



How to grow a pile of money every time you exhibit

Post Show Marketing



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It might seem like a fantastical title for a guide to post-show marketing, but it expresses why post-show marketing is so important.

Actually it's vital.

Think about all of the time, trouble and expense that goes into organising your show experiences. Whether you take part in one show or many, there is a lot to organise and invest in.

In fact, if you tallied up your direct and indirect costs you might be surprised. Perhaps shocked. Direct costs are those you can allocate to budget items - things like your structure, graphics, hotels and travel expenses.

Indirect costs include the time you and your colleagues have spent discussing and working on the event and your objectives. Indirect costs may also include the cost of time spent by the team at the actual show, time spent by your marketing department promoting your presence, and other "hidden" costs associated with this form of marketing.

Going to great lengths to engineer a successful event, attracting lots of visitors to your experience and extensive social coverage is just one part of the exhibiting equation. The other, and perhaps harder, element is converting those leads and all of that interest into sales.

If you don't do that, well, you might as well set fire to a big pile of money, but I think we mentioned that already.

And it is with that photosynthesis-like conversion that breathes life into your investment. From that seed, the shoots of success can grow.

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The need for speed

If you've exhibited before, you'll know what that warm trade show sales glow feels like.

It comes when you're having great sales conversations with visitors who seem incredibly interested in what you offer. It's exciting. It's a buzz.

It's also fleeting if you aren't careful. That happy feeling will fade soon after the show closes, often faster than a mirage in the desert.

The longer you take to follow-up with your visitors, the greater the chance that they will be distracted from buying your products and services...potentially by one of your fellow exhibitors because they got back to them before you did.

Many show visitors (not all) make buying decisions soon after they are back from an event.

Therefore, they need your information quickly so they can proceed with their purchasing decisions. Keep in mind you are competing for their attention and budget with other exhibitors and even existing vendors. That's why speed of response and postshow follow-up are vitally important.

The slow and sluggish will not get prizes in this particular race.

Scary Fact:

80% of trade show exhibitors don't follow up with their show leads.

Salesforce

Great execution is the ultimate Differentiator

Margaret Molloy

Global Chief Marketing Officer and Head of New Development Siegel & Gale

Why 'Post-Show Marketing' should really be called 'Ongoing Marketing'

Exhibiting provides an excellent way to increase the number of quality leads in your sales funnel. Some of the people you meet will have short-term orders to place, others may have a requirement in the medium to long-term.

It's on this basis your leads should be graded as they enter your sales funnel.

In order to close deals in each of those time periods, ongoing marketing will be needed. In the next part of this guide, we will walk through tactics to aid in converting leads into sales.

Right now, the important thing is to think of your leads as people you plan to have an ongoing relationship with. Better still, as people who are going to become clients of your business.

With that in mind, start your ongoing conversation while they're still standing on your exhibit, or at least very soon after they leave.



Post-show marketing strategy

Before we get to tactics, let's think about **strategy**.

That's where having a **plan and strategy** comes in.

Ultimately, exhibiting is about driving sales and attracting clients. You may also have other sub-goals such as building brand awareness, finding agents and HR talent, or something else altogether. An important component of your post-show marketing is to take action to help deliver on your exhibiting goals.

Focus on your key objectives. The things that will move the needle most for your company. When should you develop your strategic marketing plan? **Before the event takes place, of course.** You should be ready to start post-show marketing during the show itself.

Don't think about the start of the race, **think about the ending.**

- Usain Bolt

Tactics

1 Thank you for visiting us

“Thank you for visiting us” is an email you send to your visitors. It’s a short, friendly email which reminds the reader they interacted with your brand at the show. Remind them of the name of the event, describe briefly what your company was showing at the event and let them know follow-up information will follow shortly.

This email can be written in advance and sent to every person recorded as a visitor. Ideally, you should send these emails on the day a visitor attends. If real-time isn’t possible, the latest they should be sent is the day after the show closes when, presumably, you’re back in the office. If you’ve used a Visit Connect style lead capture system, all of your data will be ready to go: just plug it into your email and hit send.

2 Distribute leads collected to the sales team

At the earliest possible time, get your leads into the eager hands of your sales team. Provide them with, background information about the event and the products displayed, especially if they weren’t at the show.

You might also want to provide some background on the type of people who visited. Anecdotal information about the weather conditions, traffic incidents and anything else that might help personalise the show for them are good things to include too - “Thanks for braving the big freeze to come and see us” is just one example.

3 Supply the sales team with graded leads

One thing that will boost sales efficiency massively is distributing leads to salespeople with some sort of grading system. Hot or short term. Medium and long-term interest grades will tell a salesperson where to turn their attention to first.

They need to be talking to those visitors who are seeking to purchase soonest and nurturing those who are in a longer sales cycle.

4 Other sales tools can help your sales team close deals

A post-show briefing: Organise a post-show briefing meeting for your first day back in the office.

Relay to your sales team the highlights of the event; feedback from visitors; information about the competition, etc. Highlight the sales targets or objectives that are now expected to be delivered.

Phone scripts: These are always useful. Good salespeople will use them as a framework they can adapt with their own telephone style.

Include details about any event-related offers and deadlines that might apply.

Standard letters and email copy: These save masses of valuable sales time.

Scripted responses also provide a great lead-in for the sales team when they make their follow-up phone calls. The body of your letter can be standard, but you should always personalise the recipient's name – this is really easy to do using the data you collected from the event. You can personalize other follow up information such as product interest, company name, or anything else captured by your CRM system.

5 Social media activity

As we mentioned in our **Pre-Show Marketing white paper**, trade shows create a huge amount of media interest and coverage. This wave will continue in the two weeks following an event.

During this period, post your images and videos from the show. Promote access to content that relates to important themes covered by the event. Encourage readers and viewers to sign-up for updates from your business. Email and social sign-ups are a great way to add leads into your sales database.

6 Marketing emails

We have already mentioned the first email your visitors should receive post-show. That was the “thank you for visiting us” email which should be sent within hours of their visit.

But what have you got planned next?

Email is the **third most influential** source of information for B2B audiences, behind only colleague recommendations and industry-specific thought leaders.

- Wordstream

Given that sales power, you can understand why ongoing marketing utilising email is so important.

Email subscribers are **3x more likely** to share content on social media than leads who came through another channel.

- QuickSprout

By creating an email campaign for your show attendees - including content with strong calls to action - you are much more likely to achieve a positive response. A typical response may include a request for more product information or a sales appointment.

Remember many buying decisions are not instant.

There are buying cycles and budget periods which play a part in those decisions. Not to mention quotations and sales activity from rival suppliers. Before a show takes place, think about creating an email campaign to build further confidence in your company.

Build in strong calls to action. Use incentives where you can. Create landing pages to build conversion.

7 Use landing pages to build sales

Think of your **email** as the message that creates interest. Think of your landing page as the place to convert interest into some kind of action.

Landing pages work best when they are linked closely to the theme or subject of an email. There should be continuity between them.

Emails which take their readers to website homepages have very high dropout rates. That's because the specific content the email recipient expected isn't there. And they aren't prepared to go hunting around a website to find it.

Here's something that might surprise you;

Long landing pages can generate up to **220% more leads** than above the fold call-to-action.

- Marketing Experiments

Why would this be?

Think about it. If you are interested in something, you want lots of details. So, you could create a landing page that provides a review of what your business was promoting at the show.

Within your copy, you can include links to take readers to other landing pages on your website - pages that provide full details on specific products or services.

In each page, ensure that there are **clear calls to action (CTA's)**.

These are clear instructions telling the reader what to do next. When you send further emails to your list, you can create new landing pages if you feel this will be beneficial to your audience. They will definitely be beneficial to your business.

Companies see a **55% increase** in leads when increasing their number of landing pages **from 10 to 15.**

- HubSpot

7A Landing pages are also great for SEO

That's because search engines like landing pages, too.

The detailed content they contain highlights to the search engines websites that possess expert knowledge on the subjects covered. This improves the ranking of those websites.

Content-heavy landing pages will boost your ranking in search results. And the more often you post content, the more often you will be noticed by those mysterious search bots. So landing pages are a win/win scenario.

They will also increase the conversion of show visitors while attracting interest and enquiries from people who didn't go to the show. This is why trade show participation is so good for building sales. They provide those all-important introductions to prospective clients. And, they provide the opportunity for ongoing permission based marketing, which is vital in the age of GDPR.

8 Post-show follow-up phone calls

When collecting data at the show, ensure you get as many phone numbers from your visitors as possible.

Main company numbers are usually included in the lead data an organiser supplies, but ask for direct lines and mobile numbers when talking to your guests. The more information you are able to provide your sales team, the less time they will spend on researching their list of contacts.

Why are direct dial numbers so important?

It takes **18 dials** to connect with a single buyer.

- HubSpot



9 Set targets with your sales team

Follow-up calls and the progress of sales should be monitored and reported. You are handing over great leads that cost real money to deliver and you want to know how many of those leads turn into sales.

Highlight when calls should be completed by and the reporting format you want everyone to follow. Feedback and update meetings can also build enthusiasm and competition among your sales team. Scripts and ready-made follow-up letters and emails will boost sales productivity.

Keeping your team posted about follow-up emails and landing pages will also provide them with tools to work with when talking to prospective clients. Using referral style copy in your emails makes it more likely that a sales call will be taken.

73% of executives prefer to work with sales professionals referred by someone they know.

- HubSpot

10 Tag your pictures

Trade shows provide you with an excellent referral strategy. The initial meeting in person makes the perfect door opener for your sales team. That's why it's so important your initial follow-up emails refer to the show and to the fact that the person receiving your email visited with your brand.

No doubt you will take lots of pictures when you exhibit. These images can be used in a variety of ways. You can put them on your event landing pages, you can link emails to them, you could create an event gallery on your website...

Whichever way you plan to use them, always add **Alt. Text** tags to your event pictures.

These tags, the words which describe your image, will appear if the picture cannot for some reason be displayed in a web search. By including the name of the show in your tag, your image may also appear in web searches for that event.

Obviously, you should also include your own company name inside the brief tag description, too. You might also want to include the name of the venue.

For example:

**“ABC’s stand at Bett at ExCeL
London displayed the latest in
math’s teaching software”**

Alt tags should be short on copy.

PRO TIP

Short, punchy descriptions are much more likely to be ranked by search engines. The Alt Text subjects, or topics, that will be found by search engines are also important.

Usually, this should be your company name, the name of your product and service and the name of the show. Using your images in this way provides another exhibiting-related benefit to your business.

11 Distribution of show-related content

Trade shows provide lots of ways to generate content after an event has taken place. Here are some examples to consider:

Did a member of your team present a talk, seminar or conference paper?

If they did, release a transcript as a briefing, report or whitepaper.

For a whitepaper, their presentation could form a significant part of a wider analysis of the subject covered in their talk. If there is a video of their presentation, even better. You can link people directly to the presentation.

Don't forget: the best time to email your leads, if not in the immediate aftermath of your event, is **Tuesday between 8 and 10am.**

Content builds relationships.
Relationships are built on
trust. **Trust drives revenue.**

- Andrew Davis

Highest rated speaker;
Content Marketing World

Turn visitor questions and comments from the show into emails and social media posts.

During an event, be on the lookout for visitor questions and comments that could be turned into helpful social media posts.

Survey your visitors and release the findings.

Post-show webinars.

Daily briefings with your team will help uncover questions and recurring themes. Pose the question (or questions) on Twitter and link to a page on your website that provides the answer - positioning your company as an expert on the subject.

You can use the same tactic to develop emails that will be of interest to the people who receive them. Highlight "this question came up a number of times at the XYZ show in January." Provide a partial explanation with a link to the full explanation on your landing page.

A simple survey of your visitors can be used to generate social media coverage straight after the event. You don't need to ask a lot of questions. Think instead about what will be newsworthy.

For example, asking visitors for their opinion on the economic outlook for the year ahead will produce a news story.

You can pose simple questions on a whole variety of issues. Pick one that you can relate directly to your business.

Webinars can build buzz for your business both before and after an event.

They make an excellent subject for follow-up communications with visitors because you can offer attendees the opportunity for a deeper dive into a particular topic. You can also build-out attendance to your webinars from people who didn't make it to the show.

12 Breakthrough marketing

Breakthrough Marketing: How successful were you in attracting visitors from companies identified as top-level client prospects?

These are businesses who could transform the sales of your company. They will vary from industry to industry but you will know who the right ones are for your business. The first place to look is within your list of show visitors, the second place is the show's attendee list.

As an exhibitor, you won't always be supplied with the show's attendee list but you can ask the organiser to share attendance information for specific companies. What you want to know is how many people from each of your breakthrough companies attended. You also need to know their job titles and their locations.

Because you are not asking for names or contact details, there should be no problem with supplying these details. Once you have the information, you can see how well you fared in attracting visits from those businesses.

If many of them attended but you didn't see them at your stand, you might need to adjust your pre-show marketing at the next event.

You might also consider whether or not your exhibits were right for the event. If few buyers from these businesses attended the show, it doesn't mean the show was "wrong" for your company. That only becomes a question if the lead data from other visitors were low and of a poor standard.

Aim out of the park.
Aim for the company
of immortals.

- David Ogilvy

Founder, Ogilvy & Mather
and advertising legend

13 Data management

Breakthrough marketing is a subject in its own right, but as you can see from this brief introduction, it also has an important role to play in your post-show follow-up work. You might have thought it should be front and centre of this guide but we've put it here for a very good reason. Breakthrough marketing links strongly to the next subject - Data Management.

Some businesses have built their entire sales database just from exhibiting at trade shows. In many cases, trade show participation is the only form of marketing they do. They rely on the data-building properties of events to keep their lists up to date and you can do the same.

The goal is to turn data into
information, and information
into **insight**.

- Carly Fiorina

Former CEO of HP

Delivering live data

Trade show attendee data is so valuable because it's current and it's obtained from real, live people.

Think about the lengths you have to go to update all the moves and changes that happen every month. There's a lot of work required to keep a database up to date. Trade show data removes a ton of research work.

Names, job titles, locations, and product interests are all delivered to you in one handy file. For all new entrants into your list, make sure the name of the show and year are recorded as the source of the lead.

This information will be useful when you analyse the effectiveness of your face-to-face marketing.

Conclusion

We hope we have enabled you to make the most of all the tools at your disposal in order to get the most out of your events.

For the most successful outcome, post-show marketing needs to be a seamless part of your brand experience conducted in a timely and efficient manner.

Remember you are in competition for buyer attention and not just with your fellow exhibitors. Once a buyer leaves an exhibition hall, there are many distractions that can take them away from your business.

Take action after everytime you exhibit and grow a pile of cash in your wake.



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