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Tradeshow Success Tip: Qualify Leads

By Dick Wheeler

Tradeshow exhibitors often miss important leads at trade shows because they have no lead

development strategy. In addition, according to the CEIR (Center for Exhibition Industry Research), as much as 80% of trade show leads never receive any form of follow-up.

One reason is that following up with unqualified leads from trade shows is tedious. This produces disappointment, frustration and inertia as you pursue the mind-numbing work of trying (and failing) to get new business from your bag full of tradeshow booth visitors' business cards.

There is a better way. The key is to identify and classify hot prospects and the products and services they are interested in buying. There are new, sophisticated software packages that allow you to identify a half dozen weighted multiple choice questions in advance that will determine how viable a client prospect is. You need to identify the hot leads, filter out those who are not qualified, and then measure your results. You will be able to target qualified sales leads that have the budget, time frame and ability to purchase your product. Your screening strategy not only helps you zero in on qualified leads but also helps you establish stronger relationships with your best clients.

Rank your prospects as "A" (highly qualified), "B" (somewhat qualified), or "C" (poorly qualified) prospect. When a prospect arrives at your trade show display, your sales staff will be ready to kickstart the sales process by using the software package to help identify qualified leads.

Have your sales force follow up on "A" leads immediately the day after the trade show to maximize your profit opportunity from the trade show. By earmarking the key prospects, your sales staff should be energized by their success in selling the right products to the right client at the right time. Don't neglect the "B" prospects from your trade show, but follow up with them only after you have mined the hot lead lode.

Measure Your ROI You will be able to measure your trade show return on investment and justify your trade show exhibit expense if you carefully track your qualified leads. Measure the results of these qualified leads in every stage from the number and dollar amount of proposals made to monies received from actual sales. Your head of marketing can better justify the tradeshow expense to the company CEO when showing solid business-producing results.

Dick Wheeler is President of Professional Exhibits & Graphics, headquartered in Sunnyvale, California. The firm is a full-service premiere trade show exhibit, graphics and management services company.

For additional information, go to

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Tradeshow Giveaway Tips

By Rick Sheldon

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Tradeshow Giveaway Tips

First begin with marketing your tradeshow prior to the show. Let your potential customers or clients know that you have a gift waiting for them when they stop by your booth.

When a new prospect enters your booth, make sure to get a business card. Don't just let people wander into your booth and snag your giveaways. They cost you money! Our Motto: No Business Card, No Gift!

If you want to make a big impact at a tradeshow, try handing out Tote Bags at the front door. You want everyone at the show sporting your bag and displaying your name. Don't forget to have a flyer about your company or your products in the bags.

If you want people to come to your booth, try handing out a toy such as a Yo–Yo. We have seen shows where everyone in the aisle is trying to work their new Yo–Yo's, and those who aren't are asking "Where did you get that Yo–Yo?". Don't forget to give all the other exhibitors a Yo–Yo as they will be playing with them all show long and ultimately sending people to your booth. You can even take this one step further with a contest and a prize.

When you hand out a Promotional Product, make sure you attach a flyer or a business card to the product. Remember you are prospecting for future business, so make your Tradeshow Giveaways count.

We hope that maybe some of these tips will make your next tradeshow more successful.

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