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Gaylord Texan Resort, Dallas Texas

Pre-Arranged Appointments and Personal Invitations Increases ROI

Statistics say it is five times more expensive to acquire a new client than it is to keep a current client. To improve your company's results, pre-arrange as many meetings, demonstrations and booth tours as possible with existing customers and pre-qualified prospects. Leverage these meetings to accelerate the buying/selling process.

Include Invitations to Current Customers

Your booth is a great opportunity to interact with current customers. Meeting face-to-face rather than a phone call or email reinforces relationships and moves the sales process forward.

Meetings with your senior executives and technical experts can be invaluable in reinforcing relationships. Customers with limited or no access to them will relish the opportunity to meet face-to-face. Attendees will benefit and it enables your company's leadership to gain a better understanding of your current customers' needs and plans for the future.

Let your customers know they can interact with new or upgraded products. Your booth is a great way to introduce them to technology and products they have yet to experience first-hand. This allows them to better understand your offerings ask questions, which could lead to a new sale from a current customer.

With customers coming to the show, you want to make sure they spend time with you and not your competition. Most attendees arrive with a list of companies they want to see and it's imperative your company is on that list. Customers may assume they have nothing new to learn from you and if they have limited time, bypass your booth. Personal invitations, by phone, email or in personal will place you at the top of their list.

Tried and True Tactics for Setting up Appointments

Here are some tried and true tactics that exhibitors have employed in the past that have helped reinforce the value in the meeting and greatly reduced the rate of no-shows.

1. Conduct an aggressive appointment scheduling campaign which includes lots of follow-up after a meeting has been scheduled. A request for the meeting should initially come from your sales folks because they have an established relationship with the client. This doesn't necessarily mean that the sales person will be at the show. If

the salesperson is not attending, explain to the client who they will meet and the credibility of this person. Now you can plan to bring technical experts or product development personnel to staff the booth.

2. Follow-up. Once a specific appointment is made the next step is to confirm it. This can be done with a simple e-mail or text. But, don't stop there. If the client will be meeting with someone other than the sales person this is a good time for that person to introduce themselves to the client. This can be done with a personal phone call, or a quick note. Staying connected to the prospect prior to the show gives both the sales person and other representative an opportunity to open the discussion and uncover issues that the prospect is hoping to solve.

3. Last minute reminders. If you have the prospect's mobile number you can text or call during the show to confirm their attendance. If you know where they will be staying then you can leave a message at their hotel.

4. If they are late for the meeting then you have the ability to text or phone to see if there has been a delay.

5. After the meeting use this same technique to confirm what transpired at the meeting and any follow-up that was agreed to.

6. Put time aside for meetings. There is nothing worse than showing up for a meeting and waiting until staff disengage from another visitor to meet with you.

7. Let the prospect know that you have set aside time to meet. Not everyone is prompt when it comes to meetings. Some arrive too early and others too late. In either case if your prospect sees that you have set aside meeting time, it will reinforce their commitment. This is accomplished with a sign welcoming the visitor and identifying the person that they will meet.

8. If for some reason the staff member who has the appointment is engaged, then it is the responsibility of another member of your staff to make the visitor feel welcome by offering them a seat or a beverage.

9. Provide the visitor with a tangible reminder or their visit. This can be in the form of a small gift or product sample. The trick to giving these reminders value is to ensure that they are not placed on counter-tops for everyone to take but rather are presented at the end of the meeting as a thank you.

Reducing the no-show rate is often a matter of taking the time to put into place a system that says to the prospect, "You are important." Follow these nine steps and see if your no-show rate doesn't drop significantly.

<u>Tried and True Tactics</u> provided by Barry Siskind, International Training and Management Company. For the past 28 years ITMC has been helping businesses achieve positive results from their trade and consumer show activities both domestically and internationally. We are dedicated to enhancing the performance of people and organizations at trade and consumer shows and contributing to their success. For more information, visit www.siskindtraining.com