

AVP Advice

Making the Most of a Trade Show

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There are many ways to drive lead generation. While we often rely on cold calling, researching through directories, obtaining referrals, utilizing LinkedIn and other social networking to generate leads, sometimes being a trade show exhibitor is over looked.

The perception of being too expensive, too time consuming to organize, and the fear of less-than-expected results (ROI) overshadow the successes. Ensuring a successful trade show does involve a good deal of planning, but if done right, the payoff can be rewarding.

I had the pleasure of working with [Lippolis Electric \(PHOTO\)](#) in New York City at the [BuildingsNY trade show at the Javits Center](#) during the week of March 20, 2017. I gladly accepted the invitation to work alongside the team to provide support. There were 329 exhibitors at the show and, at the conclusion, I was impressed by the amount of attendees that visited the booth.

If you choose to participate in a trade show, here are a few tips to attract prospects to your booth and ensure a successful event:

1. **Make sure you have a clear and clean, crisp booth.** Your booth's appearance is as vital to attracting prospects as its location. An inviting looking booth enhances approachability. I recommend displaying different banners and exhibits representing all facets of your organization. Offering multiple displays helps you appeal a variety of prospects, and having a one-line brochure and company information to handout is essential.
2. **Interacting with people is the single most important function.** Make sure employees from all your different divisions are present to engage prospects. There are other keys to help attract prospects, including:
 - Make sure everyone from your company is dressed in matching company attire.
 - Smiling and staying off your cell phone is critical.
 - Do not sit because your posture and positive outlook will drive prospects toward your booth.
 - Address people with a warm welcome, and start conversations by asking them about what they do and where they are from.
3. **Promotional giveaways drive attendance.** Inexpensive pens, stress balls, and light up trinkets create a great start-up conversation, which leads to further in-depth discussions.
4. **Volunteer to speak.** It is a great way to enhance your message and get the word out to a larger portion of the audience. Make sure you have a well prepared topic to discuss and try to enlist others from your organization to assist and speak.
5. **Quickly follow up on leads generated at shows.** Do not wait too long to follow up, because as time goes by, it is easier for someone to forget you or your organization, and what was discussed.

I want to thank the team at [Lippolis Electric](#) for allowing me to participate in their event. In the end, their enthusiasm and team spirit is what attracted many of the prospects to their booth. They did an awesome job.

Trade shows can be a big investment, but the payoff can also be big by following the right steps.

