

How To Find Qualified Prospects at a Trade-show Event

By Patrick Helmers

Trade-shows are a great way of generating new business. But only if you use the opportunity wisely.

In this article we'll show you how to maximize your time and resources to find prospects, make sales and grow your business. At the end of this article you will have a strategy for collecting a number of highly qualified leads that will convert to sales.

Good luck!

Overarching Trade-show Goals

You have four goals when attending an exhibit or trade-show:

1. Strike up a conversation with a complete stranger and immediately connect
2. Ask key questions that will allow attendees to self-qualify as prospective clients
3. Pitch your product or service using your ideal client's exact thoughts
4. Easily collect contact information without being pushy.

Use This Mindset

Far too often sellers get too caught up in themselves to really connect with attendees. Approach the event with the following mindset:

I'm Here to Help

With this mindset you can reach out to prospective clients in a non-pushy manner. Here are the key tactics you must use to create a conversation with the "I'm Here To Help" strategy:

- It's about them, not you
- Find out their pain, frustration, hopes and desires.
- Ask questions to see if they're a match
- Be empathetic to their suffering
- Assume they know very little about what you do
- Be a teacher of what you do, but only if they want to be a student
- Find out if you can help regarding the pain they suffer in your market.

Trade Show Tactics

There are a number of tactics you can take to ensure a successful trade-show experience. The metric of success is to obtain “Qualified” leads, not a fish bowl full of names that highly unlikely to ever purchase your products or services.

It will only take one or two new clients to pay for this event!

Here are some practical trade-show rules:

1. Dress consistently. Dress like your ideal client. If they dress business formal so should you. If they dress in workout clothes, so should you. Your attire should signal immediately who you are and what you’re about.
2. Stand in the aisle with your handout cards or give away.
3. Don’t text in front of people unless they are boring and you need a reason to get away... “oh sorry I need to do something, hey it’s been really nice meeting you, please stop by tomorrow”
4. Keep your phones on vibrate during the entire week
5. Don’t do work at your booth unless your certain there are zero people in the aisles.
6. Hand prospects the cards and say, “We are/do YOUR BUSINESS ... are you doing anything like this?”
7. Go into research scientist cocktail party mode and start asking questions

Take the Mindset
You’re a
Research Scientist!



Response to Questions on the Trade-Show Floor

First tell the person your business in VERY few words. Than ask the person if they are doing anything like what you provide.

Example: *We provide underwater basket weaving services. Do you ever need those kinds of services?*

1. If they say YES you respond “How do you do that now?”
2. If they already have a solution: ask all about it. Find out if they don’t like it
3. If they don’t like it, ask them why (NOTE: **You have a prospect!**)



4. If they love what they have and have no interest, this is an opportunity to do competitive analysis. Grill them all you can. They may not want to share, but try to extract as much from them as possible. Keep asking questions. It's OK to say *"Some people say XYZ is hard to use, is that true in your opinion?"* Speak in hearsay.
5. If they say they don't know anything about your business, ask them who does?
6. If they're a prospect ask them *"would you like some information about us?"* They will probably say yes. (NOTE: **You have a prospect!**)
7. If they want to give you someone else's name, take it, but take their name too. You will reference that person when you follow up *"so and so said I should call you..."*
8. Hand them the clip board saying *"please fill this out"*, don't ask permission instead start putting together a package of literature. Take your time; give them plenty of time to fill it out.
9. Make sure their contact info is legible

If they're currently shopping for a product or service like yours, pull out your phone to set an appointment NOW. The goal of any lead is to get an appointment. It can be in person or on the phone but you want to reserve a time to talk.

NOTE: an in-person meeting trumps a phone call every time.

When the exchange is done, quickly write notes on the contact sheet so you can recall the conversation when it's time to follow up. Details matter.

Don't rush conversations, the more time they spend with you, the more likely they will remember you. However, this is only true of prospects; some people just want to waste your time. Qualify them to discover if indeed they are really shopping for your services.

Follow Up Sequence: Email then Telephone

After the event, immediately email your leads then follow up with a telephone call. Now is not the time to be shy. You've spent a lot of time and energy working this trade-show. Let's convert the leads and make sales!

Time is of the essence. Leads quickly go stale.

Your prospects will quickly forget they ever met you. Follow up to remind them.

Within two days send an email

Send an email within two days. It should say something to the effect:

"Hi PROSPECT, it was great meeting you at EVENT NAME and I'm writing to follow up. If you recall we provide BENEFIT for people/businesses like you. You mentioned you were interested in X Y Z (see interests in your detailed notes) and it would be great if I could learn a bit more about your needs. Do you have a moment next Tuesday to meet (call) or would Wednesday be better?"

In two days follow up with a phone call



More often than not your prospects will not respond. Call two days later.

“Hi this Pat from MY COMPANY following up on the email I sent a couple days ago.... . If you recall we’re the company that provides YOUR SERVICES for people/businesses like you. You mentioned you were interested in X Y Z (see notes you made) and it would be great if we could learn a little bit more about your needs at THEIR BUSINESS. Do you have a moment next Tuesday to meet or a conference call “

Copy Rules of Thumb

Relook at all of your brochures, business cards, handout cards, literature and website they will reference long after the trade show event.

Do the following:

- Write at the level of your audience, walk in their moccasins
- By understanding their pains, frustrations, hopes and dreams you can provide solutions that help
- Better to speak benefits first, features second

Hand Out Card

You don’t need to be a graphic designer to make a nice hand out card. They are an inexpensive tool for creating a conversation on a show room floor.

The card should have the following content:

- 8.5 x 5.5 “
- Head line ... End Result + Time + Overcome one Objection
- Solution .. With YOUR COMPANY say goodbye to BAD STUFF, say hello to GOOD STUFF then list three benefits
- List 5 benefits... “just one click”, “easy to use”, “Intuitive”, “rock solid reliable”, “ custom to your business”, “complete solution”.
- Get a quote “Best thing since sliced bread...”
- Promote trust “Exceeding client expectations since 2008”
- Call to action; “Call today for a free consultation”.



Further Advice

Go to www.salesbabble.com/salestraining to learn about the Selling with Confidence Non-Pushy Sales System.

Be Yourself, Add Value, Make Sales