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Follow-up Methods & Tools

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Tradeshow Follow-up – the Benefits

<http://www.trade-show-advisor.com/tradeshow-follow-up.html>

Follow up According to Needs

Not all leads are created equal. Prioritize your leads. Which need specific information and which need more general information such as a fact sheet? Hot leads need an immediate follow up—the next day—with either a phone call or email.

This is the time to provide the quote they asked for, or to answer questions, the real reason for your follow up. If you were asked to provide information to someone who has decision-making authority, do so the next day.

Follow up Immediately

Studies show that most trade show leads are never re-contacted or activated, which wastes the time and money you spend, according to Joanna Krotz, co-author of the *Microsoft Small Business Kit*. Timing is critical. Don't let a hot prospect become a cold lead because too much time has passed before you've made contact.

Your post-show strategy should be fairly simple: call the most serious prospects within two days. Then follow up with all your leads within five business days, either by email or phone. The longer you take to make contact with the customer, the more chance there is of another exhibitor getting their business.

What about the contacts that aren't considered good prospect or leads? Email all attendees who provided their contact information. Thank them for stopping by your booth and repeat the message, sales point or offer you were promoting at the show.

Prospect Your "Turn Downs"

Obviously not all your leads will be interested in buying your product or service. This doesn't mean that warm or even cold leads should be ignored. Give them an alternative to purchase and offer a way to keep in touch.

This can include putting them on your newsletter mailing list, inviting them to participate in webcasts, or sending them articles or whitepapers about your industry.

The goal is to cultivate these leads and keep actively engaged with the contact until they are ready to purchase.

Follow-up or Waste Your Money

<http://www.trade-show-advisor.com/trade-show-job.html>

The Center for Exhibition Industry Research (ceir.org) says up to 80% of leads gathered at a show are not followed up. Bottom line, that translates into wasting 80% of your money.

Here are tips for recouping your investment and improving your bottom line:

What's Your Purpose at the Show?

If it's your trade show job to gather leads, then that should be the main focus before, during and after the show. What if it's something else, like meeting with clients or recruiting employees? That doesn't absolve you of following up with leads. You still have to do it as part of your trade show job.

What's a Lead?

Define before the show what you consider a lead. Is it a company that will purchase within a certain time period? Has a certain budget? Is looking for a particular product you sell?

You can separate the contacts into levels -- A, B, C or hot, medium, cool -- and work them that way. But they still have to be contacted as part of your trade show job.

Who's Responsible?

Develop a schedule for following up with your trade show leads. The first contact should come within 10 days of the end of the event. Otherwise people forget who you are. The trail becomes cool, then cold.

Determine names and responsibilities at each step of the follow-up process. Trade show job accountability is important. Make each person aware of what is expected of ss part of his or her trade show job, and who else is in the process. This is critical when the person staffing the booth is not the person who does the actual follow-up call. The farther and longer the process from the show site and date, the more chances there are to lose the lead.

What's a Follow-up?

At minimum, follow-up with a thank you note to every contact you made. These people invested time and money to come to the show, time and effort to stop by your booth. The simple courtesy of a thank you goes a long way in today's fast paced and impersonal world.

If you listened properly and were able to gather specific information, you can provide a quote, supply answers and have a real reason for the follow-up call.

What Should You Send?

Unless requested, do not send the \$20, 20-pound corporate package of literature that tells absolutely everything about your company. Do not send an obvious form letter ("Thank you for visiting us at the ABC Expo in Booth 6543 six months ago..."). Do Send...

- ☐ your business card -- people will remember a logo and spelling of names and companies
- ☐ information about your company -- a generic piece is fine
- ☐ the specific answer to the question -- "My company can help your company ____ (crunch numbers faster, ship with less hassle, increase accuracy in testing, etc.)"
- ☐ any samples, price lists or references that will help speed the sales cycle.

Remember, the trade show job that Anybody can do, and Everybody thinks Somebody will do, but Nobody does -- well, that changes when all understand the importance of trade show follow-up.

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