

Capturing & Managing Leads at Trade Shows



Skyline.[®]



INTRODUCTION & TABLE OF CONTENTS

In this book, Skyline has compiled 27 blog posts originally published in *Skyline E-Tips* (formerly *Skyline Trade Show Tips*). The posts combine valuable information about trade show and event staffing, giveaways and lead management.

TRADE SHOW BOOTH STAFFING & GIVEAWAYS

- 3 NAUGHTY OR NICE: 9 THINGS STAFFERS DO TO GET YOUR BOOTH NOTICED – *Sofia Troutman*
- 6 KILL THE GIVEAWAYS...CREATE AN EXPERIENCE INSTEAD! – *Sofia Troutman*
- 8 MY TIPS FOR TRADE SHOW BOOTH STAFFERS – *Kristi Schulz*
- 10 15 TIPS FOR ALIGNING CORPORATE SWAG WITH YOUR MARKETING OBJECTIVES – *Kelsey Stage*
- 13 3 BEST CONVERSATION STARTERS TO GET ATTENDEES TALKING IN YOUR DISPLAY – *Scott Price*
- 14 BEST BOOTH ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES – *Ivette Flower*
- 15 TRADE SHOW ETIQUETTE 201 – *Tami Moore*
- 16 EACH BOOTH STAFFER SHOULD HAVE A ROLE – *Sofia Troutman*
- 18 THE 5 TYPES OF PEOPLE YOU’LL MEET AT A TRADE SHOW – *Kristi Jones-Damalas*
- 19 THE BEAUTY OF MULTIPLE PERSONALITIES – *Steve Hoffman*
- 20 3 THINGS TO CONSIDER BEFORE HOSTING A LIVE SPEAKER IN YOUR BOOTH – *Craig Koopersmith*
- 22 HOW TO USE A COPING MECHANISM TO INTERACT WITH ATTENDEES IN YOUR BOOTH – *Sarmistha Tarafder*
- 24 HOW MANY STAFFERS DO I NEED? – *Marc Goldberg*
- 26 GIVEAWAYS – WHY THEY ARE IMPORTANT TO YOUR BOOTH’S SUCCESS – *Brian Gordon*
- 28 PRODUCT DEMONSTRATIONS – WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW – *Marc Goldberg*
- 30 BOOTH STAFFING TIPS FOR THE DIGITAL ERA – *Sofia Troutman*
- 34 3 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SUCCESSFUL BOOTH STAFFING – *Karla Flores*
- 36 9 REASONS TO FIRE YOUR BOOTH STAFFER – *Sofia Troutman*
- 38 THEME YOUR EVENT & BOOST PROMOTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS – *Sofia Troutman*

TRADE SHOW LEAD MANAGEMENT

- 41 TRADE SHOW STRATEGY: GETTING LEADS – *Chris Rowe*
- 42 6 STEPS TO MASTERING LEAD MANAGEMENT – *Danny Pace*
- 44 FIVE LEAD CAPTURE APPS FOR TRADE SHOWS – *Sofia Troutman*
- 46 TRAINING YOUR BOOTH STAFF TO QUALIFY LEADS – *Jenna Snyder*
- 48 4 TOOLS TO MEASURE THE SUCCESS OF YOUR EVENT – *Sofia Troutman*
- 50 HOW TO GO BEYOND LEADS - EVENT HOSPITALITY & NETWORKING – *Sofia Troutman*
- 52 7 STEPS TO IMPROVING LEAD MANAGEMENT AND FOLLOW-UP – *Sofia Troutman*
- 54 WHY YOU SHOULD MEASURE PRE-ROI – *Jon Althoff*

TRADE SHOW BOOTH STAFFING & GIVEAWAYS



NAUGHTY OR NICE: 9 THINGS STAFFERS DO TO GET YOUR BOOTH NOTICED (FOR THE RIGHT REASONS)

— *Sofia Troutman*

No matter how wonderful your exhibit or promotions, if you have booth staffers who are not paying attention you could lose more brand equity and sales than you realize. Yet they can also do simple things to get you more attention than any exhibit ever could. Below are the nine things staffers can do to get you noticed.

...if you have booth staffers who are not paying attention you could lose more brand equity and sales than you realize.

1. DRESS FOR THE OCCASION

Your everyday khaki pants and company polo are OK, but are not going to get anyone to take notice. Yet, coordinating your outfit to your brand or booth theme might stop people. Get solid dress shirts using a bright color in your brand or buy them matching vests. If they are frequent exhibitors, invest in comfy shoes that match the booth. Whatever you do, make sure they all know that they should be dressed as if they were attending a special occasion...because they are.

2. GET OFF THE SCREEN

If your staffers are on their phones, they are not getting the face to face time they came for at the show. People will walk right by the booth if they feel the staffer is disinterested. If you don't have the budget to send two staffers to the show so they can take breaks, then explore whether you can get a local employee or hire a crowd gatherer to help the booth staffer during busy times or cover them for a lunch break. Yet, do use tech wisely with relevant videos, a good lead management app and timely follow-up emails after the show.



3. SAVE SNACKS FOR THE PARTY

Eating during the show sends the message that you are not ready to conduct business. Eat before or after the show or find someone to cover you so you can leave to get a snack or lunch. While you as the host should not be munching away while someone is trying to get your attention, it is very nice to offer your visitor a bottle of water, candy or a much-needed cup of coffee or tea. It can set you apart from your competition and encourage them to stay a little bit longer to tell you about their business needs.

4. TURN ON THE LIGHTS

Lighting can make such a difference not just for your

Continued on page 4

Continued from page 3

home, but also in your booth. Ensure your brand is highlighted by your branding and remove any lights that are not working. Better yet, see if you can get them fixed. Also, accent lighting on your brand, back lighting on your message or a simple floor lamp in your conference room can create a unique ambiance to help set you apart.

5. WIRE MANAGEMENT

This may seem like a minor issue, but a cluttered mess of wires on the floor is not only a trip hazard it makes your booth look unprofessional. In an in-line or portable space you can get away with just running the wires behind your exhibit, but if you are in a peninsula or island exhibit, invest in wire management clips, plan where the power will come from in your booth space or invest in having wires run under the carpet. You can get the information regarding where the power will come from or even request where you want it by communicating with your show organizer well before the show.

6. KEEPING IT CLEAN – PORTER SERVICE

Just like a cluttered store or a messy house can stress visitors out and make them less likely to spend time there, a littered booth will do the same. Build awareness by reminding staffers that it is important to help keep the space tidy. Also, it is very worthwhile to ensure the trash is emptied on a regular basis. If you are serving snacks, ordering porter service from the show is very worthwhile as they will come to take your trash multiple times per day.

7. MAKE A GOOD FIRST IMPRESSION – GRAPHICS

Neatness counts. Your potential clients will be looking at your graphics to find out who you are and what you do. Make sure they look good. There are so many times I walk a show where I see wrinkled, poorly installed, loose or even soiled graphics. Most graphics can be steamed,

and fabric graphics can often be washed or dry cleaned. Spot cleaning can also usually be done with mild soap and water or even baby wipes at times (make sure to bring sample sizes of both in your crates so you can use them to clean your graphics or counters as needed). Check with your vendor before the show regarding graphic care.

8. DON'T FORGET TO SEND INVITATIONS & THANK-YOU CARDS

Make sure your best customers and prospects are invited to visit you at the show or they may not come. You don't want to be left at the show without anyone for you to talk to or to entertain. Plan to send either thank you cards or a thank you email to remind your visitors about your conversation and to thank them for taking the time to visit you. Also, make sure that you have fulfilled any promises you made at the show, such as sending brochures, following up with samples or scheduling appointments.

While you don't need to create a party atmosphere, you should make sure your booth is one people want to visit.

9. MAKE IT MEMORABLE & FUN!

While you don't need to create a party atmosphere, you should make sure your booth is one people want to visit. A fun activity that ties to your brand is a fantastic way to do that. It can be as simple as a quiz on a tablet, an opportunity to get hands on the product or an old-fashioned game that has been customized with some of your brand elements. You could customize Jenga or a bean bag toss with some problems you solve or benefits of your product. Even the overused "spin the wheel" game is better than nothing. Something as simple as a friendly smile and joke can set you and your company apart from your surly neighbor at the show.



Regardless of what you do to get noticed, make sure to always keep your brand and company messaging in mind. How does the outfit, the food or the game you plan tie into it? Can it? How will you communicate your

message in your invitations, at the show and after the show? If you keep these tips in mind you will get some “NICE” results.



KILL THE GIVEAWAYS...CREATE AN EXPERIENCE INSTEAD!

— *Sofia Troutman*

I am often asked what giveaways are the most popular at trade shows. Event managers feel they should offer something, but they are at a loss to what will draw people in so they can talk to them. However, they find that while giveaways were a good draw in the past, many of today's show attendees are not interested in them. I have had multiple show-goers decline my offer of a giveaway because they don't need it. This response has become much more frequent over the past 3 years.

I have had multiple show-goers decline my offer of a giveaway because they don't need it.

This is in line with demographic changes we are seeing in our population. Millennials have become most of the USA and Canadian workforce. Multiple studies show that they are prioritizing experiences over products. They don't measure their success by what they own, but instead focus on enjoying their life and collecting experiences they can share with their peers, often via social media. They also tend to be more environmentally conscious and selective about what they own.

So, does that mean that there is nothing that will attract Millennials to your booth? No, it doesn't. It just means that you must be a little more creative than just offering the latest gadget. Over half of them tend to spend their money on experiences, so we know they value them. This is a strong indicator that you can attract those consumers by offering a unique experience.

How do you create an experience in your booth? First you need to identify what your brand stands for and how to communicate that message. Once you know what

that message is, you can design an experience to help communicate it. Part of that experience may include a giveaway, but then again it may not. It all depends on what will better communicate your brand message.

I often get the question: But what if my company is small and we don't offer a product? How do we attract prospects?

IDENTIFY YOUR TARGET

Your brand message should guide what you do. You must also consider your audience, not just your company's target market, but also who is likely to attend your show or event. This will help dictate your next steps as that will determine your success.

PICK A THEME

Again, this should be brand appropriate but interesting and attractive to your audience. For example, if your audience is made up scientists they are more likely to respond to an experiment themed exhibit than to a gambling one.

ROCK YOUR GRAPHICS

Yes, they need to communicate who you are, with a big bold logo of your company and maybe brief statement about what you do. That does not mean, however, they can't tie into your theme and maybe add a little fun.

PROMOTE, PROMOTE, PROMOTE

Communicate your theme before, during and after the show. This will make it more likely to be remembered and enjoyed by your audience.

MAKE IT PLAYFUL

Create a game if possible. If you can make it educa-



tional to your brand that is even better. Whether it is a quick iPad® game where they get to select the top superpowers your company has or something more analog like a remote-control car race, having fun will ensure your company is memorable not only to the participants, but also to observers.

FACILITATE SHARING

Have an environment that is unique, provide a location specific to taking photos or video, promote the event hashtag, create your own themed hashtag and consider providing incentives to your visitors so they will share the experience.

SEIZE THE MOMENT

While attendees may not want to clutter up their home or office with tchotchkes, they will want a giveaway that is useful to them. Since most attendees are travelling

for the trade show, you know that there are some things they are likely to value. For example, earbuds for listening to music/movies on the plane, a water bottle, snacks for their trip home, etc. If you are not sure you can always ask a few of your best customers for ideas.

THEMED GIVEAWAYS

If you can find something to fit your theme this will also help extend the memorability of your show. If you have a charity you support or key values, those may be opportunities to have giveaways tie into your social responsibility. One exhibitor had a putt-putt golf activity in their booth and gave away branded golf balls to qualified visitors. One year we offered attendees to our exhibit the option for us to donate to selected charities that aligned with our brand.

Make sure that anything you offer reflects the quality of your brand.

DRESS THE PART

You can really increase the attention to your booth by coordinating staff attire with the theme or exhibit colors. You don't have to be as dramatic as the staffers dressing in costume, but something as simple as wearing socks or a lanyard with your brand colors will make you stand out. Also, remember that Millennials appreciate it when you don't take yourself too seriously.

By going through those steps, you are likely to identify the best way to create a memorable experience for your audience. Make sure that if you do offer a giveaway, it adds to the experience versus offering it because you think you should. It is better to have no giveaway than to have the wrong one.

MY TIPS FOR TRADE SHOW BOOTH STAFFERS

— Kristi Schulz

What creates a successful trade show booth? Is it the tables, backdrops, booth, theme, or merchandise? No way! It's all about the performance of the booth staffers. These tips will transform your mediocre booth into a noticeable, thriving, interactive booth!

Walking into a trade show the first time can be overwhelming, especially being a booth staffer.

Walking into a trade show for the first time can be overwhelming, especially as a booth staffer. The bright colors, attendees, free samples, contest drawings, competition, new faces, the list goes on and on. How can you make your booth staffers feel comfortable in your booth and the environment to ensure their best performance? Being a previous booth staffer, I will let you in on a few hints about my personal trade show experience.

To have success, it is important for all your staffers to know their duties. These are some strategies that will guarantee to peak your booth staffer's performance:

- **Assign a Team Lead:** This is a veteran staff member who is knowledgeable about the company, able to answer any questions, keep an eye on other booth staffer's presentation quality, and encourage them throughout the long day. This individual can help divide and conquer jobs to provide equal work to each staffer. This is a great way to strategize the installation and dismantling of the booth equipment.
- **Schedule a Morning Meeting:** A morning meeting is a great time to learn what is expected from each staffer throughout the day. This is where staffers learn about updates on the quality of leads coming in, announce adjustments, timing of activities, and updates on how everyone is doing on the goals that have been set.



- **Expand Your Territory:** Get staffers out of their comfort zone. It is great to engage with attendees who are in the aisle. Although the attendees are not in your booth, you never know if they will be an important part of your future in business. Something as simple as a warm smile and greeting can go a long way.
- **Create Engagement:** Establishing a relationship is key in finding new leads. Ask the attendee some open-ended questions to break the ice. My favorite question is “What brings you to the show today?” This line works like a charm.
- **Observe:** Interacting with attendees can be hard work. Provide a short break after a couple hours for your staffer to grab a snack and a bottle of water. Allow them to take a few steps away from your booth to watch the booth while snacking. This can help your staffer know what the attendees are seeing. This will also point out if your booth staffers need to be doing something differently.

- **Enhance Your Posture:** Stand relaxed with open posture. This will make you look more welcoming than having your back to attendees, head down and arms crossed. Keep the most valuable trade show booth staffing tools in your hand, or nearby, at all times. These can be business cards, a clipboard, iPad® or a giveaway item.
- **Address Sticky Situations:** If all staffers are busy and there are attendees waiting impatiently respond with, “I will be with you in a moment when I finish this conversation.” If someone is upset make sure to direct them to the Booth Captain or someone in management to help them.

REMINDERS FOR YOUR STAFFERS DURING A TRADE SHOW:

- Knowing the information about the product or service being sold can help you point out advantages you have to offer. Take a moment to review your web page and make sure to attend any booth staffer training offered.

Knowing the information about the product or service being sold can help you point out advantages...

- Many trade show attendees have spent their own money to come to the show to find a solution to their problem. The attendees will often be happy to meet you!
- Being at the trade show will allow more face-to-face time than on the road selling. Also, prospects are likely to be more open to talking to you since they are away from some of the demands they face in their offices.
- Understanding the company’s strongest competitors will allow you to talk about how your company does it differently and better. If possible, do a quick walk through before the show to see who else is exhibiting



- and how they compare to your company.
- Listening to the attendee will help you answer their questions and narrow down whether or not your company is a perfect fit to fulfill their needs.
 - You are selling something you believe in. Confidence is key. Ensure you understand what makes your company special and be prepared to share that information with booth visitors.

Providing and applying these tips will allow your booth staffers to create relationships, draw in more leads, improve the quality of staffers, create an enjoyable atmosphere, and benefit your company.

15 TIPS FOR ALIGNING CORPORATE SWAG WITH YOUR MARKETING OBJECTIVES

— *Kelsey Stage*

Everyone knows that corporate swag is an awesome way to spread the word about your brand and engage new and existing customers. But did you know that it's also a perfect opportunity to boost many of your other marketing objectives? With cool promotional items, you can re-energize your existing customer base, attract new talent and even gain followers from a whole new demographic.

So how do you tailor your giveaway items to meet these marketing goals? The key is to align the DNA of your brand with the audience and the event. Everybody knows that brand storytelling is a big — though often underused — opportunity for marketers, and one of the simplest ways to tell your story is through cool swag. Let your promotional items demonstrate what makes your company unique and exceptional.

So how do you tailor your giveaway items to meet these marketing goals? The key is to align the DNA of your brand...

COMPANY SWAG FOR LEAD GENERATION

In the majority of cases, you simply won't get very far if you don't have a solid base of prospective customers. Lead generation is all about attracting and converting strangers into loyal fans, and there's basically no better way to do that than through branded promotional items at trade shows and conferences. Cold-calling is no longer effective; you have to catch potential clients' attention in more commanding ways.

• **Offer an Incentive** — According to Dr. Robert Cialdini's book *Influence: The Psychology of Persuasion*, reciprocation is one of the most valuable tools in terms of branding. Even small booth giveaways — like a

promotional pen or stylus — will encourage conference attendees to feel the need to reciprocate. Invite them to sign up for your email list or follow your company on social media for a branded gift.

• **Give Something Useful** — Let's not kid ourselves. Conference attendees come home drowning in business giveaways. So much so that they may even fail to register the business names in their pile of corporate swag. Pick something useful, like cool tech giveaways, to ensure that your handouts actually get used. The more use your branded gifts get, the more effect they have.

• **Design with Quality** — This one's especially important if you're prepping for an event, trade show or conference in your specific industry where you know that attendees will be bombarded with competitors. The best trade show giveaways are those that are well-designed and eye catching so they stand out in a crowd.

COMPANY SWAG FOR BUILDING BRAND AWARENESS

According to this powerful study, 50 percent of consumers keep a promotional product for between one and four years. That's a good chunk of time to make an impression. If your primary goal at your next event or conference is to make your brand a household name, a good place to start is with unique swag items.

• **Choose Something Industry-Specific** — How do you tell the story of your brand in a way that's memorable and relevant? Pick branded swag that's aligned with your business. Top promotional items are those in the education, technology, financial, healthcare and non-profit sectors. So, if you're a university angling for more potential students, you can't go wrong with branded notebooks. If you run in the financial realm, you'll definitely get attention with wallets featuring your logo.



- **Go (Really) Big with Branding** — Did we mention that good design is vital to good swag? When your goal is to improve branding, make sure that you choose corporate swag that puts your logo front-and-center. Your logo should be large and in charge, complemented by messaging that helps prospective clients understand what you do.

- **Leverage Social Media** — How do you market your brand at lightning speed in this day and age? Of course, it comes down to social media. Encourage recipients to share swag with their social media followers by creating a unique hashtag. They'll be more likely to share your giveaway items if it's something unique or funny. You can even use the gifts as part of your social media sweepstakes to get more visibility.

COMPANY SWAG FOR A NEW SERVICE OR LAUNCH

You've worked hard on your new service or product, and now all you need is some buzz. Cool promotional products are a good way to help garner attention, whether you're debuting your new product at a launch party or hyping it up pre-launch at an industry event.

You've just got to make sure you pick the right gifts and the right messaging.

- **Host a Product Launch Event** — Before you book the venue, send out the e-vites, secure the catering, and make sure that you've got some solid swag ideas on deck as party favors. No good launch party is complete without custom-branded tech swag to fill your gift bags.

- **Customize Swag to the New Product** — Just any old branded gear won't do! Make sure that the swag for your launch party or debut is specific to your new service or product. You can achieve this both through the design of your custom gifts and the product itself. For example, if you're debuting a new fitness app, choose custom insulated water bottles with your new product's name clearly positioned.

- **Use Swag as a Pre-Order Incentive** — If one of your primary goals for your product launch event is to get people committed to signing up, don't start the day of launch. Instead, prepare with pre-order promotions that encourage people to sign up early. You can do this by offering affordable, branded gifts for the first group of users.

COMPANY SWAG FOR ENTERING A NEW MARKET

Your swag is only good if it's actually valuable to your target consumer. That means that if you want to reach new groups of customers, you've got to pick promotional items that they'll actually want to use. Whether you want to break in with a certain age group or expand your business to a new geographical region, promotional messaging can help.

- **Use the Right Wording for Your Audience** — One of the most important aspects to breaking into a new segment is understanding the market's habits. For

Continued on page 12

Continued from page 11

example, you know that Millennials are more likely to be loyal to businesses that have a strong social media presence. Since they're the most brand-loyal generation, make sure that your promotional products include social media information.

- **Pick Products They'll Actually Use** — Here's a riddle for you: If you're looking to break into a geographical market in the hot, arid southwest, should you offer them branded umbrellas? No, of course not! Try to dig deep and get specific with your target audience to ensure they'll actually use your product.

- **Use Market-Specific Graphics** — If you've been into a new Whole Foods 365 store lately, you may have noticed that the new supermarkets are totally tailored to the geographic area in which they exist, using fun signs and graphics that tie the brand to the region. Companies entering a new geographic region can get personal with potential new customers by adding local graphics and wording.

COMPANY SWAG FOR RETAINING CUSTOMERS

Don't forget about your existing customers! You already know that keeping your current consumer base loyal, happy and brimming with positive reviews is an effective marketing strategy with a relatively low return on investment (ROI). Take it to the next level with promotional items tailored specifically to the customers you already have.

- **Create Customer Appreciation Giveaways** — Every once in a while, surprise your customers with branded giveaways simply as a way to say thanks. If you're an eCommerce business, this might mean adding a small, affordable promo gift to your large online orders. The same goes for in-store purchases.



- **Use Swag as a Promotional Item** — Customers love free gifts. In fact, a study published in the *Journal of Marketing* showed that free giveaways can maximize sales, but that customers were more likely to spend more when the gift was expected and not a surprise. Leverage email and social media to promote incentives for purchases over a certain dollar amount or when existing customers reorder or try a new product.

- **Feature Loyal Customers On Social Media** — As you can tell, retaining your customers is all about making sure they feel appreciated. Consider adding a customer appreciation post to your social media rotation where you say thanks to one particular customer each month. You'll get major bonus points if you share a photo of your favorite customers in your company swag.

THE BOTTOM LINE

Just like anything else in business, choosing the right corporate swag for your specific marketing objectives is a combination of art and science. As long as you put in a little bit of thought, effort and passion, you can be sure your branded products will help you reach even the loftiest marketing and recruitment goals.

3 BEST CONVERSATION STARTERS TO GET ATTENDEES TALKING IN YOUR DISPLAY

— *Scott Price*

The hardest part of exhibiting with trade show displays is getting people to come into your booth. No matter how great your product is, if no one sees it all of your efforts go to waste. The first step is to have a great display. Trade Show News Network (TSNN) suggests hosting presentations, product demonstrations and finding ways to entertain attendees. But what if you don't have a crazy eye-catching display or demo? What if your budget doesn't allow for extras? How will you get people to stop and come inside?

YOU DO NOT NEED PUSHY SALES REPS TRYING TO DRAW IN CUSTOMERS

Getting people in your booth is as easy as starting a casual conversation. The key to attracting attendees effectively is to keep the interest on the potential customer, not your company or staff. It's all about keeping it simple and making the conversation about them, then listening to their points and having the knowledge to back up your replies.

But, as everyone knows, starting up a conversation with a total stranger can be incredibly difficult. Everyone is busy, wanting to pack as much into their trade show visit as possible. Many just want to be left alone until they're ready to ask the questions. However, by making them feel like you just want to get to know them, you can win their attention and prevent scaring them away. This can be best achieved with a few key questions, which can be posed by any members of your staff or by you if you're the only person manning your booth.

STARTER QUESTIONS CAN BEGIN THOSE IMPORTANT CONVERSATIONS

Each of these three starter questions provokes a different thought process. You can use them to cus-

tomize the attendee's experience. Focus not only on the answers, but also body language and eye contact. By paying close attention to all these aspects, you can help to steer the conversation and make a customer want to come inside and feel comfortable, which also eliminates them feeling like you're pushing them to do something they don't want to do.

1. "WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING FOR AT THE SHOW?"

Find out what this specific customer is looking for today. Every show attendee's goals are likely to be different, and you need to know what this specific group of attendees focusing is.

2. "HAVE YOU HEARD OF US BEFORE?"

While knowing you have product recognition is important, so is the opportunity to gain new customers. It is also important to use shows as a way to change opinions and to gain credibility for your company and product. Attendees will talk to one another and having your company name and product associated with a positive experience will encourage others to come to visit your booth as well.

3. "WHAT'S YOUR BIGGEST CHALLENGE?"

Use this as an opportunity to cater to the needs of your customers and show product flexibility. By phrasing this question properly, you can ensure a productive conversation that leads to solutions or a product conveniently located inside your booth.

If their answer to "What's your biggest challenge?" is "knowing how to get the most out of a trade show," get an expert opinion. Speaking to someone with experience in the field can help you to find out how to get the most out of a trade show.

BEST BOOTH ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES

— *Ivette Flower*

Who remembers the old-school way of collecting leads at shows? Does a fancy fishbowl come to mind?

Do you remember how hard it was to qualify a lead on the back of a business card?

Thankfully, exhibitors got a little more sophisticated when they used the fishbowl and filled it with candy. As soon as someone put their hand in the bowl, you felt like you “caught one” and now you had their permission to go into your elevator pitch!

The way we engage and how we qualify event attendees is shifting because potential buyers are savvy and have more control of the buying cycle. They are well on their way through the buying journey before they even get contacted by sales or visit your booth space.

A well-organized event can be a great opportunity for attendees to learn...

A well-organized event can be a great opportunity for attendees to learn and connect while enjoying the process.

While there are a variety of objectives to achieve as an exhibitor, most often the mission for exhibitors is to provide professional guidance to their attendees to ensure that they get the very most out of your event. When it comes to relationship building and gaining someone’s trust, there really is no substitute for person-to-person interaction. It is important that your booth staffers leave a great first impression with attendees.

One way Skyline is creating engaging at-show experiences is through our discovery process where we create



a custom solution based on objectives. We recently designed a 10’ portable solution for our Open House. Our message was “Helping the World Trade” which communicated our global reach and expertise. Our objective was to create a game where booth staffers could educate and qualify attendees. We designed a world map backwall graphic and created energy in the booth through an augmented reality application using gamification strategies. In other words, the world map graphic came to life and encouraged attendees to stop by.

If an exhibitor can successfully combine education and fun into their booth experience, then they are strengthening that relationship with that attendee. The end result for our Open House was attendees who enjoyed interacting with our booth staffers, and booth staffers who were able to further qualify attendees as a prospect for follow-up.

A lot has changed in the events and exhibition industry, but having a trusted, experienced partner to help you will always be important.

TRADE SHOW ETIQUETTE 201

— *Tami Moore*

It's SO much more than not eating in your booth. We all know that talking on your cell phone and eating in the booth are among the worst things you can do at a trade show. But how many of us have witnessed, or been guilty of, less obvious breaches of exhibition etiquette? If you think your booth manners are perfect, ask yourself whether you or your staff have ever committed one of the following "Trade Show Don'ts."

RESPECTING ALL ATTENDEES

Many veteran exhibitors claim they can easily sort out live prospects from the attendee who just wants to collect a lot of swag. But be careful here: that hard-to-engage wallflower that wanders into your booth may be the CEO of an emerging startup who could become next year's top customer. Rude or dismissive behavior from booth staff can be remembered long after the expo ends.

ATTENDING SOCIALS

If you think the best networking opportunities happen on the show floor, you haven't been exhibiting very long. Opening events, evening galas, award ceremonies, and meet-and-greets are where true customer connections are formed and existing ones strengthened. More importantly, your absence from these events can send the message that you don't care about your industry colleagues on a more personal level.

STAYING FOR THE ENTIRE EVENT

After long hours on the floor, it can be tempting to pack up your booth before an event is even over. But doing so could cause you to miss out on last-minute leads and can send a message to attendees that your time is more valuable than theirs. It can also affect your pocket book...some show organizers have stated in the exhibit manuals that they will fine exhibitors who tear down before the show is over.



HELPING OTHER EXHIBITORS

Brief chats with other exhibitors are important for networking and learning trade show tips. But if you notice an attendee curiously eyeing the other exhibitor's booth, point that prospect out and step aside. Your grace will likely be rewarded the next time you're the one temporarily distracted on the floor.

DON'T SPAM THE FISHBOWL

Onsite signups long ago made the business card fishbowl obsolete. If you acquire a list of emails and try to subscribe them to your e-marketing list, you're likely to get reported for spam. A better approach is to immediately send any of those random prospects a personal, one-to-one email and provide a link to a landing page on your website with a valuable white paper or case study. Ideally, those downloads also automatically subscribe the prospect to your double-opt-in newsletter.

Good trade show manners go far beyond the creating an inviting booth experience. Mindfulness of these and other aspects of trade show etiquette can pay long-term dividends in the strength of your brand.

EACH BOOTH STAFFER SHOULD HAVE A ROLE

— *Sofia Troutman*

There is a perception by some Event Managers that the best booth staffer is always the outgoing sales person who is outspoken and fun. While sales reps can be great staffers, there are other personality types and expertise characteristics that can be just as important to round out your perfect team. Below I outline some key roles for booth staff candidates you can use to fill those roles at your next trade show.

ENGAGER/CROWD GATHERER

It does not matter how wonderful your message and service is if you can't find someone to talk to about it. That is where the people my colleague calls "extroverts on steroids" come in. These are the people with the magnetic personality and no discernible fear of rejection. They will reach out to people in the aisle and ask just the right questions or share an enticing tidbit of information to get people to notice their exhibit and engage them in conversation.

ENTERTAINER

This is the person who does not mind being on the spot. Whether it is running a demonstration, presenting new information and, in general, being in the spotlight. They can handle the unexpected, love the attention and are quick with a joke to help the client feel at ease. Some sales people will fill this role, but I have found that creative people can do this very well, also.

HOST

This is the person who welcomes people and makes them feel important. They will make sure they have a place to sit or some water. They are good at observing body language and asking just the right questions. They may or may not have the answers, but they will happily get the right person who does, and they will know who that is because they are good listeners.



TECH EXPERT

Every modern booth that is any larger than a 10' x 10' space should have someone who can troubleshoot technical issues. Whether it is getting the monitor to play videos, setting up a presentation or tethering phone internet access to your iPad®, it is always good to have someone on hand who can help. This should also be the person in charge of planning for any presentation backups, extra cords and for helping you decide what computer you need to have to run your tech.

PRODUCT/SERVICE EXPERT

Information about your company, product and services is available on the internet and therefore potential clients may already have quite a bit of basic information about your company. In fact, some booth visitors may even be your current clients. In those cases, you will need someone who can answer their more detailed questions and know how to cross-sell or up-sell them as appropriate to their needs. This is a level of knowledge that is not easily covered in your booth staffer training – you



will need the real experts. Whether it is an engineer, product manager or customer service representative, these people can be invaluable for those highly-engaged prospects and clients.

STAFF MANAGER

This is the person who makes sure staffers know what they are supposed to do and when and where staffers should be. They will give people breaks, make certain visitor appointments are kept and ensure everything is running as planned.

SOCIAL/PR MAVEN

This is that marketing person who knows your brand, your client and how to talk to them. While you can pre-write a press release or schedule tweets, it is invaluable to have someone on staff who can perform on the spot when the opportunity arises. They will be in charge of doing any Facebook live posts, posting impromptu pictures of prize winnings or recording testimonials at the show.

CLOSER

This is the staffer who is great at easily flowing the conversation from your client's or prospect's needs or idle chitchat to next steps. That could be finding out what information they need sent to them, setting up a follow-up appointment or getting them on their way if your company is not a good fit for them. Each one of your staffers, with possible exception of the "Engager" should be able to fill this role. They need to determine needs and set up next steps. After all, that is why you are at the show – to develop and further client relationships.

Do you have all these characteristics in your staffers? Did I miss any? Certainly, many staffers have the ability to fill several of these roles...but there are some who can't. Select your staffers carefully because, as you probably already know, a good staff team makes all the difference in obtaining good results from your show.

THE 5 TYPES OF PEOPLE YOU'LL MEET AT A TRADE SHOW

— *Kristie Jones-Damalas*

For trade show marketers, working a booth has one main goal: to gather leads. Sure, sales are great, and networking is nice, but gathering a list of prospective buyers makes a day at a trade show worth it. During your hours working a trade show, you'll meet hundreds — perhaps thousands — of people, all who have differing levels of interest in your product or service. Whether you're attending your first trade show or your fiftieth, you'll meet lots of interesting people.

THE TIRE KICKER

Like your family car shopping on a spring day just to get out of the house, the tire kicker stops by your booth out of pure curiosity and to kill some time before the next breakout session or demo. Tire kickers are attracted by fun graphics or flashy interactive features in your booth, but have no expectations about the experience and no objectives. You'll know the tire kicker because he will walk leisurely around your setup, hands in pockets, lost in thought, and then may wander out just as quickly.

THE TRICK-OR-TREATER

It's all treats for this trade show visitor, who is in it for the freebies. Trick-or-Treaters are on the hunt for the very best giveaway promo items from each booth, but aren't necessarily visiting to learn about the product or service (although they may stay long enough to say hello and listen to your spiel as they snatch a free pen from your table.) You'll know the Trick-or-Treater by the branded tote bag bulging with company logo key chains and notepads and the lightening-fast speed with which they leave your booth after claiming their prized promo.

THE INFORMATION GATHERER

On a thrill-seeking mission to find the best product at

the most competitive price (and cut a deal while he's at it), the Information Gatherer's only goal is to take your information and run. This trade show attendee is a frustrating blend of Type A obsession with facts, figures and price points and mistrust of salespeople. You'll know an Information Gatherer by the notebook full of hastily scribbled notes, product brochures with circled pricing information, and skittish demeanor that causes them to run when you ask for their information to follow up.

THE COMPETITOR

The "other guy" at the trade show, The Competitor, may saunter casually to your booth and ask very specific questions about your product or service that typical customers wouldn't know to ask, including wholesale pricing or production costs. You'll know The Competitor by his arms crossed over his branded polo shirt and because you walked by his booth earlier in the day.

THE SERIOUS BUYER

This trade show attendee visits your booth for a good reason: to buy your product. The Serious Buyer knows his objectives, and meets the elements of BANT: budget, authority, need, and time. He will have a budget in place, the authority to select the vendor or can influence the person who does, a need for your product; and has a timeframe for the potential purchase. The Serious Buyer will be upfront with their questions and concerns and forthcoming with their info for a follow up.

Although it's great to meet potential customers of all kinds, the serious buyer attendees will make your trade show experience worth the time and money you put into it.

THE BEAUTY OF MULTIPLE PERSONALITIES

— *Steve Hoffman*

Your eye-catching booth, quality products & services, brilliant presentations, and promotions can all be torpedoed by the “wrong” booth staffer. They are the single most important piece in determining your ROI at a trade show.

Ideally, an exhibitor can match booth staffers’ personalities to their skill sets, strengths and responsibilities within the exhibit space. Effective management of qualified attendees (booth visitors) is a key ingredient to trade show success. So, with the awareness that staffers might have different roles to play, let us also be reminded there is no one ‘cookie cutter’ personality to look for when staffing a booth.

Here is a brief summary of certain personalities you can find at the best trade show booths.

1. THE WARMER UPPER

The beauty of the Warmer Upper is they are able to be totally sincere and welcome people to your booth in a way that is pleasant for all. Their funny and quirky personality quickly cuts through the awkwardness and makes people feel at ease while at your booth. Warmer Uppers may still occasionally tackle prospects in the aisle, but the prospects don’t mind!

2. THE DETAILED ONE

This person is the master of your products and services. They have a wealth of knowledge and can provide all the information your guest needs and then some. Beware: Detailed Ones can sometimes forget a cardinal booth rule: Nobody cares about your stuff – talk to prospects about how your stuff will help their company!

3. THE PASSIONATE ONE

This individual has a genuine passion and interest in what they are selling or discussing. It is clear that the

person is knowledgeable, but more importantly, their excitement and energy about what they are promoting is contagious. Eye contact, charisma, and passion can go a long way. Passionate Ones know that the best way to make an impact and convey benefits on the show floor is to tell real stories of how your firm has helped real customers. Any story that can involve babies, puppies, efficiencies or increased revenue is truly heartwarming.

4. THE TO-THE-POINT ONE

At a trade show, you have to respect a booth visitors time. To-The-Point staffers win over people quickly by focusing on highlights. They utilize facts and data to quickly convey a persuasive message. Guests can be in and out of your area in no time while still taking away an array of valuable benefits. The To-The-Point personality type also concludes interactions with a plan for the next step. (Sometimes the plan is “don’t waste my time – you’re not a qualified prospect so let’s just disengage quickly.”)

5. THE EMPATHETIC ONE

Nobody likes to be sold to, but everyone likes to be understood. The sympathetic one is able to do this extremely well by listening, learning, and applying what they hear from potential customers. They are also keenly aware that pain points for the customer are a chance for further discussion. Empathetic Ones bring emotion to the booth staff process. After all, it’s likely your product or service is helping address issues they may be having, so show them you understand and care (even if your feet hurt!)

Think about yourself. Which personality describes you and how can you best leverage your employees for a successful trade show experience? Remember, people respond differently to different actions, and individuals. Make sure your trade show booth has both.

3 THINGS TO CONSIDER BEFORE HOSTING A LIVE SPEAKER IN YOUR BOOTH

— *Craig Koopersmith*

Some of you may be old enough to remember “The Amazing Kreskin,” a frequent guest with Johnny Carson on “The Tonight Show.” I met Kreskin at a trade show, where he attracted a huge, standing room only crowd to his incredible demonstration of ESP (Extra Sensory Perception). I recall the scene vividly, and even got his autograph. Do I remember the booth? No. Do I recall what they were selling? No. How many real potential customers did not have an opportunity to learn more about this company’s products because the crowd kept them away?

Many trade show attendees visit trade show booths for the opportunity to educate themselves on new products. You may be thinking, “what better way to give them the in-depth knowledge they’re looking for than by having a speaker in your booth?” While that may sound like an easy way to get attention and even take some of the pressure off you and your staff, it can also come with some drawbacks. Here are three important factors to consider before inviting a live speaker:

While that may sound like an easy way to get attention...it can also come with some drawbacks.

1. PLANNING IS EVERYTHING

All aspects of exhibit design require extensive planning. Having a speaker adds an extra layer of complexity. First, you must consider the logistics. Do you have the space in your booth for attendees to comfortably sit? Standing room only is not likely to keep a crowd’s attention. Do the event organizers offer A/V equipment and A/V technicians to monitor sound levels during the talk? If not, you will need to hire outside A/V help to maintain a professional appearance.

Next, consider the person you’d like to have speak. Is the speaker well-known enough to be perceived as trustworthy and knowledgeable by your audience? Does he or she have the knowledge about your specific product to be a good representative of your company? Keep in mind, if the topics your speaker chooses to discuss are not tied directly with your product, they may distract or even turn away potential customers. It is also a good idea to have a back-up plan if the speaker doesn’t connect with your audience, so you can quickly redirect your attendees. Otherwise, you run the risk of losing them altogether.

Once you choose and book a speaker, you need to be sure you have an audience. Long before you set up your trade show booths, you will need to have materials prepared to market your speaker as an event. Sending out invitations for a private Q&A session, or another opportunity for one-on-one time with your speaker can help guarantee not only people in your booth, but engaged customers who want to interact and learn. Scheduling your speaker to be in your booth during peak traffic times can help pull in customers who want to have a more personal experience with your expert.

2. COSTS CAN ADD UP QUICKLY

According to Trade Show News Network (TSNN), successful trade show booths should give a good return on investment. Having a budget is crucial, and a speaker as part of your trade show can be a budget buster. Be sure you have reserved a large enough space for a crowd, as well as equipment including chairs, speakers, and soundboards, all of which will add to your costs. Then there is the speaker’s fee, this is how they earn a living and their time does not come

cheap. Be sure you know exactly what the speaker's fee covers, as extras may not be included. Lastly, factor in your pre-event marketing costs. Even the printing and mailing of simple postcard announcements can add up quickly.

3. KEEP THE OVERALL GOAL IN MIND

What is the overall goal for your trade show booth

design? This is the most important factor of all when considering a speaker. Is the cost of a guest speaker, marketing, space, and equipment going to guarantee an increase in real leads and sales? Will their presence be helpful, or will it just add extra stress to you and your staff? If you're unsure, don't be afraid to ask for help. Trade show exhibit companies can help with planning and marketing no matter what your industry.



HOW TO USE A COPING MECHANISM TO INTERACT WITH ATTENDEES IN YOUR BOOTH

— *Sarmistha Tarafder*

You want people to stop by your trade show booth. When they do, are you equipped with the tools of interaction?

First, let's take a quick tour of neuroeconomics.

Neuroeconomics is an emerging field that combines economics with biology neuroscience and psychology.

In a series of studies spanning across nine years, Dr. Paul J. Zak found that Oxytocin (aka the cuddle drug) is the “social glue that binds families, communities and societies.” Hence, it acts as a lubricant in our everyday capitalistic commerce of trade and transaction.

These are the KEY FINDINGS:

- Oxytocin is the recognized human stimulant of empathy, generosity and trust. Empathy is an essential catalyst in triggering meaningful interactions and relationships with your audience. Above all, empathy is contagious and detectable.
- When you demonstrate an awareness and understanding of the challenges that your audience faces, you are empowering them to ask the tough questions. As a result, their attention focuses on your brand and your message.
- To garner empathy, you must first educate yourself about what moves your audience, your industry – then communicate value and create a sense of belonging. You and your brand truly have to become the people you are trying to reach.

In a trade show venue, if you and your sales team are trying to understand the people you are trying to reach, you need to understand their mindset. After all, the people attending the event will have their own agendas and you'll need to know how to work with that.

Your sales reps need to understand how to work effectively with the attendees of the show, and to do that they need to know a few secrets.

DON'T RELY EXCLUSIVELY ON YOUR TRADE SHOW DISPLAY TO DO THE WORK FOR YOU

Obviously, a well-planned and effective trade show booth is important for some success at your event. But that's just the beginning!

Here is a list of possible emotions and moods the visitors are probably going through during a show. Be prepared to meet them with empathy and engage them appropriately.

- **If the attendee seems impatient.** If their offices are sending them to trade shows, chances are the attendees are influential – and busy! They don't have time to waste and they'll want you to get to the point without too much schmoozing. Be polite, of course, but also be concise. If a visitor to your booth feels like you're just wasting their time, they won't want to stick around and do business with you.
- **If the attendee seems forgetful.** Like we said, these are busy people, and they'll have a million details to track. Remember, you're not the only vendor they will talk to at the show! Do as much as you can right there at the booth to close the deal, so that they don't have to remember all of the details once they get back to the office. Do the work for them.
- **If the attendee seems hassled.** Convention goers are surrounded in every direction by vendors who want their business. It's easy to get overwhelmed and irritable with all the commotion, and when you're in that frame of mind it's hard to keep details straight. Remind your sales staff to keep things as simple and straight forward as possible to make it easy on the clients. Make the conversation about their needs and let them steer the conversation. If you do not have a solution, point them to the vendor who



does. Do not waste their time.

- **If the attendee seems hesitant.** Visitors to your display are not ignorant. They can see your signs and brochures perfectly well, but with so many options surrounding them, they might need a gentle nudge toward signing a deal. Offer some nice incentives to move them in the right direction, but don't give them the hard sell! Again, remember that they have lots of options, and if sales staff push too hard, they might just push those clients away altogether. Give them straightforward reasons on how you can meet their needs and talk with them enough so they feel that the choice is clear.

- **If the attendee seems egotistical.** With so many vendors fighting for their business, trade show attendees have the upper hand and they know it! So, go out of your way to make them feel special and give yourself the extra edge that you need.

Know that 81% of trade show attendees have buying authority

(and being ego driven comes with the territory), which means more than 4 out of 5 people walking the aisles are potential customers for exhibitors. (Source: CEIR: The Spend Decision: Analyzing How Exhibits Fit Into the Overall Marketing Budget)

Start before the convention by asking your marketing team to contact your regular clients and offer an incentive to customers who visit your trade show display. Also, if your existing customers send a referral, that deal will be extended to them as well. In addition, offer exclusive discounts for serious buyers or new clients who seem interested. A little flattery will get you far.

The very best trade show display booth and location won't do you any good at all if you don't work it right. Always remember to see the situation from your customer's point of view, and that will give your staff the edge that they need to stand out from the crowd.

HOW MANY STAFFERS DO I NEED?

— Marc Goldberg

It can be hard to determine just how many booth staffers you need to bring to your next trade show or event. The investment in booth staffers in terms of time, training and money spent traveling to the event can be substantial. Appropriately trained staffers will give you a positive return on investment when they know how to effectively capture leads. Below, I've outlined the best way to determine how many booth staffers you will need for your next trade show or event.

If the booth size is a given, which it normally is, then you will need one staffer for each 50 square feet of unoccupied space. Occupied by what, you are asking? By your display, product demonstrations and equipment.

...you will need one staffer for each 50 square feet of unoccupied space.

METHOD #1

Take the total square feet (sf) of the booth (10' x 10' = 100 sf, 10' x 20' = 200 sf, etc.) then subtract the square footage occupied by your exhibit, pedestal tables and demonstrations. The remainder should be divided by 50 to determine how many staffers.

EXAMPLE: 10' x 10' = 100 sf – 8' x 2' for booth display and 3' x 2' x 2' for two pedestal tables or 16 sf + 12 sf = 28 sf. 100 sf – 28 sf = 72 sf / 50 = 1.2 staffers or 1 or 2 booth staffers; two would be preferable.

METHOD #2

Another way to look at staffing is to establish an objective for contacts or leads to be generated. If the objective is 100 qualified leads, then work backwards. An aggressive staffer can contact 10-15 attendees an hour. If the show is open 6 hours per day – then 60 contacts per day are



possible. If the show is a three-day show, then one staffer can contact 180 attendees. If you have 30% qualification rate, then one staffer can qualify 54 attendees during the course of the show. With a goal of 100 qualified leads, then you need two staffers.

A BOOTH CAPTAIN LEADS YOUR STAFF TO SUCCESS

Selecting a staff that can execute your plan is just the first step. You must assign a Booth Captain. The Booth Captain and the Exhibit Manager are not the same. The booth's leader must have complete authority, as well as responsibility for on-the-floor execution. Regardless of the staffers' home organization, when working the show, they work for the Booth Captain. The leader must also be charged with training and organizing the staff into an integrated selling unit. This applies to small exhibitors as well. Failure to assign a leader normally leads to a chaotic event.

ORGANIZING THE TEAM

The first function of a Booth Captain is to assure that the booth is scheduled properly to assure coverage at all times. Both for peak traffic time and slower periods. The booth schedule should be designed to keep everyone UP, FRESH and ALERT. To do this, one should think in terms of 2-4 hour shifts. An exhibiting veteran is known to have said more than once, “Untired feet, make a happy face.” Rotating staff is a critical job of the Booth Captain, even if there are only two or three personnel assigned to the booth.

BOOTH CAPTAIN CHECKLIST

- Plan the booth team (names and schedule)
- Prepare of the team, organize cross-product/product

training and marketing related issues – objectives, themes, messages

- Organize and conduct the pre-exhibition meeting
- Daily briefing and daily post-event review
- Supervise the collection leads and lead information
- Address staff and visitor needs, issues and questions
- Manage staff decorum – assure that staff stay focused on the show objectives
- Coordinate collection of competitive information and assure it is transmitted to the appropriate party
- Make notes of exhibit issues that need to be addressed and communicate to convention services
- Review expectations and evaluate outcomes met
- Participate and represent at functions
- Look after VIPs



GIVEAWAYS – WHY THEY ARE IMPORTANT TO YOUR BOOTH’S SUCCESS

— *Brian Gordon*

Being memorable as an exhibitor is extremely important for a successful show. Keeping your brand front of mind is achieved in many ways; a strong physical presence at the show with ample space, a “stand out” display with a clearly stated message, well-trained staff who work as a cohesive team, diligent follow-up, and perhaps an appropriate giveaway.

Being memorable...is extremely important for a successful show.

It is important to identify not only why giveaways can benefit your trade show experience, but how you can execute them well.

WHY A GIVEAWAY CAN BE BENEFICIAL

- **Engagement:** We are all curious by nature. Offering a gift or a prize encourages conversation and helps your staff take advantage of the curiosity. Your staff can chat up the curious attendees and ramp up into a more in-depth conversation.
- **Enticement:** We all like free stuff. It acts as a draw to bring in attendees. You do run the risk of casting a very wide net, so be careful to filter out the freebie hunters.
- **Brand Promotion:** When you give somebody products that they will actually use, you are able to increase brand exposure for your company. Be bold with giveaway branding, and prominently display your company information and logo.



- **Connect First, Sell Later:** Offering a free sample, giveaway or prize can create goodwill. The attendee has invested in being at the show. We can't always be asking for the sale. Give at the show and follow-up in the field.

Keep in mind that a giveaway isn't always necessary and could in certain cases detract from your brand. Don't feel like you have to offer a useless keychain or rubber stress ball because everyone else is. Ensure that the giveaway you choose aligns with your brand and perhaps even your booth theme.

IDENTIFY HOW YOU CAN EFFECTIVELY EXECUTE A GIVEAWAY

- **Profile Your Audience:** When deciding which items to give away, don't just arbitrarily make selections. Think about your audience. What do they actually want and more importantly what will they actually use? Make sure your giveaway products can be appreciated and used.
- **Make it a Game:** Games can really create a buzz at your booth. Instead of just giving away items to everybody, consider making them a prize. Coordinate games in your space and give away prizes to the winners. Cater to their competitive spirit, have fun and be memorable.
- **Be Relevant:** When possible, offer products that relate to your company. For instance, if you are a golf equipment wholesaler, consider golf balls and tees, or some other gadget which can be used on the golf course.
- **Explain Yourself:** Connect your giveaway to your message at the show. Make sure the attendees are clear on the connection. Remember, the number one reason we go to shows is to see what's NEW. Perhaps you are unveiling a new product or service in your industry. Use the giveaways to reinforce the message. They can help spread the word.



TRACK THE SUCCESS OF YOUR GIVEAWAY

- **Social Media:** Keep an eye on your social media. If the giveaway resulted in meaningful customer interaction and subsequent promotion of your company, you will likely see an increase in followers on your social media in the days and weeks following the show.
- **Website Searches:** Similarly, organic entries and search entries for your company should increase after the trade show because of heightened awareness for your brand. Compare the number of searches for your website before and after the trade show.
- **Contact Information Collection:** When giving away products at a trade show, make sure people provide their contact information before they are given the product. The more emails and phone numbers you gather, the better.

Giveaways are an important part of a holistic trade show experience. Make sure you plan accordingly.

PRODUCT DEMONSTRATIONS – WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

– *Marc Goldberg*

They Create Lasting Memories

Product demonstrations at trade shows and events create images in the mind of visitors who participate in them.

They work because:

- There is action or motion.
- The benefits are easy to discern.
- It delivers proof that the product works.
- There is involvement by the attendee.
- There is greater understanding through learning.
- They involve all the senses which makes them memorable.

There is greater understanding through learning.

When deciding how to structure a product demonstration, keep in mind how adults learn:

RETENTION RATES

- Lecture - 5%
- Reading - 10%
- Audiovisual - 20%
- Demonstration - 30%
- Discussion Group - 50%
- Practice by Doing - 75%
- Immediate use of Learning - 90%

Now let's look at the average memorability for the most commonly used exhibit methods:

- Formal Product Demonstrations - 80%
- Informal One-on-One Product Demonstrations - 79%
- Static Displays - 71%
- Attention Getting Techniques (mimes, magicians, robots, models) - 67%

Average of All Types - 75%



The average effect of a demonstration at trade shows is higher because most demonstrations studied are interactive so the visitor actually “practices by doing.”

- Effective demonstrations are planned and integrated into the entire exhibiting event so that the remainder of the event reinforces the demonstration and vice versa.
- A demonstration is a good attention getter and an even better vehicle to assure information retention. It accomplishes the former through action and the latter through involvement.
- Demonstrating how to use your product beats the static booth, which only has the staff to gain attention and communicate the message. The addition of a product demonstration for a small exhibit increases the attractiveness of the booth and the number of prospects that will be interested in visiting. Because a demonstration has the ability to identify the key points of benefits the product or service offers, it aids in organizing the booth activities. It becomes the center of attention.

A PRODUCT DEMONSTRATION CAN ASSIST EXHIBITORS BY

- Allowing you to compete with the larger, more elaborate exhibits.
- A demonstration can pre-qualify the prospects, since they visually can judge if there is an interest level before the visual engagement and verbal communication begin. Both products and services can be demonstrated. It just takes a little more imagination and creativity to accomplish results for the latter.
- Decide what you want to say about your product. Focus on benefits, not features.

Decide what you want to say about your product. Focus on benefits, not features.

- Decide how the product can demonstrate the benefits to support your verbal message. Design the demonstration to keep the visitors involved in the action.
- Use a team selling strategy for qualifying and presenting:
 - Identify the booth staffers who have the ability to present the message and conduct the demonstration. At times, a professional presenter is appropriate, but for some exhibitors, technical sales or other experienced personnel can undertake the task.
 - Identify booth staffers who are good at “meeting and greeting” to engage, qualify and transition interested prospects.
- Rehearse the demonstration in the office/plant before going to the show and at the show site to assure that there are no “stops and starts.”
- Develop a system for transitioning prospects after qualification to the demonstrator. A good system for handing-off is impressive to the prospect and is efficient for the demonstrator. By providing the appropriate level of qualification information to the demonstrator, it shows

the level to which the greeter was listening and avoids the necessity of re-qualifying, which is annoying to the prospect.

- Be professional and straightforward, as a product demonstration is not intended to be entertainment for booth visitors.
- Reading nonverbal signs is critical.
 - Notice signs of pensiveness, which indicates deep interest (eyes up or down)
 - Watch for signs of lost interest (staring eyes – that cold, hard look)
 - Making solid eye-to-eye contact assures that you are reading the signs and indicating your interest in them and what they have to say.
 - Be aware of signs of daydreaming or disinterest eyes that are unfocused and staring into space
 - Be aware of eye movement of up to the right or left. To the right...a sign of evaluating information that has been presented or heard previously. To the left...determining the veracity of the information just communicated.
- Even in a demonstration, the booth staffer should not do all the talking. Probing for needs and presenting benefits to fill those needs, then demonstrating how the product can fulfill the needs will be best received by the booth visitor.
- Product demonstrations can be either conducted upon demand or according to a schedule. A combination of the two works best. A good rule of thumb is to conduct the demonstration as many times as possible. At a minimum, four times per hour should be targeted.
- One-on-one demonstrations work best in small booths. When possible, design the demonstration for multiple visitors, since the visitor’s questions multiply the value of the demonstration and make it more memorable.

BOOTH STAFFING TIPS FOR THE DIGITAL ERA

— *Sofia Troutman*

Staffing for trade shows and events has changed. Before “Big Data” and the proliferation of electronic marketing it was sales people who reigned supreme at the show. Their personality and ability to connect with people were key tools for getting more people into the booth. Crowd gatherers were big, as it was all about getting people who you did not know to come into the booth and learn all about your company. While sales-people can still be great staffers and people skills are always great, the landscape of trade shows has changed as well as the type of skills needed to staff the booth.

WHAT THEY NEED TO KNOW

- **Why are you there?** Are you looking to gain new clients or nurture existing ones? Are you planning to educate people on an existing product or launch a new one? What are your goals for the show and how do they fit into your overall marketing and company goal? It is helpful to give staffers specific goals they have control over. An example may be to ensure they find out from the client if they are aware of the new product, if they think it will meet their need, and what steps the company should take to get that client’s business. It may also be helpful for them to know approximately how many leads they are expected to take throughout the show and each day of the show.
- **It’s not just about leads, it’s about relationships.** There are other ways your company can get someone’s name or email address. However, this is the time to start a real relationship with a qualified prospect by listening and making them feel welcome.
- **Technology should help not hinder.** If the client is there and wants you to talk or listen, don’t force a video or demo on them just because you think it is cool.
- **Less about you and more about them.** This includes pitching your products. Find out about their needs, their interests, and their experience with your company or their current vendor.

- **Fully control the customer experience.** From the trash in the booth to the time you take to ask how their day is going. The trade show is a unique opportunity to truly control their whole environment. Take advantage of it. They need to create an experience that goes beyond the booth.

They need to create an experience that goes beyond the booth.

- **How to capture information.** Capturing information from clients via quotes, photos or videos is part of the value of the show. This information can later be re-purposed as marketing content that will extend the value of the event not only from a marketing standpoint, but also potentially to benefit your product/service improvement and customer service initiatives.
- **Any products or services that you are featuring at the show.** If staffers need training they should get it well before the show. As products become more complex, hands-on time is even more valuable. They will be expected to know more than just the basics.
- **How to demo.** Staffers should be comfortable doing a live demo of your products or service (as relevant) or, at the very least, access a video of one. If they can’t do this well the effectiveness of your live event will suffer, and you will miss opportunities to build credibility with new and existing clients.

WHO THEY SHOULD BE

- **Good listeners.** Attendees are not looking for someone to spew out everything already on your website or marketing materials. They can get that by doing a Google search. They need someone to truly listen to their questions, needs, and to tailor the message to them. In fact, the attendee may have already searched

Continued on page 32

Introducing

tenable.io™

The first vulnerability management platform built for today's dynamic assets, like cloud, containers and web apps.



Entrust Datacard

Identities | Secure Transactions™

CWALL

Continued from page 30

your company, and will come to your booth staffers with more knowledgeable questions. The buyer is a lot more informed than they once were, prepare for questions deeper than the surface of your company or products

In contrast to your technical booth staffers, it is important to have a good balance of personalities to engage with your attendees. A Skyline booth staff veteran has this key take away from experience.

“Yes, it was important to have very knowledgeable people in the booth, but I would always balance those people with the “Engagers”. For me, it almost mattered more that people in the booth were people. They were engaging and outgoing and, frankly, fun (without being pushy).”

No one enjoys a pushy booth staffer!

• **Tech savvy.** No, they don’t need to know how to code, but...between lead gathering apps, monitors and possibly digital signage, there are plenty of opportunities for both leveraging technologies for the benefit of attendees and for tech glitches. You need someone who will not be afraid to troubleshoot, will be comfortable learning and using apps as needed and can easily use technology to ensure the exhibit is functioning and exhibitors get an optimum experience. Something as simple as googling an answer or pulling up a key video on YouTube should be a natural thing for your staffers. Their time and your time with them is precious.

One of Skyline’s veteran booth staffers had this to say about the increased use of technology on the trade show floor:



“What I appreciate about where technology is now is it allows the booth staffer to come alongside the attendee and join their self-guided experience. This is achieved through the use of touch screens and apps for iPad®. It creates a feel of teamwork and co-discovery. As a staffer, I became less of a presenter and more of a companion.”

• **Customer focused.** If they are not the type of person who will go the extra mile to help a client, they are not the right person to staff the booth – emotional intelligence is key. You get seconds or minutes to make a good impression in person with a current or potential client. Many other companies are there competing for that time. Your staffers need to be eager to make the most of every client experience. One way to bring this home is to talk about the potential lifetime value of each prospective client that walks into your booth.

Change has always been inevitable at any live event, and trade shows are no exception. This is not new, but it has become even more prevalent and expected. Technology is a big help but will increase the uncertainty of whether or not things will work as planned.

Your staff needs to be able to adjust course as needed and do it with a smile.

No one knows every single answer to every question they get. However, there are some people who take ownership of the question, ensure they can find the answer and then follow up with the client as soon as possible. Your staffers should be able to access answers with the client at the show if at all possible, during the show and send the response via email, phone or immediately after the show (within days at the latest).

Working as a team, instead of creating an “us versus them” mentality, makes the attendee feel welcomed. This is an example of technology enhancing the face-to-face experience, rather than detracting from it.

Working as a team, instead of creating an “us versus them” mentality, makes the attendee feel welcomed.

WHAT THEY SHOULD WEAR

- **Ensure they are easily identifiable.** You don't want attendees wondering who is staffing the booth and who is a client, as time is precious
- **Ensure that they are comfortable yet professional** unless it fits well with your theme and branding. Comfortable shoes are a must. Their feet will hurt regardless, but they will hurt more if they are wearing the wrong shoes, which is likely to make them tired and irritated. No one wants to interact with someone who appears to be in pain. Besides, dress codes are much more relaxed in most industries nowadays and good quality shoes can look stylish.
- **Brand and theme appropriate.** Gone are the days that the uniform at trade shows was branded cheap looking polo shirts. You can be brand-appropriate

without necessarily wearing a uniform. This is more the case if you have a larger exhibit but try to think of alternate ways you can make your staffers easy to identify without making them look like they are ready for their hourly shift at a local burger joint. You can have branded name tags, accessories and all wear the same color shirts (not necessarily the same style). You want your staffers to feel comfortable. For example, if a lady has to wear a standard men's shirt that reaches down to her knees, she is not going to feel her best.

WHAT THEY SHOULD HAVE:

- **Smartphone, tablet or touchscreen.** Make sure staffers have easy electronic access to key product/service information so if they are asked a question they don't know the answer to they can easily check it on the spot and get back to the client.
- **Show and venue information.** They should have this well before the show, so they can make their travel arrangements and clear their calendars.
- **Backup hard copies.** Provide paper product/service cheat sheets well before the show so they can review them on the plane and at the hotel before the show. Also, lead card backups are always a good idea in case your Wi-Fi sputters or you lose access to your lead gathering application.

BONUS POINTS

- **If you have a staffer** that can also be a presenter of relevant industry data, your company will gain added credibility and real face time with potential clients. Those clients are then more likely to come back to visit your company's booth.
- **If staffers are active on social media** they will be able to help promote your presence before, during and after the show and are more likely to be recognized as someone potential clients are already familiar with and trust.

3 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SUCCESSFUL BOOTH STAFFING

— *Karla Flores*

After years of hosting seminars, one thing has been made very clear to me: as marketers, we very often face similar struggles when it comes to organizing and implementing successful trade shows. One of those pain points is booth staffing!

If you can answer yes to any of the following or if you know someone who is struggling with similar issues, keep reading or kindly share.

Ask yourself: What type of booth staffers do I have on my roster for my trade shows?

- The “I hate traveling” – reluctant staffer
- The “oohhh we’re going to Vegas?” – vacation mode staffer
- The “I’ll see what I can do, I’m really busy” – working on site staffer

Or the one most marketers love...

- The “It’s easy just scan a lot of badges” – lead retrieval trigger happy staffer

Listening to my fellow marketers, it seems like for many trade show staffing isn’t a strategy but an afterthought. And because of that, we often don’t staff the booth appropriately and/or share pertinent information with booth staff team members.

Trust me, I’ve been there. To help you avoid the pitfalls I’ve experienced, here are my top 3 recommendations to follow to successfully staff your next trade show:

1. Set and communicate your objectives. If you don’t know what your objectives are at a trade show then how are you supposed to communicate the importance of your participation to your team? Setting S.M.A.R.T. (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-Bound)



objectives it will guide your entire planning and most choices you make regarding strategies and purchases.

2. Select the right staff. Sometimes sales people aren’t the best people to staff your booth, or at least not all of them. A rule of thumb for qualified leads is to engage, qualify, and present. Think about those pesky objectives; what are you trying to achieve on show floor – product launch, brand recognition, meeting new suppliers? Then decide who will best suit those purposes. Ex: If you have a complicated product that needs detailed explanation, maybe invite your engineer to do the presentation portion. Your sales person can engage and qualify for them.

3. Communicate, communicate, COMMUNICATE!

You’ve set your objectives, pre-selected the best staff to support your strategies and now you have to communicate all the details. Instead of sending a meeting invite to book their time off, create a travel kit (snorkel not included). It’s important to anticipate questions, issues, or information your staffers will need to know. I’ve broken it down to the following topics:



SHOW OBJECTIVES

- What show are they attending?
- Who is your target audience?
- What are your show objectives?
- What does the exhibit look like?
- What are the targeting strategies?

SHOW DETAILS

- How many qualified leads do they have to collect? How are they expected to collect those leads? What is a qualified lead?
- What are they selling, promoting, or presenting?
- What marketing materials are available to offer or to know about in the booth?
- Are there contests or promotions that they need to know of?
- How will breaks be scheduled?
- Provide a copy of the floor plan and conference schedule so they can anticipate lulls if any during conferences/workshops on show floor.

PERSONAL

- Is there a dress code?
- What is their per Diem (if it comes out of your budget) and where they need to expense items?
- Accommodations details and any reservation numbers.
- Travel arrangements
- What's close by (pharmacies, restaurants, etc.)?

You can add more details but using the K.I.S.S. method for each subject, you're already miles ahead of what most staffers expect. Equip your team with all the relevant information and even talk to last year's team for feedback on what worked and what didn't.

The fact of the matter is you could have planned everything to perfection and have the best-looking booth money can buy, but if your staff is not well equipped to engage, qualify, and nurture leads you might not have any return on investment (ROI) to show for it.

9 REASONS TO FIRE YOUR BOOTH STAFFER

— *Sofia Troutman*

When it comes to vendor events, your company only has a small window of time to bring in potential customers and wow them. The staffers at your booth are your first line of defense, therefore success is dependent on their behavior during the event. Even the most carefully chosen booth staffers can end up hurting your event, and then it's time to say goodbye. Here are 9 reasons you should fire your booth staffer.

LATENESS OR FAILING TO SHOW UP

The reasoning is simple: if your booth staffers don't show up, you have a few products on a table and nothing else. The key to success in a vendor event is the interaction and lead generation from the visitors to your booth, and without a staffer, that can't happen. Beyond the initial worry that you'll miss valuable interaction with potential customers if no one is staffing your booth, lateness or a failure to show up may indicate a fundamental problem with your booth staffer. Chronic lateness could be a sign of underlying social anxiety or lack of confidence. Individuals staffing your booth should be confident, as well as punctual.

RUDENESS

Like the chronically late, rude booth staffers can also be a huge problem at a vendor event. Because face-to-face communication is the backbone of a vendor event, booth staffers must be friendly and open. Each visitor to the booth is a potential customer; every conversation is a lead. Your booth is the first impression some people may have of your business and, as a business owner, you don't want that impression to be a turn-off. Additionally, rudeness is thought to be contagious in the workplace; if one staffer is rude, it could influence the behavior of others.

OFFENSIVE BEHAVIOR

Offensive behavior isn't just catcalling, inappropriate flirting or racial slurs. Although these are arguably the worst types of offensive behaviors and could get your staffer

into a great deal of trouble, you should consider other, minor offensive behaviors, such as cursing, inappropriate gestures, off-color jokes or worse. Although not everyone may be offended by these behaviors, it takes just one or two visitors to your booth who witness these types of behavior to start a word-of-mouth chain of events detrimental to your event success.

GOSSIPING WHILE STAFFING

Your staffer's role at your booth is part sales person and part customer service rep, and they cannot do either of these jobs effectively while talking or gossiping. Whether your booth staffers chat with one another, spend the whole day talking on the phone, or gossiping the entire time, it doesn't matter. All of these scenarios mean that visitors aren't being welcomed like they should, and you could miss out on valuable customer interactions.

EATING AT THE BOOTH

You've got to eat, but not during a vendor event! There are several great reasons your staffers shouldn't be eating while they are working an event. First, eating at a vendor event is unsanitary. As your booth staffers are eating, they are spreading bacteria from their mouths to other parts of the booth. Second, eating at the booth is incredibly distracting, and depending on what he or she is eating, could leave an unpleasant odor in the booth, driving traffic away from your display. Lastly, eating while you're working is unproductive and inefficient. Have you ever had a meaningful conversation with someone who attempts to speak with a mouthful of food? I am sure it was not a positive experience.

USING A CELL PHONE

For many, cell phones are an important part of their work and personal lives. Technology lets us do amazing things when it comes to vendor events; such as connect with other vendors or visitors through social media, but when



it comes to working an event, your booth staffer should take a break on tech or hit the road. Some rude cell phone behaviors include: texting too much, taking phone calls when visitors are in the vicinity; talking too loud while in the booth; checking for new messages continuously; and playing loud music or games. These behaviors are not only distracting to the staffer, but can lead to frustration from visitors trying to get information about the product or service at your vendor booth. This also makes your staffer look distracted and could make your visitors feel like they aren't a priority for your company. If possible, round up all the phones of your booth staffers, including your own, and place in a locked cabinet, or a safe stowaway drawer. Your staffers won't be distracted by their phones if they aren't carrying them.

SITTING DOWN ON THE JOB

If you have scheduled your team correctly, your event staffers will get a break throughout their time at the event, but if they are spending the largest chunk of time sitting instead of greeting visitors to your booth, it's time to let them go. Stamina is an important part of working an event successfully. Making small talk with hundreds of people, standing and walking for hours, and using powers of

persuasion to sell your product can be mentally and physically draining. If your staffers aren't up to the task, find someone who is.

TALKING TOO MUCH

Staffers should be friendly, talkative and outgoing, but conversely, they should be able to listen to the booth visitors. When staffers talk too much, or talk about themselves too much, it can be a turn off for potential customers. Sales, fundamentally, is finding a solution for a problem. If the booth staffer doesn't listen for the problem presented by the attendee, he or she will be incapable of selling or promoting the product effectively. Your staffer should be familiar with different facets of your product or service, but not dump all this information on the visitor.

IGNORING ATTENDEES

Talking too much is a problem but talking too little is as well! If there's one thing a booth staffer shouldn't be, it's shy. Blatantly ignoring customers, whether they just aren't interested in talking or are too shy to approach them, can make attendees feel undervalued. If your employees undervalue prospects at a sales event, how will they treat the prospects after the sale is made? Keep in mind that attendees want to be wowed at an event, and to stand out from other vendors your staffers must make an effort to approach and dialogue with prospective customers attending the event.

A TRUSTED DISPLAY COMPANY CAN HELP YOU TO CHOOSE THE RIGHT EMPLOYEES FOR THE JOB

If you're new to the trade show and expo scene and you want to avoid these mistakes from the start, asking your trusted display company can help you to determine which employees to choose for any given trade show or expo. More likely than not, this isn't their first time dealing with these particular incidents and they can offer invaluable insight on making the right choices for manning your booth.

THEME YOUR EVENT & BOOST PROMOTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

— *Sofia Troutman*

On a regular basis we get the question from clients about how to pick a promotion or a theme to use for a trade show or event. Often these promotional messages or themes are intended for a trade show, but sometimes they are for the launch of a product or just to generate awareness or sales. Here are 12 steps to help you pick the right promotion to grow your leads, sales or improve your overall marketing results.

- 1.** Identify if your company has a brand promise or brand image that should be considered before you evaluate alternatives. Find out the details and determine whether it is current and resonates with your customer base.
- 2.** If your company does not have a brand promise or brand image identified, work with your marketing team and leadership to develop one or hire out a company to help you do it.
- 3.** Find out – or decide – what you are trying to promote or sell. Whether you are exhibiting at an event or creating an exhibit, consider the audience expected to attend when picking your theme or promotion.
- 4.** Determine the company's goals beyond incremental sales for the product, service or event being promoted.
- 5.** Communicate and confirm goals with your company's leadership, marketing and sales teams.
- 6.** If you are planning to promote a new product, ensure that you understand key differentiators for the product along with the client for the product or service. These may be the same as for your broader company message or it may be narrower or even different if you are seeking new markets.
- 7.** Determine how much you need to sell or save, with this promotion, to justify your investment. This could be an estimated amount of new sales or estimated savings in alternate advertising costs to get similar client engagement (this will help you determine a budget if one is not already set).

- 8.** If you don't know how to calculate or estimate the expected revenue or savings you can ask your sales, marketing or leadership teams to give you an estimate or look up results from similar promotions in the past.

- 9.** Regardless of where you get the estimated goals ensure to get approval and agreement on said goals before proposing a theme, event or promotion. You want to make sure that when you propose your promotion you can explain how it can contribute toward achieving your company's approved goals.

- 10.** Brainstorm with your team a theme or promotion that will tie in with your brand. Be relevant to your target clients/event attendees and that will help you achieve your goals.

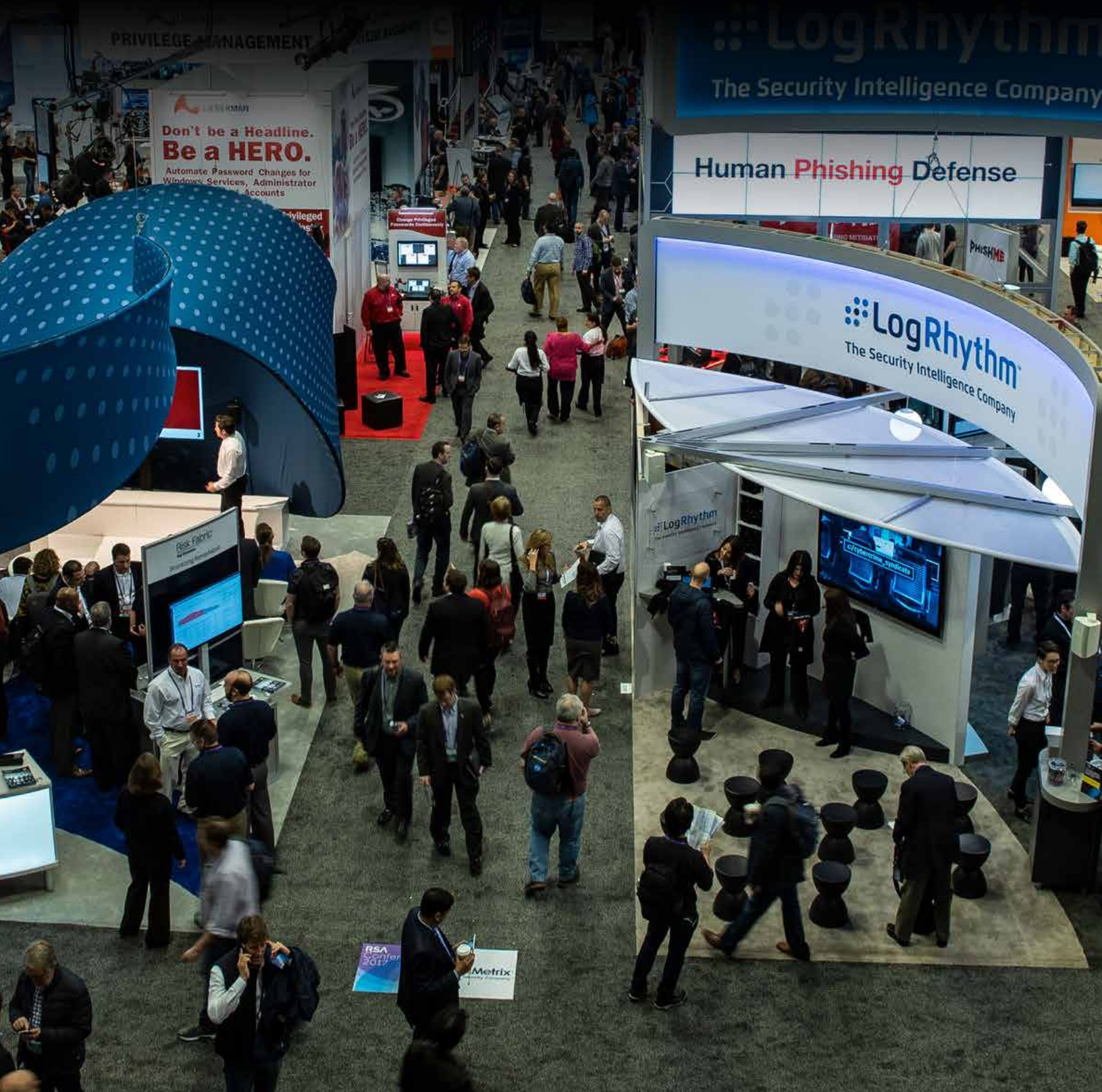
- 11.** We get a lot of questions from trade show managers who were worried that they couldn't come up with a suitable promotion or giveaway because their company provides a service and not a tangible good. If that is the case for you, think of what benefit that service provides for your users. For example, it could be savings, peace of mind or efficiency. Then tie that benefit into your brand and promotion. If your company provides peace of mind for their clients, you can offer a relaxation app or game.

- 12.** Create a tagline or statement to describe your theme and how it ties to your company, brand or product. Make sure to utilize that tag or statement to reinforce your theme wherever possible. For example, if your theme is all about superior performance you could have race car giveaways, race car colors for staffer shirts, a promotional email message that ties into the theme, social media hashtags that tie it all together like #SuperiorPerformance, #TradeshowYear and #YourCompanyName.

I hope these ideas help you put together a great theme for your next trade show event promotion.



TRADE SHOW LEAD MANAGEMENT



TRADE SHOW STRATEGY: GETTING LEADS

— *Chris Rowe*

I recently had a conversation with a friend about trade show marketing. In short, while attending a trade show an exhibitor had come up with a unique idea on how to draw attendees into their booth that really stood out. It stood out enough to warrant a LinkedIn post and a nice conversation. From what it sounds like, it was hugely successful in getting people into the booth. This is a good thing, having an active booth is A LOT better than having an empty one. But does a busy booth translate to a successful show? The answer is more complicated than yes or no.

There are a thousand ways to draw people into your booth; games, giveaways, handing out candy and playing a cool video are all totally valid strategies. The problems arise when booth staffers don't know how to capitalize on a busy booth. It presents the opportunity to talk about your product or service and to qualify leads. If you offer some type of giveaway and require people to drop their business cards into a fishbowl, you'll end up with a fishbowl full of "leads" but when you call them in a week you may find they were only interested in the cool prize you were giving away. Just because a person stops to play your game doesn't mean they are a lead.

SO, WHAT DO YOU DO?

Make your gimmicks count. Whatever gets them into the booth is great, but if that thing brings awareness to your company, informs them of your product or generates brand awareness – all the better.

ENGAGE YOUR VISITORS

Don't simply return from a show with a list of badge scans and hand it off to someone to call them. They are going to be bummed if 90% are unqualified leads that just scanned their badge to get a prize and have no



need for what you're selling. Try your best to talk to everyone. If your booth is a mad house, you may not be successful in engaging everyone but the more people you can connect with the better. Take the time to work with your booth staff on proper booth etiquette and best practices, it will make a difference!

BE KIND

Not everyone walking into your booth is going to buy from you, but everyone that walks into the booth will leave with an impression of both you and your company. Everyone that walks into your booth has a voice and a sphere of influence and they will talk about a bad experience.

COME PREPARED

Rather than trying to rely on walk in traffic at your booth, come prepared by scheduling meetings in advance with key prospects and current clients. You can have a successful trade show without a ton of foot traffic. Planning ahead will allow you to get coffee with that one client you wanted to connect with and strike a deal. This is where a strong social media strategy will help you.

6 STEPS TO MASTERING LEAD MANAGEMENT

— *Danny Pace*

Most exhibitors have replaced the old “business card fishbowls” with badge scanners and software. But far too many exhibitors are still merely collecting as many cold prospects as possible and handing them over to sales. That approach can make the follow-up sales efforts overwhelming. Using the following six lead management steps will ensure your lead generation efforts identify the quality leads.

STEP 1: DEFINE GOOD LEADS BEFORE THE SHOW

Before each show, decide what constitutes a qualified trade show lead. These qualities might remain the same throughout your sales year, or they may change depending on the shows you attend and the products or service lines you feature. Once these definitions are established, set up your questions and database to effectively identify and capture the information.

STEP 2: QUALIFY ON THE FLOOR

In-booth qualification criteria typically needs to be broad. Initial discussions should be very welcoming; asking too



many questions about budget or purchase timing can be off-putting to attendees who just want to learn about your company. Since your exhibit staff will be meeting and greeting many attendees, they won't always have time to get into in-depth discussions with everyone who enters the booth. Nevertheless, train your staff to identify and record the attendee's reason for attending. Assign a dedicated staff person to sort the leads, separating the buyers from the browsers. You likely won't need to send your sales team leads for students, spouses, or other show attendees who aren't part of your target demographic.

STEP 3: RESPOND IMMEDIATELY

Attendees will often quickly lose track of individual companies because of the many booths they visited at a show. For this reason, it's important to follow-up quickly to stay top-of-mind. At the end of the day or show, send each visitor an automatic email or text message thanking them for visiting the booth, and mention that you will be in touch after the event. Doing so can ensure that warm prospects don't go cold. It can also ensure that your competitors don't reach hot prospects before you do!

STEP 4: PUSH PROSPECTS INTO A CRM

While you can certainly manage all your prospects in a giant spreadsheet, most businesses are far better off managing their leads with customer relationship management (CRM) software.

Salesforce and Zoho are industry CRM leaders, while Insightly and a few others are often highly touted by small business owners for their ease of use. CRM software can let you set and measure sales goals, track prospects throughout the sales cycle, calculate average lifetime sales, conduct email marketing campaigns and so much more. If you haven't implemented a CRM solution, this is the year to start!



STEP 5: NURTURE LEADS VIA PHONE AND EMAIL

Make at least three attempts to contact each prospect, giving priority and extra effort to those you pre-qualified at the show. Some exhibitors make a point of sending out a weekly email for the first three weeks. Others swear by the “1 week, 3 months, 6 months” rule. Start by reminding them of who you are and where you met. Using dedicated landing pages related to your event, send them a relevant and timely blog post to read, offer them a downloadable whitepaper or case study, or send them to an offer related to the event. Your CRM software will typically show how individuals on the list are (or aren't) engaging with your website content – thereby giving your sales staff further insights on which prospects warrant another follow-up call.

STEP 6: DON'T FORGET ABOUT OLD LEADS

A percentage of even highly qualified leads will eventually go “dark.” While you don't want to continue inundating these leads with calls and emails, you shouldn't consider them dead leads either. Purchase decisions often get shelved for another budget year. When your exhibit schedule comes full circle, it can be a good idea to revisit qualified leads from the previous year's show.

Use their attendance at last year's show as a reason to reach out to them, to see if they plan to attend again this year.

By following the above lead management best practices, you can ensure that more of your trade show prospects are qualified, contacted, and closed!

FIVE LEAD CAPTURE APPS FOR TRADE SHOWS

— *Sofia Troutman*

For many exhibitors, mobile apps are rapidly replacing rented badge scanners as the preferred means of capturing leads on the trade show floor. These apps put customer data instantly in your hands, rather than having to wait to have information routed to you days later. The ability to reply to leads quickly and to automatically integrate the information with your CRM software makes these apps an efficient option for busy trade show managers.

Below are a handful of apps we've cherry-picked as being especially useful to event staff. We've specifically limited our list to those that integrate with at least one of the popular CRMs, and to those that are available for both iOS and Android devices:

iCapture

iCapture is somewhat unique in that when you use it to scan a badge, the capture is automatically transcribed and verified by actual people, to ensure the highest level of accuracy. The verified data can then be integrated with a variety of popular email providers such as Constant Contact and Mailchimp, as well as with popular CRMs such as Salesforce, HubSpot & Marketo. Any data captured offline is securely stored on your device until an internet connection is reestablished.

atEvent

atEvent is specifically designed for trade shows and related events. It allows managers to monitor the productivity of their sales team during events with its employee tracking tool, which provides a leaderboard of which salespeople are generating and interacting with the most leads. To help marketing teams capture insights during events, atEvent provides tools such as customizable fields for data integration with marketing

or CRM systems, real-time synchronization, campaign workflows, and reports on metrics such as cost-per-lead, productivity, follow-up actions, and more to assess event success. Event planners can also benefit from atEvent by providing booth staff with the tools to track attendees and scan badges and generate reports on event trends and ROI.

Momencio

Momencio is more than a badge scanner; it provides context around a scanned badge and potential lead, and allows trade show staff to start facilitating a relationship with that attendee. Users can scan attendees' badges or business cards to register leads, or search for contacts in pre-existing customer lists. Digital marketing materials can be stored in Momencio, giving users immediate access to marketing collateral whenever they are interacting with leads. Trade show attendees are automatically emailed by Momencio after presentations, with emails containing a link to a personalized microsite. The dashboards in Momencio's event portal provide insights into unique booth attendees, repeat attendees, leads acquired, lead qualification insights, brand assets requested, follow-up emails sent and opened, landing page visits, and more. Users can set sales and lead acquisition goals before events, then track performance for individual salespeople or the entire company, and measure event spend against benchmarks. Momencio integrates seamlessly with major CRMs.

Eventdex

Eventdex is specifically designed for people who organize trade shows, conferences and expos. Key features include online registration, event ticketing, attendee management, mobile-check-in, lead scanning, business matchmaking and networking, as well as



customized analytics dashboards and reports. Eventdex provides a user-friendly platform to create and design event registration pages with online payment collection and automated post-registration emails to attendees for confirmations, invoices, orders and badges. Using the badge tool, users can design unique badges with QR codes or barcodes for scanning. Exhibitors can use a socket scanner or their phone's camera to scan the attendee's badges for leads and follow-up with them later. Users can rate their leads on the spot, take notes on prospects, and access them offline via their mobile device. Eventdex integrates with Zapier and Salesforce, as well as multiple payment gateways including Stripe, PayPal, and Authorize.net.

QuickTapSurvey

QuickTapSurvey allows for fast lead capture via the use of custom survey questions. It allows you to build

branded mobile forms and surveys that include your logo, brand colors, etc. Once the survey is submitted, you can quickly identify quality leads versus dead ends. Each response is automatically tallied to create an overall score for each lead. You can export the leads instantly to Mailchimp, Salesforce or via application programming interface (API) software, and can even use the app offline.

Many of the mobile lead capture apps are available only via monthly subscription, so they may not be the most viable option for infrequent exhibitors. As will all software, some packages are better for the small business, while others are specifically designed for organizations with large sales teams. But by doing your homework and finding the app that works best for your needs, you might just be able to say goodbye to badge scanner rental fees.

TRAINING YOUR BOOTH STAFF TO QUALIFY LEADS

— Jenna Snyder

Lead generation is the #1 goal for 85-90% of trade show exhibitors. But if your booth staff is doing no more than scanning badges or gathering business cards, they're mostly just generating cold prospects. To ensure you're providing valuable, actionable leads to the sales team, follow these tips.

GET SALES TEAM INPUT FIRST

What constitutes a qualified lead? If staffers are asking attendees for information that doesn't matter to the sales team, your efforts on the trade show floor will be wasted. Tap the reps early in the process to find out the information they like to collect from prospects.

REMEMBER "CHAMP"

The latest acronym for qualification methodology is CHAMP: Challenge, Authority, Money and Prioritization. These are the four factors that help you separate a hot lead from a swag collector:



- **Challenge.** Determining the attendee's pain points is the first order of business. What brought them to the trade show? What needs do they have that currently aren't being met? How does that unmet need affect various people at the company? What could their current vendors be doing better?

- **Authority.** This is arguably the toughest (yet most critical) quality for a rookie booth rep to determine. The person with buying authority is quite often NOT the person who asks the most questions, nor the trade show attendee with whom you develop the best rapport. Spending too much effort on an attendee without purchasing authority

wastes everyone's time. Find out who the decision makers are at his or her company.

- **Money.** While it can be difficult or even sometimes undesirable to talk money in the casual environment of a trade show, there are some budget questions that can be helpful to sales. One of the most basic is if and when funds will be allocated to the attendee's needs. Some buyers' fiscal years match the calendar year, others start mid-year. Government buyers are often trying to use money by year-end, while academic buyers often make decisions in the spring. Just finding out how the budget signoff process works can be a huge asset to your sales team.

- **Prioritization.** How critical is this need amid the attendee company's other goals? What's prompting him or her to do something about it now? What would happen if the issue is ignored or a decision postponed? Getting these answers helps your sales team know when, and how often, to follow-up with the lead.

WRITE AND PRACTICE YOUR QUESTIONS

There are hundreds of ways to ask CHAMP questions of exhibit attendees, and no one way is right for every prospect, nor for every booth staffer. Role-playing in advance of the show can help your staffers refine their approach to match their personas, and to adjust their tactics "on the fly" depending on the responses received.

RECOGNIZE AND PROPERLY ADDRESS EXISTING CLIENTS

Nothing is more painful than overhearing an exhibitor mistakenly treat an existing customer like a cold prospect. Make sure staff is prepared to recognize these VIPs and to give them the warm welcome they deserve. Inquire about their current level of satisfaction and find out what, if anything, your team can be doing to better serve them.

After each show, meet again with the sales team to get their impressions of the leads your staff has collected. If there's a quality control problem, it's better to discover the root of it and make adjustments before you get too deep into your trade show season. With ongoing refinement, your team will secure better leads—and a better ROI—from your exhibits.

FINAL THOUGHTS

A beautifully designed booth is nothing without the people who staff it. If you want the most return on your investment, follow the tips above and always remember prospecting does not end when the show does. The show is only the beginning.



4 TOOLS TO MEASURE THE SUCCESS OF YOUR EVENT

— *Sofia Troutman*

Trade shows and events are a ton of work. And you know that there is value in attracting new clients, nurturing current clients, creating awareness for the brand and your products. Yet “knowing” this based on your own personal experiences at the show or instincts is not enough. You need to prove to your managers and company leadership that the money invested to make it all happen resulted in enough revenue to at the very least offset the cost and ideally generate incremental revenue. After all, we are not doing this for the “fun” of it, right? We plan and execute events, so we can make more money.

We plan and execute events, so we can make more money.

Determining the costs of your event is relatively easy. When you create your budget, ensure that you have a method to keep track of what accounts expenses will be charged to, so you can note the actual costs that were charged after the event. It can be surprising to see how one, presumably minor, delay can significantly increase final costs.

After totaling up the costs comes the hard part, figuring out what you gained from your event participation. Thankfully, there are new tools available to help you better capture data you can use to calculate, or at the very least estimate, the real benefits your company received from an event.

Here are some of those tools available to you:

- **Lead capturing applications** – These tools, whether rented from the show or some of the many options available via vendors online, enable you to gather lead information more effectively and to be able to download the data into your lead management system or CRM. Use

them to properly capture key prospect information including answers to qualifying questions that will enable marketing and sales to determine if they are a good prospect and how interested they are or might be in your products or services. Make sure that you have fields in your lead management and CRM system to capture the data you get at the show.

- **Lead management software** – Examples of this type of software include; Pardot, Marketo, Eloqua, and ActOn. With this software, you can import and tag all leads based on what show you obtained them or nurtured them. You can use it to create email templates that can be personalized for follow-ups after the event based on information requested, activity, participation or questions answered.

- **Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system** Examples most commonly used include; Salesforce, Oracle, Microsoft Dynamics, and Sales Navigator. These are often bundled with lead management software. This is the database system that allows Sales to keep track of which leads they contacted, who made a purchase and when to get back to people. However, even with these tools you, as the marketer, need to follow up and either get access to this data or request downloads from Sales for each of the events you planned or shows you attended. You will need to explain what the benefit is of this data. Make sure to let Sales know that you will share your results with them once the analysis is done.

- **Spreadsheets** – While in the ideal world we all have access to real sales data you may be in a situation where you don't have access to the final sales results that take place after you distribute trade show leads. In this case, you may need to resort to estimating your sales. You can start with a conversation with a sales manager and find out the average percentage of leads that are closed in the department you got leads for, at that time you can also get average sales value. Obviously, the more detailed the information the better. For example, if they say that



the group closes 30% of their leads and that the average sale is \$10,000 and you gave them 100 leads you can estimate that the value of those leads is approximately \$300,000. You should also find out the length of the sales cycle. Will it take them a month, a year or longer to close those sales? You can then compare the cost of each show with the estimated revenue generated from that show.

Also, keep in mind that there are benefits to the trade show that may not come directly from sales obtained from trade show leads. Examples of those are: brand awareness created by show publicity or social media associated with the show, actionable client feedback received, staffer learning obtained about the industry and clients during the show.

HOW TO GO BEYOND LEADS - EVENT HOSPITALITY & NETWORKING

— *Sofia Troutman*

You know that your booth staffers are one of your most valuable, if not the most valuable asset when exhibiting at a trade show or hosting a business event. However, you may feel like you have little to no control over how they perform at the show. Yet, by selecting the right staffers, offering appropriate incentives, recognition, and training, you can be sure they will rise to the challenge and become excellent brand ambassadors for your company.

MAKE STAFFERS ACCOUNTABLE

For example, if you have no accountability for the leads or connections that they make at the trade show they are likely to be unmotivated to reach out to prospects and may spend most of their time on their phone. Think about it, if they answer their emails they will be rewarded by their supervisors or clients for being responsive. Furthermore, if you as a trade show manager don't provide goals or incentives, staffers will have little motivation to make a big effort to reach out to prospects.

Make sure staffers know that you will evaluate and communicate their performance to them and to their supervisor.

COMMUNICATE GOALS

Communicate the team goals for the show to staffers and give them an idea of the number of meaningful conversations they should strive for each day. Spend the bulk of your training time talking about your company's goals, your customers, what you offer as a company and how to be a good host. The overall message should be to treat each booth visitor as the important guest they are. You want clients leaving the booth with a better impression of your company than what they started with.

Some would argue that this could be a waste of time. What about the competitors that come to scope us out?

What about the client who you know is not buying anything else? What about the person who is just coming over for the giveaway? Let me say this, I would much rather a staffer spend too much time talking to a competitor or give away a few too many giveaways than be inattentive or rude to a visitor because they did not take the time to listen or because they prejudged someone based on preconceived notions.

MOTIVATE APPROPRIATELY

If you motivate staffers simply based on the number of leads they get, then they will think of prospects as "just another lead" rather than as an individual. Granted, if you select your staffers appropriately they will likely be polite and qualify prospects. Yet, they may rush from one interaction to the next because they are focused simply on the number of leads rather than the quality of their interaction.

Part of this issue can be overcome by properly training staffers on the right qualifying questions to ask. Still, if you are judging their performance on the number of leads that will likely distract them from taking the time to ask questions and have a meaningful conversation with the prospect.

QUESTIONS STAFFERS CAN USE TO ENGAGE VISITORS

One of the hardest things about staffing is knowing how to start a conversation without feeling like a used car salesman. You want to be authentic, but at the same time, you can't just wait for people to come to you. I cannot tell you how many times people have said to me after a conversation on the trade show floor "I am so glad you stopped me."

HERE ARE 10 SAMPLE ENGAGEMENT QUESTIONS STAFFERS ASK:

1. What brings you to the show?
2. What have you heard about our company?
3. What problems are you looking to solve by attending

this show?

4. What have you seen at the show that you have found interesting or useful?
5. What are you looking to learn by attending this conference (or event)?
6. Have you seen our demo and what did you think about it?
7. Can I offer you some water, soda or a snack? While this may draw in people who are not necessarily in your target market, it is a small cost to pay if your exhibit is empty and you are more likely to meet someone interesting by doing this than by just standing around.
8. Did you sign up for our <fill in relevant> giveaway raffle? Make sure you prequalify prospects.
9. What did you think about the keynote speaker?
10. Did you want to sit down for a minute? Use this with qualified prospects.

TRAINING FOR HOSPITALITY

How do you train that level of hospitality? Don't people just have that, or not? While many traits are inherently well-suited for someone to be a good staffer (such as friendly demeanor, curiosity, conscientiousness and company product knowledge), most staffers will benefit from learning, or being reminded, about important staffing skills (such as how to engage people, product knowledge and tech tips on lead capturing).

Also, sharing general demographic information about who your customers typically are and reminding them that this is the opportunity to actually meet and listen to customers in person will help. If staffers know who the client is likely to be, they will be better prepared to host them. You can typically get this information from the show organizer or from your company's own marketing research. This is especially important if you send out invitations to prospects

and make appointments as those clients should get extra special treatment as they are prequalified.

Selecting staffers that understand that they are representing not just your company, but also your brand is invaluable. However, also reminding them of how acknowledging and listening to visitors can make the difference between a good and a mediocre experience. A good resource to consider is a book by Danny Meyer, the hospitality expert and author of *Setting the Table – The Transforming Power of Hospitality in Business*.

DON'T FORGET ABOUT NETWORKING

It is so tempting to think about trade shows as only a way to get new names. So easy to think that you can talk to your customers at a different time because you are at this event to meet new prospects. So natural to want to only think about what is in it for you and your company. Don't get me wrong, I think the primary focus should be getting a good return on our presence at the show and hopefully making numerous sales as a result of the valuable contacts obtained at the show. BUT...that is not ALL that the show is all about.

The trade show is also an opportunity for you and your employees to learn more about existing clients. Find out if they are happy, or not, with your products or services. These events allow you to connect with business associates, to meet people (who, while not your prospects now, could be so in the future or who you can help), to learn more about your industry and the people in it and to listen. Because, when you take the time to really listen to your customers, and to your business associates, you have the opportunity to not just make one sale, but to really help them, and to develop a long-term business relationship. This is the type of thing you can't do online. This is what face-to-face marketing is all about.

7 STEPS TO IMPROVING LEAD MANAGEMENT AND FOLLOW-UP

— *Sofia Troutman*

It's hard to believe, but there are times that as a client you really want to be contacted by a salesperson. In fact, many trade show attendees will often go to a show in hopes of finding relevant products that can make their lives easier or help them to better serve their clients. What they don't want is to take too much time having to read through irrelevant information in order to get what they need. Worse, attendees don't want to have to wait too long to get the information or phone call they were promised.

...attendees don't want to have to wait too long to get the information or phone call they were promised.

That is where good lead management comes in. When you have done your homework to find out who the client is, asked the right questions, and recorded and analyzed the answers, you can ensure that that relevant information gets to someone who can help that client in a timely manner.

We all agree that collecting qualified leads is often the primary exhibiting objectives. Unfortunately, sometimes these leads are not properly qualified, classified, or contacted. Statistics show that over 60% of exhibitors still rely on business cards as a way to gather lead information (*Exhibitor* article by Travis Stanton – *The Myths of Lead Management*). While there is nothing wrong with a business card as a supplementary, and undeniably convenient way to gather potential client information, it is insufficient at best. Business cards can be lost, outdated and most importantly do not have enough information, or room to record pertinent client data, to properly follow-up on a lead.

A lead at a show may be the first opportunity your company has to begin a positive customer relationship. If the information you provide to sales is limited to just a name, email and a phone number, then you are limiting their ability to make a positive connection.

Here are 7 steps you can take to help your sales or marketing team make the most of the leads gathered at the show:

1. Start gathering information before the show.

If you take the time to send out a pre-show promotion to clients attending the show you can use that as a way to ask your prospective clients two or three questions regarding their needs. Make filling out those questions a pre-requisite for a giveaway or raffle at the show.

2. Link lead information to your corporate Customer Relationship Management system (CRM).

This way it is easy for your sales representatives or marketing to find out more information about the client and to record additional information they may discover when they follow up.

3. Let your sales teams know you will be checking up on results from leads assigned to them. This will motivate them to follow up on the leads before you contact them. You may want to send sales reps an email reminder before you call them, so they have an opportunity to ensure they will have something to share when you do follow up.

4. Set ROI (return on investment) expectations about how these leads will be measured. Do you expect 1 of 10 leads to convert? Is your conversion rate closer to 20% – 30%? How do you define conversion? Is a quote request sufficient or will a sale need to close before you count it? What time period are you



evaluating? The time period will have to take into account your sales cycle. How long does it typically take from an inquiry to a sale?

5. Dedicate one person or team to distribute leads to the appropriate departments and to manage tracking and ROI calculation. Ideally, this same group should be the one responsible for the trade show budget.

6. Follow up quickly. An email or phone call by someone qualified to help the client should happen in less than two weeks. The longer you wait to follow up, the more likely the prospect will be to start working with a competitor or find another solution to their problem or use for their budget dollars.

7. Leverage technology for lead capturing. By using either the shows' badge scanner or lead capturing

application, you may save time recording contact information after the show and be better prepared to follow up with potential clients faster. One advantage to tablet or phone lead capturing applications is that you can take notes and record comments from your conversation directly into the client's record with the information that you just scanned. You can also reach out to the client immediately by attaching PDFs of brochures or information that they requested and copy the salesperson simultaneously.

While taking all these steps may not guarantee a sale it will ensure your staff has a better opportunity for proper lead management and follow-up and an opportunity to create a lasting business relationship.

WHY YOU SHOULD MEASURE PRE-ROI

— *Jon Althoff*

In the trade show business, it's all about measuring ROI, which is critical to any program. But what about your Pre-ROI?

We all love to make a sale at the show or the few days after, but in many industries that just isn't possible. The ROI comes later, often many months later.

So, knowing if the customers who visited your trade show exhibit left with a positive impression of your company after visiting your booth at the show is important. You can find out within days if success is likely to come in the form of positive ROI, or if you are dead on arrival...the phone won't ring, the website won't be clicked.

Skyline has been providing branding materials and services to the trade show industry, as well as doing trade shows ourselves for 40 years. We have learned that you need to survey your customer right after the show to find out your "Pre-ROI".

Consider asking your attendees questions such as:

- Did you feel that you were treated well or excellent by staffers while at our exhibit?
- Did you feel you were valued and that staffers listened to your questions?
- What were your feelings about (your company) before you came to the show? How about after your exhibit visit?
- What is the likelihood of working with (your company) in the future, due to the exhibit staff experience?

At a recent **EXHIBITORLIVE** show in Las Vegas, over half of the attendees who visited our booth and responded to our survey said they were more likely to work with Skyline after the exhibit visit than before. Now that's a good reason to exhibit at your favorite trade show! And even better news, 60% were not yet Skyline clients.



Skyline aims for 100% satisfaction and we found from the survey that 4% left with a feeling that staffers did not listen to their questions like they expected, so we have room for improvement and will work on that in the next booth staff training cycle. In fact, we choose our next exhibit staffers based on the Pre-ROI scores they generate. It's not the quantity of leads gathered, it's the quality of relationships built and measured.

There are always opportunities to learn and improve, and how will you know what to improve upon if you don't ask? At the very least, reaching out to your customer shows them that their opinion matters – whether a sale was made or not. It has been said that “People will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel,” which is of most importance in the industry of face-to-face trade shows.

Do you survey your customer attendees after a show or event? If not, start! It's never too late to start measuring your Pre-ROI and build a world class experience at your next exhibit/event.

