

## How to conduct pre-show promotion which gets qualified prospects to your booth

You've signed up for an event, and let's say the event organizer has previously told you that you can expect 500 conference attendees and 15,000 visitors to attend the event. Your goal is to attract 200 good leads from the event, but there are 300 other exhibitors at the event, some competition, some not. How are you going to get 200 leads? Hopefully you've read some of my other articles(available here: <http://www.theeventmechanic.com/resources.html>) about other ways to profit from tradeshow, this edition will focus on the pre-promotion you'll need to do to emerge from the crowd of other exhibitors.

### What to do

First of all, you will have established a budget for your effort for marketing both that you will need at the event and for pre-promotion. We're only going to focus on the pre-promotion that is, whatever you need to do to get the 200 leads you've mentioned above.

Depending on the budget you have you'll decide from this list which represents a mix of electronic, direct mail and personal efforts. They are in no apparent order:

- Direct Mail
  - Postcards
  - Letters from the President of your company inviting them to the event
  - Wedding invitation style mailers
  - Ads in trade publications
  
- Electronic
  - e-newsletters
  - web banners
  - press releases
  
- Sponsorship or participation in the show organizer resources
  - directory listings on shows website
  - sponsorship of emarketing
  - sponsorship on show website
  - sponsorship of direct mail
  
- Set up meetings with key customers and prospects at the event

### When to do it

When you have signed up for an event, it's a good idea to get the relevant information to the show organizer as soon as possible since you are paying for the exposure, you might as well get it! Here's some other things you'll want to do as soon as you've signed up:

- Add your information to the organizer website
- If you are a sponsor get your logo on the show organizer site as soon as possible
- Decide on what mix you will use- meetings on site/ direct mail/ electronic- the easiest and quickest are the electronic campaigns, harder hitting are the direct mail pieces(in the. Meetings on site have the most impact.

#### *At six months*

This is the most important time before an event, as you can have the big picture and still have the luxury of time to plan and execute your strategy:

- Conceive of, design and complete any direct mail pieces
- Decide on the basic schedule and frequency of all marketing pieces
- Build list strategy for all outbound pieces
- Contact all key contacts/prospects to let them know about your event so they can pencil the date on the calendar
- Contact the relevant trade magazines and agree upon advertisement size and in which issues they will appear
- Decide on all add on promotional activities at the show, sponsorships of areas, giveaways, presentations on the show floor then contact the show organizer to arrange. These can include:
  - Billboards in registration or conference areas
  - Advertisements in show guides and show dailies
  - Registration or conference area sponsorships
  - Banners in high traffic areas
  - Sponsorships of breaks, meals or functions

#### *At twelve weeks*

- Get mailhouse ready to send out direct mail pieces(if applicable)
- Develop the artwork for the advertisements

#### *At eight weeks*

- Send out direct mail piece
- Send out first email blast to customers
- Send the ads to the trade magazines

#### *At four weeks*

- Send out second email blast

#### *At two weeks*

- Confirm all appointments
- Send out third email blast

#### *At the event*

Make sure that all of your onsite promotions(banners, break sponsorships) are set up properly

## How to do it

The messaging of everything you do is very important. Think about theme that you want to adopt for the event and have all of your promotional materials follow that theme. In addition:

- Know who you are targeting and why
- Make it easy and obvious why attendees should come to your booth
- Find a way of customizing your message to each reader
- Tell the audience other non-booth activities you will have at the event(such as receptions or breaks that your are sponsoring)

As a special treat here's tool that can help you measure your results(the ROI Tool Estimator):

<http://roitoolkit.exhibitsurveys.net/Home/Welcome.aspx>

The job of the traditional show organizer ends when the attendee registers on site. Your job is to separate the 'tire kickers' from the real prospects and deliver a steady stream of them to your booth, so be creative and ask your show organizer for help. If you follow the advice above, you should be the recipient of your highly qualified leads, a lot of pats on the back and possibly a raise! Good luck and contact me with questions if I can help!

*Warwick Davies is the Principal of The Event Mechanic!, a consulting company which helps event organizers realize greater revenues and profits by fixing 'broken' events and launch new ones both in United States and internationally . His clients include event organizers in the information technology, healthcare, biotechnology construction and design engineering and executive event markets. Previously, Warwick was responsible for internationally recognizable event brands such as Macworld Conference and Expo, LinuxWorld Conference and Expo, and the Customer Relationship Management Conference and Exposition worldwide. For more information on The Event Mechanic! and past ROI-Q The Event Mechanic! columns please visit <http://www.theeventmechanic.com/resources.html> . He can be reached at Warwick@theeventmechanic.com or at 781 354 0119.*