



# The Exhibitor's GUIDE TO TRADE SHOW SUCCESS

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Let's Talk Sales.



# I N T R O D U C T I O N

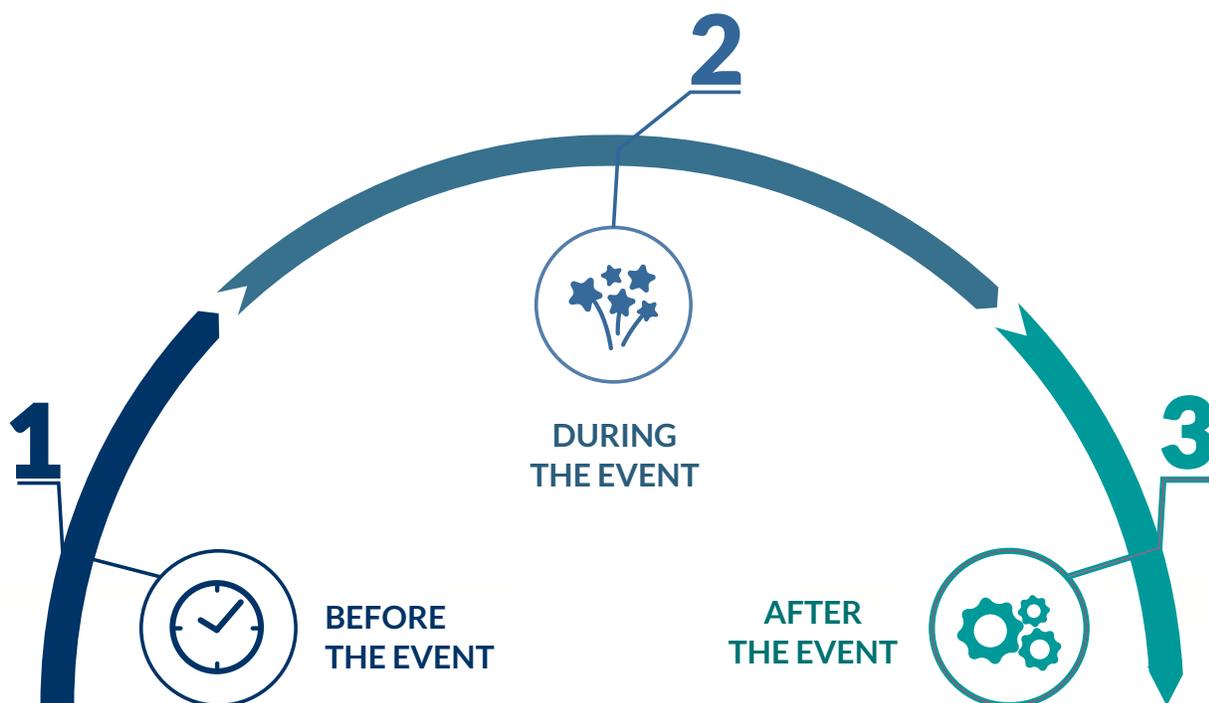
Having a booth at trade shows, expos and conferences can be a great way to develop leads, if it is done right. Companies of all sizes, in all stages of their growth spend thousands of dollars on trade shows and often get disappointing results. Exhibiting at events can be a good source of leads, but it can be very expensive, and if you are not ready, they can hurt your business more than help. If you have had disappointing results, you are not alone.

THIS EBOOK WILL SHARE A PROCESS YOU CAN USE TO IMPROVE  
YOUR RESULTS... AND IT ALL STARTS WITH PLANNING.

### 3 PHASES OF PLANNING FOR EXHIBITS

Exhibiting at an event can increase sales, but it can also be overwhelming. Create a plan so that you get results that make the expense of exhibiting worthwhile.

A successful exhibit plan has three phases:



The work done before and after usually receives little emphasis, but is more important than what you do at the event.

# PHASE 1

## BEFORE THE EVENT

Before you exhibit, you need to select the right events. Start by researching and making a spreadsheet of events that attract your ideal prospects. Gather all of the information about each trade show on that sheet, such as cost, date and time, what the exhibit booth includes, etc. Then decide which events will best meet your goals.

Depending on the budget, you might want to attend instead of exhibit. In addition, decide which shows would benefit from you (or someone at your company) as a speaker. For driving leads, the best results come from having a speaker from your company (that is terrific) and then driving traffic to your booth after their presentation.

Upon determining which events to attend, it's important to add the dates to your calendar, including the travel dates, and then schedule all of your planning meetings. This eBook focuses on exhibiting at events, the planning and actions required to get results. Therefore, start preparing eight weeks in advance of each conference, using the planning sheets on page eleven.

### SET GOALS

Set the goals for the show. What do you plan to accomplish? You've already determined that it is important to your business to exhibit at this show.

- Who do you need to meet with?
- How many leads do you need to collect?
- How many visitors will visit your booth?
- How many other exhibitors will you meet?
- How many sales should result from exhibiting?
- What will you do at the booth?

You might choose to measure the number of booth visits, qualified leads for follow up, and number of total contacts.

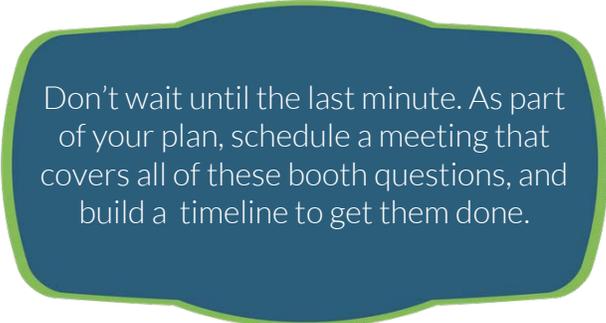
## BOOTH PREPARATION

Whether you have a booth design in place or you're starting from scratch, booth prep and design can cost \$1,000 to \$100,000. However, a fancy booth is not the key to getting qualified leads. Decide on a budget for building your booth based on what is needed to do a good job. It's best to take a look at your competitor's booths and other booths at the shows you plan to attend.

The booth needs to invite people in. Nothing should stand in between you and the prospects. Once you have a solid booth designed, determine the collateral needed, and who will work the booth and what they should wear.

Now that you have the booth planned, here are some other booth aspects to consider.

- What is the work schedule?
- Who will set up and tear down?
- Will you give away gizmos and gadgets?
- What questions will you ask booth visitors?
- Do you have a budget for all of the above?
- Does anything need to be designed or ordered?



Don't wait until the last minute. As part of your plan, schedule a meeting that covers all of these booth questions, and build a timeline to get them done.

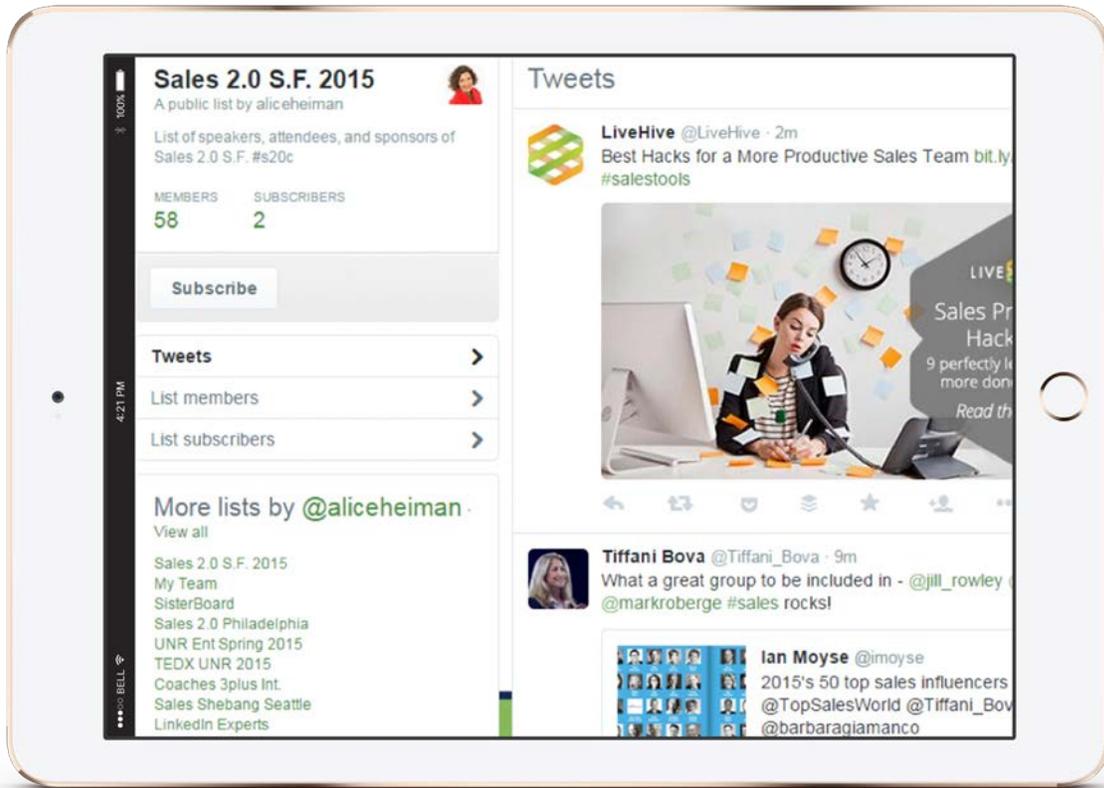
## CONNECT WITH PROSPECTS AND CUSTOMERS BEFORE THE SHOW

If your sponsorship doesn't include free passes, register in time to get the early bird special. Then, connect with your prospects prior to the event to let them know you're attending. This has many benefits, including:

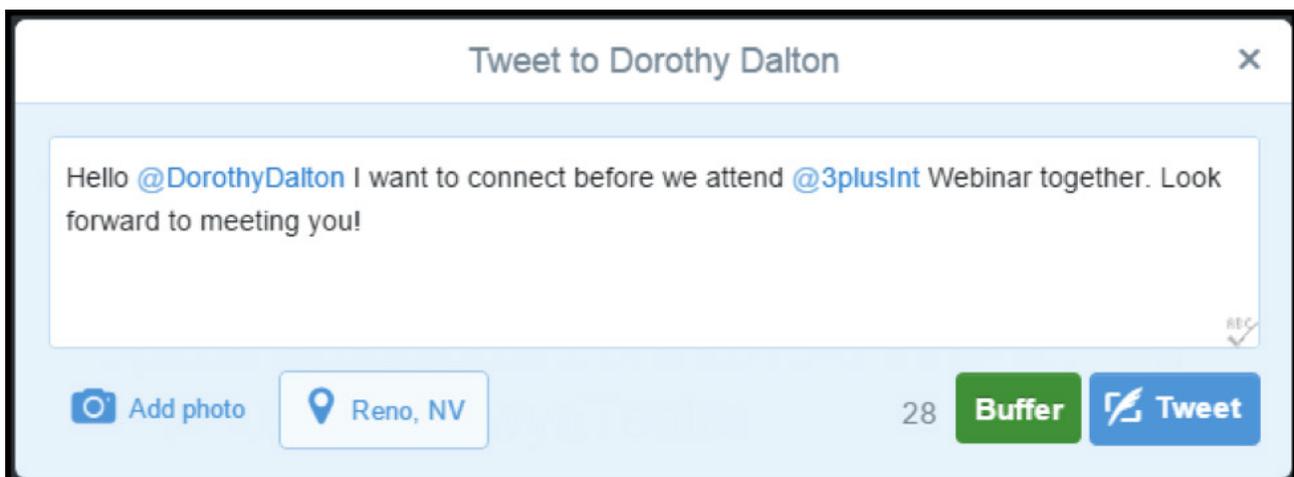
- Guarantees you will have more visitors at your booth
- Markets your company to those who may not attend
- Gives you higher visibility to those that are attending

Request a list of registrants for the conference and a list of exhibitors. Sometimes a list comes with your registration and sometimes you have to pay extra. It's worth it to pay for the list. Make a plan to contact that list prior to the event. It's rare to get email addresses so you will need a budget for direct mail or time to make calls. You can also append missing contact data with tools like [Capture](#).

If you have Twitter, an easy way to keep track of speakers, exhibitors, and participants is to build a Twitter list. Here is an example of a Twitter list that I created before I attended [Sales 2.0](#). I added all of the speakers and sponsors so I could interact with them prior to attending the event.



Introducing yourself via Twitter is a great way to meet the speakers and break the ice prior to attending the event. **Here is an example of a quick and easy introduction:**



## FOUR WEEKS BEFORE THE EVENT

Email your customer database letting them know you will be at the event. It can be part of your existing communications, such as a newsletter. Post on your social media channels and mention any show specials or giveaways. Don't forget to use the event's hashtag!

## TWO WEEKS BEFORE THE EVENT

Always have a clear call to action, such as bringing the direct mail piece or the email promo code to the booth. This way you can track your results. In addition, make phone calls to high-quality prospects requesting to schedule appointments with them or ask them to stop by the booth.

## FOLLOW UP PLAN

While the follow up occurs after the event, you need to plan for it beforehand. In fact, the most important piece to be planned in advance is the follow up. Make sure to get it scheduled on your sales team's calendar or it won't get done.

Plan a drip marketing campaign, or a series of automated processes that send a set of messages or content to sales leads at the right moment to move them through the sales cycle.

This will help nurture the leads. If individual emails and calls are warranted, time should be blocked to do that. Consider hiring temps, or allocate BDR (Business Development Representatives) to help with trade show follow up so you don't lose valuable leads. Build on the momentum.

Plan the social media and blog content you will post before, during and after the event, and have that ready to go, too.

**THE BASICS OF DRIP CAMPAIGNS**  
BENEFITS, EXAMPLES, AND BEST PRACTICES FOR NURTURING YOUR LEADS

Drip nurturing is the process of automatically "dripping" relevant information, usually via email, to sales leads over a period of time, based either on user action or a predefined time interval.

### BENEFITS OF DRIP CAMPAIGNS

TIMELY INFORMATION	LEAD NURTURING	EASY AUTOMATION
<p><b>BE RELEVANT</b></p> <p>Deliver the right information, exactly when your users need it. The content delivered through drip programs is triggered by how a user is interacting with your brand and where they are in the sales cycle.</p>	<p><b>CREATE LEADS</b></p> <p>Drip marketing nurtures early stage leads until they are sales ready. Drip campaigns can provide your sales team with a continuous supply of leads that are ready to close, maximizing marketing and sales effectiveness.</p>	<p><b>WORK SMARTER</b></p> <p>Automate the most tedious part of the sales process by allowing drip campaigns to educate and nurture your leads for you. Spend less time pitching your product and more time closing deals.</p>



[Click on graphic to see larger](#)

# PHASE 2

## DURING THE EVENT

**CONFERENCES ARE A BUSY TIME, SO FOCUS ON THESE THREE AREAS DURING THE EVENT:**



Attracting people to your booth



Asking good questions and listening to build relationships

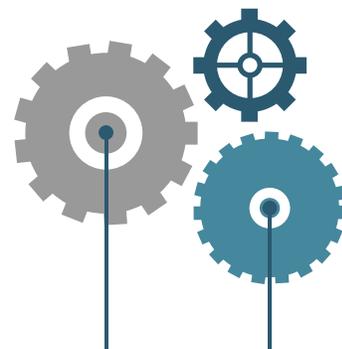


Walking the show to look at the other exhibitors to learn

If you've planned and prepared your event efforts ahead of time, attracting people to your booth should be easy. Once people are in your booth, ask good questions and learn about the prospect. Develop as much of a relationship with them as you can in the short time you have. Get to a point where they will take your call after the trade show. You can make appointments at the show, but if you don't build a good relationship or you are pushy, the person will not be interested when you follow up. Ask the right questions that get the prospect talking about their problems as they relate to the type of solution you provide.

### TAILOR QUESTIONS TO YOUR PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

1. Do you use a solution similar to ours currently?
2. How do you handle this now?
3. Are you looking for a new solution?



You don't need to sell at the trade show; you need to learn. If the prospect feels you have listened and offered a good tip or two, then you have earned the right to ask if you can schedule an appointment to call them in a few days.

## CONNECT VIA SOCIAL MEDIA

During the show, connect to your hot leads via LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook and other media used at the event. When making a request to connect, always remind the prospect where you met and include specific topics from the conversation. Be careful using LinkedIn on your mobile device as it doesn't let you send a message with your connection request. It's better to use their website than their app in this case.

If you've built a Twitter list, make sure you interact during the event by retweeting, favoriting and conversing. Almost every event has a hashtag that you can follow. Using the hashtag in your tweets helps your company gain visibility.

Here is an example:



## WALK THE EVENT FLOOR

Aside from your booth, the next best way to network is to keep moving. Don't limit your time to working in your booth, listening to keynotes, or attending sessions. Get your workout in by walking the event and visiting the other exhibitors.

As you meet the other exhibitors, talk to them about their goals for the show. Keep in mind whether this is a company for:



**BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT**



**REFERRALS**



**COLLABORATION**

No matter what you're doing at the event, keep track of all the people you meet. Bring hundreds of business cards, and exchange cards with everyone you meet. With so many introductions, however, it could be difficult to remember the face when you look at the card a few days later. To avoid that, make a point of writing a note about each person on the back of his or her card, or update your CRM immediately with notes (mobile-friendly CRMs such as Salesforce1 is a huge bonus here). These notes can personalize the experience even more, and maybe even give you a hint on how to approach the person in your next call or email.

# PHASE 3

## AFTER THE EVENT

### **DON'T WASTE LEADS**

More than half of the contacts that are made at a show are wasted because salespeople don't follow up, and marketing doesn't have a plan to stay in front of them. Everything you have done up to this point will not necessarily get you a sale. It's what you do after the show, when you get back to your office, where you start getting results. While you likely won't close sales instantly after the show, you can gauge the results of the event by number of booth visits, qualified leads for follow up, and number of total contacts.

### **CLEAN YOUR LIST**

You're gathering contact information from event-goers throughout the show. Whether it's business cards or badge scanning devices, your booth helps you develop a list of great leads. After you leave the conference, you'll have a nice list in hand. However, importing of mass lists is a very common cause of duplicate records. In addition, the leads may come in various forms, from excel files to direct imports into your CRM. Nothing will undermine or torpedo your revenue like bad data.

Prevent bad data by using helpful importing applications, such as Unique Upload, to simultaneously prevent the creation of duplicate records while uploading lists into your CRM, such as Salesforce. Applications like these can clean the lists – whether they're Excel files or other formats – before you import them. Powerful options allow you to control what happens when duplicates or related records are found.

### **FOLLOW UP**

Schedule time on your calendar for follow-up. Give hot prospects a day to get back to their office and then call them. Create a lead nurturing campaign for the new contacts that are not hot leads. Start the campaign as soon as the event is over. Connect with all of the qualified prospects via social media and send a follow up email or mail. Send a "nice to see you at the show" message with a link to a relevant whitepaper, article, or some other useful piece of information to show your value before you try to sell. If you have a special offer as part of the show, remind them that there's still time to take part, and note the expiration date. No matter the message or how you reach out, it must be planned. Don't just put them on your mailing list and spam them. Don't give up. People are busy and purchasing your product may not be their top priority.

### **PLAN TO CALL 3-6 TIMES**

Call your qualified leads at least three to six times over the next 30 to 60 days. Plan a series of great voicemail messages if you don't reach them. Make the messages interesting, engaging and most importantly about them – not you, your product or your service. Make each message unique, because they don't want to hear the same message each time. If you never connect via phone or between calls, send them an email or mail with some useful information, and ask them to opt in to your newsletter or sign up for your blog. Connect on LinkedIn. Going forward, stay connected on social media, and find opportunities to interact with them. They may need your product in the future, at which time they will be more apt to respond.

# ● TRADE SHOW PLAN ●

Use the following planning sheets side by side as you plan your next exhibit.

CONFERENCE/SHOW	DATE	TIME	SET UP	BREAKDOWN

Conference Fees	\$
Booth Fees	\$
Airfare	\$
Ground Transportation	\$
Hotel	\$
Meals	\$
Shipping Fees	\$
Marketing (mailers, ads, collateral)	\$
Product	\$
Prizes	\$
Other	\$
<b>TOTAL</b>	\$

**Expected Results/Goals:**

**BEFORE**

WHAT	WHO	WHEN

**DURING**

WHAT	WHO	WHEN

**AFTER**

WHAT	WHO	WHEN

# PLANNING MEETING CHECKLIST

Schedule a planning meeting eight weeks before the event to discuss the following questions.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- Who will be the lead for this event?
- What results are we looking for?
- Are there any meetings that need to be set up?
- Are there any pre-show emails, calls or mailings that need to go to participants or vendors?
- Is all of the follow up planned so that it can be delivered in a timely manner after the show?
- What will we send out after the show to add value?
- Do we have time blocked on our calendars to do the follow up after the show?
- Are there any people we need meet?
- What will we say to the vendors we meet?
- How will we measure the results?

## BEFORE

- Apply to speak
- Register for the booth
- Develop the budget
- Build a timeline
- Decide who will attend, who will speak
- Prepare speaker's presentation
- Make travel arrangements
- Design your exhibit – plan a booth that is inviting
- Make a work schedule
- Schedule meetings with customers and prospects during the show
- Block off several hours on days immediately after the event so that you can do the follow up
- Develop your before and after marketing pieces (info that adds value – deliver content not a pitch)
- Email clients, prospects, other constituents to let them know you will be exhibiting
- Connect to speakers, sponsors, vendors, participants on social media (include a personal message)
- Email the other vendors to introduce yourself
- Email the attendee list to invite them to stop by
- Send a press release to local media outlets telling them that you will be there
- Prepare follow up thank you notes and/or thank you emails; provide a special off that adds value
  - a. A link to your website
  - b. An article you wrote
  - c. A quarterly newsletter
- Post event on your website with a link
- Determine a give-away for drawing at the booth
- Develop questions to ask booth visitors

## PLANNING MEETING CHECKLIST CONTINUED

Schedule a planning meeting eight weeks before the event to discuss the following questions.

### DURING

- Set up booth to invite people in, don't put the table between you and your prospects
- Ask questions
- Offer information of value
- Inform prospects of offers/show specials
- Collect business cards for a drawing
- Make appointments for after the show
- Walk around to other booths and interact with vendors and collect their cards

### AFTER

- Organize
- Follow up on hot leads within 3 days
- Contact all of the people you met
- Send follow-up mail/email
- Incentivize them to join your email list
- Stay in touch over time



# CONCLUSION

## IT JUST TAKES PLANNING!

Exhibiting at events can be a very effective way to increase your sales, but they can also be overwhelming. By using the ideas in this eBook, you will be able to handle all the leads you get.

## About Alice

*Exceptional sales growth starts at the top, so for the last 20 years Alice, has been helping sales leaders, business owners and CEOs drive sales growth in a complex sales environment. Alice demonstrates how sales performance is directly related to a leader's mindset, "When sales leaders change the way they work with sales teams, results are immediate and dramatic." Other sales experts tell you how to increase sales, but Alice shows you exactly what your team needs to do, and helps you implement simple processes that fit your company culture and drive sales growth.*

*For decades, Alice has been helping companies who have a complex sales develop sales strategy , implement sales process and train sales teams to sell more effectively. Foremost, she focuses on redesign, implementation and reinforcement of sales process, including acquisition, retention and growth of customers.*

*Alice developed her expertise while at Miller Heiman, Inc., working with some of the company's largest and most complex accounts: Coca Cola, Dow Chemical, Merck and Hewlett Packard. A natural sales person and networker, Alice Heiman entertains and engages her audiences while incorporating the newest research and best practices to help business owners and sales leaders bring about sustainable change the leads to growth. When Alice is at the front of the room, everyone is having fun, engaged and learning.*

## Connect with me!



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Alice Heiman, LLC

