

For two months you have been preparing for LegalTech New York and now the show is over. You successfully acquired a stack of leads while reinforcing your marketing message to a large audience of your prospects. With all it takes to successfully exhibit at a show of this size, it's very easy to put the show behind you and get back to the work that has piled up since you left the office. In order to complete a successful trade show marketing plan, you first need to arrange to follow-up on all the leads you received and make sure your marketing plans reinforce your image presented at the show.



Sales Follow-up

It seems logical to say that the first step is to follow-up on the leads you received, but the most common mistake companies make is to promote their attendance at a show, work the show and then never follow-up on the leads they receive. According to the Center for Exhibition Industry Research (CEIR), 80% of show leads are never followed up on! To avoid this, you must make lead follow-up a priority over just about everything else — including catching up on what you missed while you were out of the office.

It goes without saying that your hot leads should be the first you follow up on, but make sure you have contacted all of your leads in one way or another within one week. Keep in mind that many other exhibitors will also be contacting them, so the earlier you get to them the better. It's also important to contact them while you are fresh in their mind. Also, remember to fulfill any promise you made to a prospect — sending literature, checking on a feature, etc.

There are a few different types of programs you can utilize to efficiently follow-up on your leads. What program you decide that will work for your company should be based on your staff level and budget. Call campaigns are an excellent way to contact your hot leads, but this can take quite a bit of manpower. At the very least, you should absolutely make the effort to personally call the top prospects you met with. For the remainder of the leads, you can utilize either a post-show mailer program or email campaign. To ensure this is carried out in a timely manner, make sure to have the mailer designed or email written before you leave for the show. This way, when you return you have everything ready to be addressed and sent.

Maintain the Marketing Momentum

While exhibiting at the show, there are many different avenues you can take advantage of to promote your brand to your target audience. Between your booth design, collateral, and sponsorships, you can make a lasting impression on your audience while making sure your message is integrated in every facet of your participation. However, the longevity of your marketing impact depends on what you do after you leave the show. After the show is a good time to re-evaluate your marketing focus and determine whether it meshes with what you achieved and observed during the show. If your products and services were well received at the show, then follow-up with targeted direct marketing. If on the other hand, your prospect base feels unsure about your offering or doesn't quite see its benefits, then follow-up with targeted advertising and public relations aimed at educating and reinforcing key messages. In fact, public relations and specifically a well-executed post-show announcement can go a long way in recapping your show successes and remind your targets what sets you apart from the competition and what business benefits they will derive from your solutions.

Remember, what you do after the trade show is an integral part of your overall sales and marketing effort. If you expect to show up at the show, and have your product sell itself, you will be disappointed. By the same respect, you cannot build lasting brand awareness by setting up a booth with a nice graphic and expect to ride out the year on your one presentation alone. As always, the key to getting the most from the show is to have that be the jumping point of your marketing plan, not the end. Use your participation at the show as a kickoff to many more impressions to follow. Successful exhibiting is truly an example of needing to begin with the end in mind.

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