

# The Salesperson's Guide to Successful Trade Shows

Event marketing is second only to email and mailings in its ability to generate a return on investment.<sup>1</sup>

It's estimated that the average number of calls required to close a trade show lead is 1.6. This compares favorably with an average 3.7 calls to close other sales leads.<sup>2</sup>

Shows allow you to meet a lot of prospects in a short period of time. You can typically meet 7 people per hour at a show — a pace not easily replicated on the road.

However, trade shows have fallen out of favor with many marketers. Shows are expensive, difficult to organize and their true value may be hidden from those who allocate the budget.

If you value trade shows you must make sure that all leads are recorded. If little or no sales revenue gets credited to the shows you attend then the show budget may get reallocated to promotions that your marketers can justify with numbers.

## Show Check List

### Arrive Prepared

- + Know your elevator pitch.
- + Bring lots of business cards, your own pen and note pad.
- + Wear your name tag high so visitors can easily read it.
- + Wear comfortable shoes and a clean, pressed shirt.

### Prepare for Opening

- + Ensure everything works and you know how to demonstrate your products.
- + Remove garbage, water bottles, coffee cups, etc. from the booth.
- + Let visitors in by getting tables, chairs and other obstacles out of the way and towards the back of the booth.

- + Stock the literature racks and know what literature is available. Keep one of each for yourself in case supplies run out.
- + Store your personal belongings in a secure place such as a lockable podium. Curtains and table skirts are not barriers to theft.
- + Review your schedule, break times and goals for the event as well as any big announcements so you know what's going on.
- + Tour the show floor just before opening. Visit your competitors' booths. Understand their messages. Recognize their staff so you'll know them if they visit you at your booth.

### Selling at the Show

- + Be proactive and initiate conversations by asking:  
*Are you familiar with \_\_\_?* or  
*Have you seen this new \_\_\_?*
- + Qualify prospects:  
Understand the problem for which they are trying to find a solution.

Determine if they have a real need for your offering.

Determine if there are any reasons they could not purchase from you.

Ask if they have a budget to purchase your product.

Find out who is involved in the purchase decision.

Understand the time-frame in which they plan to act.

Agree the next step.

Confirm their contact information (badges are not always correct or complete).

- + Make sure prospects have some literature, with your business card, so they can remember you after the event.
- + Quickly disengage from unqualified prospects.

### End of Day

- + Don't leave valuables on display when the booth is not staffed. Remove or secure computers and sales leads. Put your literature and promotional items out of sight.

### End of Event

- + To prevent theft, don't leave the booth without staff until everything is packed and ready for shipping.
- + If you expect your booth to make you look good the next time, be especially careful when repacking. Return shipping causes the most damage (less stuff, more movement).
- + Don't discard leftover literature. Brochures can cost between \$2 and \$10 each.

### Return to Office

- + Enter all leads into your CRM system and provide feedback to marketing so they can determine if the show is worth doing again.
- + Follow up with prospects as soon as possible. Remind them of your conversation, their interest and your offering. Don't assume they'll remember.

## About MarketingSage

MarketingSage® is a contracted marketing team that helps other marketers and business executives increase revenue by cost-effectively generating sales leads, building brands, launching products and developing sales channels.

With MarketingSage you can add expertise, bandwidth, specialized tools and contacts when you need them, for as long as you need them.

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talent + tools + contacts

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<sup>1</sup> Source: CMO Council, 2005 study.

<sup>2</sup> Source: CIER Note: Results can vary by industry and event.