

How Sponsors Generate Leads at Conferences

Conferences are great opportunities for like-minded people to come together, share ideas and generate new business. How people capitalize on these opportunities depends on their purpose for being there. According to The Master's Conference, event sponsors go about maximizing their experience and ROI in many interesting ways. After consulting with a number of managers from sponsor companies, they offered these 6 characteristics for achieving high ROI as a conference sponsor.

Personality

Event sponsors always have a booth at the event. Behind the counter is at least one person charged with the responsibility of generating leads and sales from the foot traffic of the attendees. At first glance, it might seem easy. After all, your target audience is literally walking right in front of you.

The truth is, there is an art to selling at a conference. First, you have to navigate the challenge of knowing nothing about the person you are talking to. So, you have to be approachable, engaging and inquisitive. There is not a lot of time to spend with each attendee, so it's important to build rapport quickly and be authentic. Ask a lot of questions and get their contact information so you can follow up with them for a more thorough conversation at a later date.

Ultimately, the most successful sales people in this environment are personable, patient and pro active...and they demonstrate a lot of hustle!

Lead Generation and Qualification

Sponsors have been known to get creative in their pursuit of quality leads. One secret tool is a big giveaway where a person gives up their contact info for the chance to win an enticing prize. It's fun and draws a lot of attention to a brand, but isn't known for drawing in a pool of qualified leads. So, get creative with your giveaway prize. Instead of a high priced gift like an iPad, give away a course, training, or demo of your product.

You'll attract higher quality leads and keep them coming back to your business!

While a great giveaway is effective in creating excitement for your booth, sales managers offered these additional tips to make the most out of the opportunity.

Talk to everyone! Even if that person isn't the right fit for your product or service, the buzz at your booth will likely attract those who are.

Ask great questions and aim to educate. If appropriate, do a quick demo that lends itself to getting a lead's contact information.

Pour over coffee. Coffee takes a few minutes to brew and enjoy, so while your prospects are there you have time to get to learn more about them.

Use a quiz. When quizzes are interactive and fun, leads are intrigued and want to learn more. Quizzes are a great tool to qualify leads and get their contact information.

Take orders. This is obvious, but its easy to forget while in the flurry of activities. But, many leads are prepared to buy on the spot. Make sure you have the order forms and other tools you need to make that sale.

The Master's Conference also recommends that sponsors strategically choose events that align with their product or service, and have a quick and efficient means to capture data and follow up with the lead.

Product

Having a great product and solid demo is critical at a live event. There is a lot of competition for the attendees attention, everything from the conference itself to other vendors. Bring your best product and make sure that your demonstration is flawless. Work out any bugs or kinks ahead of time that can cause your prospect to lose interest and walk away.

Throw a Party

Attendees love to socialize. Sponsors can capitalize on this by hosting an after party. Create it in a way where people have to register at your booth and get a sticker or a bracelet to attend. Not only will this generate activity to your booth, but also as people walk around with your sticker or bracelet, they are literally walking billboards for your party. Other attendees will ask them how to participate and show up at your booth wanting to get in on the fun!

Experiential marketing like this is highly effective and can also be used to run a contest, leverage social media, and create a presence around your booth.

Signage

Be creative and strategic about your signs. Make sure that they are eye-catching and informative. Adding short messages that appeal to your ideal customer on a display screen is a great way to catch their attention and get them to stop and ask questions

about your product or service.

Meet Existing Customers

While you are busy generating new leads at an event, don't forget about your current customers. Keep them loyal and coming back by inviting them to meet you at your booth. Learn more about their needs, show them new product features and get their feedback on your service. Use the conference to strengthen existing relationships.

Have Fun

There are many ways for sponsors to get a great ROI and generate quality leads at conferences. Create videos, host an event, be engaging and authentic. Above all, have fun with your marketing endeavors. It is infectious!