate.
- *Offer a freebie to people that scan the QR Code.*

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- *T-shirts:* upload your QR Code, include an invitation such as “Scan me to win!” and wear it proudly while people stop to scan you! (Check out www.zazzle.com to upload your own design)
- *Marketing materials:* You can insert a QR Code in virtually any piece of marketing. The trick is to offer an incentive to scan: free download, limited-time product discount, exclusive offer, etc.
- *Direct people to a ‘secret’ site* where visitors can find such things as streaming video of the show, a virtual tradeshow website, special offers, photos, and more. Make sure your site is optimized for viewing on a smartphone, though.
- *A few more ideas:* business advertising, clues for a treasure hunt, an artist manifesto, link to a non-profit’s donation page, and a bunch more on this cool collection of QR Code ideas: <http://ericaglasier.com/2010/06/25/50-uses-for-qr-codes/>
- *Event invitations*
- *Registration check-ins*
- *Attendee badges* – include a personal QR Code on each badge that include personal information
- *Sponsor marketing* – link a booth map or other pertinent information
- *Individual products or services* could each have their own QR Code and unique landing page with information specific to that product.
- *Pre-show marketing* – send out mailers with a QR Code. Once scanned the URL directs the visitor to a landing page where they enter personal interests and information, create their own individual QR Code which they then bring back to the booth. A staff member then scans the code and the visitor is directed to a specific individual for a special demo or other personal attention.
- *Encourage networking.* Event organizers can put together a program where the attendees are encouraged to scan all the QR Codes in site. The people who rack up the most scans take home some cool swag.
- *As a speaker, put a large QR Code on your last slide* and encourage people to sign up for your newsletter, download the presentation or grab other freebies.
- *Hand out QR Codes to attendees and tell them that one other person at the networking event has an identical QR Code.* Their job is to find their match.
- *Offer other downloads such as brochures or longer-form items instead of handing out papers.* Hey, it’s green!

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Scanning and Presentation Tips

A QR Code is not the easiest thing in the world to scan. Different smart phone apps approach QR Codes in different ways. For some, it's an easy matter – for others, it's more difficult to capture the code and decipher it.

If you're scanning at an angle, such as trying to scan a QR Code that's up high, it's going to be more difficult than one that's right in front of you. Trying to scan a large floor QR Code will present the same type of problem – if it's too big it's going to be at an angle and the phone app will have a harder time capturing the code.

If you want the QR Code to function the way it should – give pertinent information to the person who scans it – make sure that it's easily accessible and scannable:

- ✓ **Put the QR Code in an easily accessible location:** a code approximately 12" x 12" at eye level works great
- ✓ **Include a Call to Action:** or specific benefits next to the code, such as *"Scan me to Win!"*
- ✓ **Make sure your web landing page is optimized for viewing on a smartphone:** remember that QR Codes are going to be scanned by someone with a smart phone. If the landing page is not optimized for viewing on a smart phone, your QR Code just failed the 'ease of use' test. If you have a WordPress blog, it's easy to install a plug-in that displays the page optimized for a smart phone. If not, check with your webmaster about getting a page optimized for smart phones.
- ✓ **TEST everything BEFORE the show:** double and triple-check that everything works as it should and looks right as it will be most likely be seen by your end user – the person who's scanning the QR Code.
- ✓ **Don't assume everyone has a QR Code reader** on their smart phone. Give directions on how to download the app or post website URL's for those that don't have a one.
- ✓ **Don't include large graphics or flash videos** on your landing page.
- ✓ **Confirm that the tradeshow site has good cell phone coverage.**
- ✓ **Set up your landing page so that you can track metrics/analytics.** For instance, a Wordpress blog with plug-in Google analytics will let you track and optimize your campaign or promotion.