



Lead Persistence – The Key to Tradeshow Lead Conversion

By Jefferson Davis, *Competitive Edge*

For too many exhibitors, tradeshow lead follow-up means sending out literature, making a few phone calls, maybe sending an email, and if the prospect doesn't respond quickly, giving up.

This is in sharp contrast to what the highly successful exhibitor does. The real purpose of a good lead management process is to be there when the buyer is ready to buy, not just when you are ready to sell. This means having time perspective when it comes to lead follow-up. Just because a buyer isn't ready today, does not mean that they won't be ready next month, next quarter or even next year. Companies who design their lead follow-up programs with a longer time perspective not only build the best sales relationships, but also end up converting more leads to sales. Here are four tips to help your company be there when the buyer is ready to buy.

1. Continue qualifying throughout the lead follow-up process.

Don't assume the person you are contacting is the right person. Often a booth visitor may exaggerate their buying influence. As you continue your follow up, be sure to continually attempt to identify the entire decision team.

2. Clarify what stage of the buying process the customer is in.

Buying processes go through several stages from recognition of a need, to identification of various products/services to address the need, to identifying vendors with those products, to identifying the vendor with the best products/services. By determining what stage of the buying process the customer is in, your follow-up efforts can focus on providing the right information for the right stage of the buying process.

3. Don't just sell - inform, educate and lead.

Sometimes we need to help buyers recognize the need. They may know that they have a problem or an opportunity, but the ramifications of the problem or the scope of the opportunity is not clear or compelling enough to cause them to take action now. By educating buyers about the implications of a problem or the scope of an opportunity, you can increase their desire to act.

4. Never give up!

If you have determined that this customer has a problem you can solve, decide to keep in touch until they either tell you they are going to do business with you or they tell you they will never do business with you. Whether it takes a month, a quarter, a year, or even longer, the rewards will be well worth the effort.

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