Post-Trade Show Strategy: How to Connect and Follow-Up with Leads

Post -trade show planning often gets overlooked, but I'm here to argue that your follow-up strategy is just as important as pre-show promotion and on-site preparation. It's important to spend as much time – if not more time—on your post-event strategy because that's when a key phase of connecting with your attendees begins: the follow-up.

A strong, clean list is the first thing you will need to build your post-show plan and target future prospects. So, gathering your booth visitors' basic contact information during the trade show, as well as more granular data such as interactions and engagement, will be invaluable later on. This information can be used to create, track and grow guest lists, which can then be pared down into segmented, targeted groups of people.

Once your list is sorted, consider using this six-email plan to build on the momentum from your trade show presence. This nurture sequence will help you to continue driving engagement with your guests, not to mention move people through the appropriate funnel to your desired outcome.

However, kick things off quickly: Each day you fail to follow-up on your booth visitors will deliver about a 20 percent drop-off engagement. You can avoid this by scheduling an immediate follow-up email, either on the last day of the trade show or the very next day.

But remember: Your interactions should be personal, relevant, consistent and, most of all, exciting. Here's a deeper dive into what those six emails should look like.

Email #1: In your first follow-up message, start with something like, "We loved seeing you there!" or "We missed your today!" and provide something of value, for example, a video from the booth, a cool quote from the day or other trade show highlights. The most important thing to remember is that this first email is just about giving—**do not ask for anything**.

Email #2: In this second email (which should be scheduled a day after the first) you do want to ask for something. Ask targets to complete a survey and provide feedback on their booth experience. And to avoid this coming off as a burden, tailor your request to appeal to a greater

good and tie it to a bigger purpose. Explaining why you're asking for feedback can go a long way here.

Email #3: The third interaction should be hyper-personalized; this one doesn't actually have to be an email but it should come from a human directly. Wait three days from the second email and then send your strongest prospects from the show a personalized message from someone they met onsite. It could be an email, a handwritten note or letter, a phone call or even a small but thoughtful, gift. This is hard to scale, though, so make sure to identify and prioritize those who were the most engaged in our booth.

Email #4-6: These next tree emails are when you really start to build a rapport with prospects. Wait about a week from the third interaction and then begin sending a weekly correspondence with engaging content such as videos, blog posts, announcements or invitations to future events. It's also a good idea to include some additional personal follow-ups from you or a sales/business development representative at this stage.

After the sixth email, you'll be able to take a look at the data and see who is still engaged and where to focus your time and energy- helping you determine who to try and set up a meeting within the near future.

Source: Post-Trade Show Strategy: How to Connect and Follow-Up with Leads by Ben Hindman, Splash