

### **Get the Most out of your trade show Investment**

Trade shows are a wonderful way to generate qualified leads for your sales force; prepare for them properly and your company will find them to be very cost-effective; don't plan properly and your company will find them to be a pain in your back and feet and a waste of time and money.

Several years ago, one of our clients told us this Trade Show Horror story:

The company had spent a lot of money to attend the annual industry trade show; they paid extra for a prime location and had high expectations regarding their lead generation targets. They had a lot of booth traffic and managers were please when it was all over. They packed up their booth and sent it to storage. The next year they started preparing for the trade show and unpacked the booth only to discover all their leads had been left in the drawer of the booth...and nobody had missed them!!

Don't let this happen to you! Here are some steps to optimize your investment in your trade show and generate a positive ROI.

1. Conduct a Pre-Show mailer inviting targeted attendees to your booth.

Recommended Process:

a. Contact the show producer as soon as possible to ascertain whether a pre-show attendee list will be made available.

b. Identify what demographic/other criteria are available to segment the pre-show attendee list, if any.

c. Create an interesting/compelling offer to attract your targeted attendees to your booth and include it in a direct mail piece.

d. Conduct a telemarketing follow-up campaign, focusing on capturing valuable Account Profile information and inviting to your booth

2. Create a Trade Show Inquiry Qualification Sheet to assist in efforts to quickly qualify anyone who comes to your booth. The Trade Show will more than likely make available a badge/card-scanning machine. This will assist your efforts to capture valuable demographic information quickly and in electronic format. The Inquiry Qualification Sheet will fill in some of the information your company deems important in qualifying these inquiries. Make a special effort to confirm email addresses. You won't be able to complete these Inquiry Qualification Sheets for everyone who comes to your booth, but when you have time to use them, you will receive more information than before and provide it to your sales reps.

3. Consolidate all inquiry information from the Badge/Card-scanner, the Qualification sheets and Business Cards received and create a single Excel spreadsheet/database. De-dupe any records.

4. Import into your Sales Force Automation (SFA)/Customer Relationship Management (CRM) software and make sure to de-dupe the records here as well. If a record already

exists in your database, compare the new information and determine what to keep, delete and/or overwrite. Make sure to indicate a contact at the Trade Show.

5. Perform Literature Fulfillment. Provide customized salutations and information based on the information collected at the Trade Show.

6. Distribute Qualified Leads to the Sales Reps based on pre-determined business rules.

7. Also provide a list of all other inquiries to the sales reps and see if they want to contact any of them on their own. What we find is that the field often has targeted a specific company and hasn't made headway in the sale process with their current contact or they have targeted a company, but didn't have a contact there. In any event, allowing the sales reps to "Cherry-Pick" accelerates and gains more commitment for the post-show follow-up. The sales reps flag those accounts they wish to keep in the software.

8. All Inquiries not flagged by the sales reps would then be contacted with a telemarketing call to qualify and determine interest in further contact with your company.

9. All accounts deemed to be qualified, but not yet interested should be flagged for an on-going "Nurturing" campaign. Your company should create a consistent email campaign to send to these accounts highlighting the benefits of the your products and/or services.

## **Conclusion**

This comprehensive approach to Sales Lead Management will ensure your company maximizes your Trade Show experience and generate a positive ROI for your investment in time, money and resources.