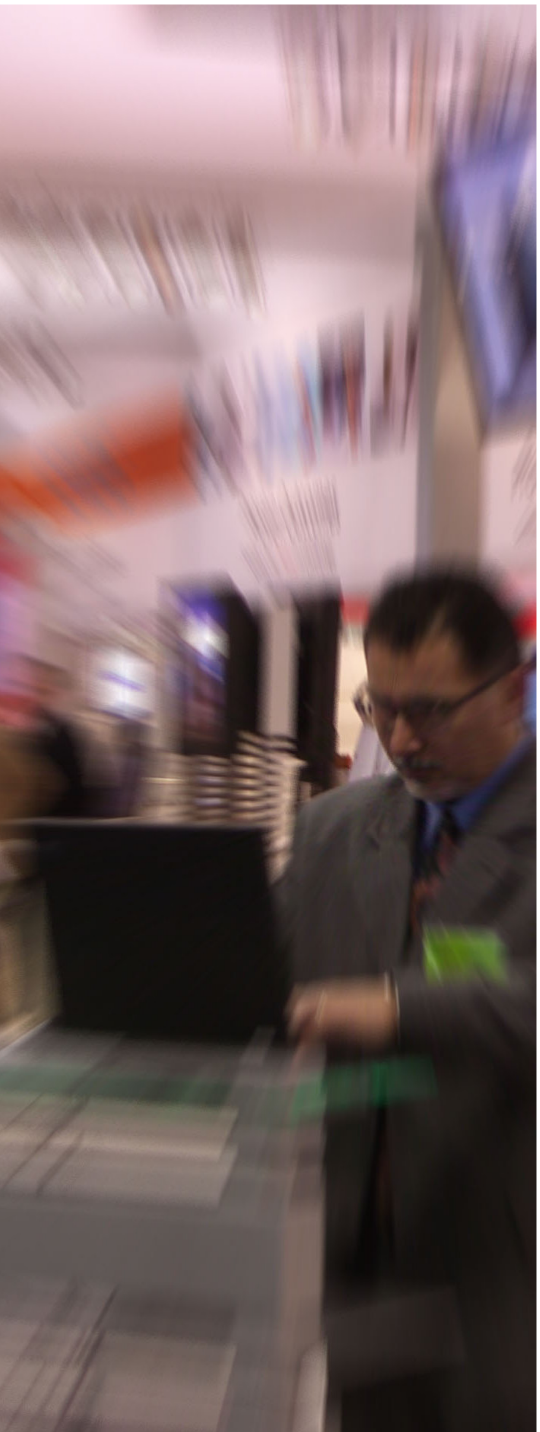
NEWLEADS
Trade Show Lead Solutions



Increasing Attendee Engagement at Trade Shows

By John Hasbrouck, President
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A friend of my father's who invented the 24 Hour Buffet in Las Vegas told me a brutal fact as he walked by my 10 x 10 booth proclaiming, "You only have two and a half seconds to tell me what you are about and then I look to the next booth." He then backed up and walked by my booth in typical attendee fashion, starting with his head looking the other way, then turning to see my booth and giving it no more than a quick look without ever slowing his stride. "One, two, three…" he counted, and then kept walking. His point was loud and clear: What exactly is your message and how easy is it to understand from the view of a walking attendee? The late Dick Taylor (the first manager of the Hacienda Hotel, now the site of Mandalay Bay) knew a lot about crowds, how to get people interested and especially how to keep them engaged; the 24 Hour Buffet kept people gambling instead of sleeping.

Once you get attendees in your booth, do you have a "24 Hour Buffet" to keep them engaged? Many trade show managers do a good job of getting people into the booth, but getting attendees to stay the main factor in getting sales-ready leads. This is not to say that branding and collecting new names for lead nurturing programs are not important activities—indeed, they are. But if your company's primary goal is to get sales-ready leads at trade shows, then designing a plan for increased engagement is a mission-critical activity. (Sales-ready leads are those attendees who have a defined product interest with a "large enough" quantity and a short timeframe for purchase; they should account for as much as 10% of your visitors).

Designing a Plan

There is a list of considerations when designing such a plan, including your booth layout, planned activities in the booth, your staff and their training, presentations and interactive sales and marketing tools available to your staff.

Any good game plan will first consider the viewpoint of the attendee. Why are they in your booth? If your iPad giveaway attracted them, are they potential buyers of your widgets? Are the doctors interested in learning more about your newest prescription drug? What do you think the attendee wants to experience: A/V presentations, long or short demos, personal access to product managers, consultative sales reps, easy to read

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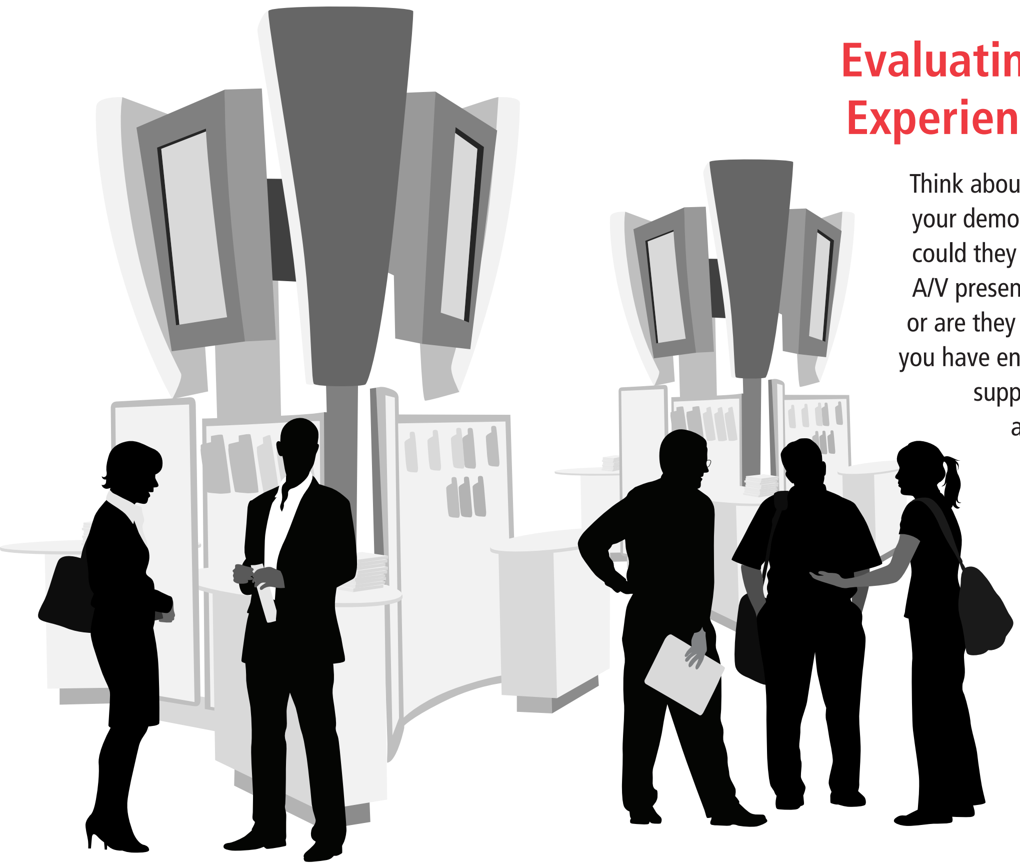
collateral? Think like an attendee; perhaps calling a few from your last show might provide some new insight.

Staff "Question" Training

Your booth staff is the key to all interaction, and basic training is a vital ingredient to increased engagement. A trained booth staff should understand that helping attendees who visit you will involve up-front questions so that the conversation is concise and an effective use of the attendee's time. It should include questions in the first minute that determine the attendee's interest. Here is a sample of what some of those questions might be for your "Widget Company" staff to ask, such as "Taylor, does your area of work involve widget technology?" then follow with, "Do you have an upcoming need for a widget installation?" followed by "How much time would you like to spend right now so that I may tailor our discussion?" and "What features are you looking for in a widget?" and "Is this an immediate or short term need?" and so forth. Of course your company has a different product and service line, so your questions will vary. If Taylor has no upcoming needs, then your conversation should be polite but short. If Taylor is looking to install 10,000 widgets, that's a good 30 minutes. But without a focused staff to ask the right questions up front, the conversation could ramble on for 30 minutes before Taylor reveals that there is no need in the foreseeable future for your widgets, squandering your valuable exhibit time. See the free article, "What's At Stake?" to see how much each rep costs you per hour.



Understanding the Attendee Viewpoint

Now, let's put ourselves in the shoes of the attendee who has an interest in your category of products and services. There are competitors on the exhibit floor, so the attendee wants as much differentiating information as possible from your company and each competitor to know who fits their short list of possible suppliers.

Attendees gain information in your booth in five primary ways, listed in broadest to most specific delivery: static or multimedia signage, mini-theatre presentations, product demo stations, sales rep conversations, and collateral (sell sheets). The last item listed is collateral; most data shows that only 25% of printed collateral ever makes it home with an attendee, leaving the chore of lasting impressions to quick follow-ups with emails and subsequent phone calls. Yet attendees still want it because they want to remember your booth and products, and you want to give it to them to keep them focused on your products.

Evaluating the Current Attendee Experience

Think about the attendee experience in your booth. Are your demo stations static, where a few can gather round, or could they be mobile? Are your information areas, such as A/V presentations or interactive screens, tradeshow-ready or are they designed for less busy, more focused venues? Do you have enough collateral and can you provide multi-media support so the attendee gets all of their questions answered? Do you have enough sales reps to handle the crowds and do they know how to engage and continuously include more attendees in a small group into their discussions?

Let's start with what should be the last part of the attendee experience, the take-away; that informational piece with which they leave your booth; a sell sheet, a white paper, a price list, a spec sheet. It's not possible nor is it environmentally responsible to print and ship everything you anticipate the attendee will request. If you are not already doing so, consider a print-on-demand literature station where PDF's can be dragged to a color printer icon for those who insist on taking literature with them. But for most, an email with links to your collateral is preferred. (NewLeads provides both of these environmentally friendly solutions but neither increases in-booth interaction significantly).

Understanding Your Sales Team's Needs

With modern technology, virtual collateral is an easy and powerful option. How many times has a sales rep asked you, "Did we bring any sheets on the XYZ Widget that Taylor is asking about?", knowing full well there are none but asking the question in front of the attendee to show they tried to help. The attendee wants their questions answered and your reps want to have all the answers. They want as much interaction as possible. Increased interaction--engagement time—combined with the right information, results in more sales-ready leads.

Consider your current process: an attendee enters the booth, maybe has their badge scanned (even though they have not expressed interest yet in anything nor have they been educated by your booth staff), perhaps they visit a demo station (unless it is already in progress and not accessible), speaks to a rep (who may be trained and focused or not), maybe asks for collateral, has their badge swiped at a lead station (if it is not being used by someone else), and leaves the booth. How many chances are there for the attendee to not get the information they are seeking and how probable is it that their requests will not be properly documented so that the sales team after the show cannot even determine if the attendee was anything more than a swiped badge? So many chances for failure create an environment where many sales-ready leads are never documented and future sales are never realized. Your chance to prove your potential ROI is greatly diminished and your company simply "leaves money on the table."

Improving the Engagement Process

Current attendee experiences are not maximized because the information givers, your reps, can't always directly access all the information in your booth (your demos, A/V presentations, collateral) and they don't have guaranteed access to a detailing device (lead retrieval system) to accurately record the conversation and interests. A new approach bridges these gaps and deficiencies by giving every rep complete access to information and exclusive use of a lead detailing system. With the invention of the iPad, NewLeads created a new process to enhance the tools available to your booth reps. It changes the entire process and interaction time because every rep can perform several natural functions without the assistance of demo stations, lead stations, collateral and multi-media support: it's all on the iPad.

Imagine that every rep in your booth is equipped with a tradeshow-ready iPad, one that is pre-loaded with a process that is attendee friendly, easy to navigate, contains just the right amount of information and has an easy-to-use lead detailing system. In this scenario, an attendee enters the booth and can engage in conversation with any rep. Every category and product or service can be easily shown to the attendee on the iPad, including short videos, PDF's, images, sell sheets and short Power Points (call Key Note presentations on the iPad). If your demo is internet based or iPad ready, it can be included.

With each iPad loaded with 50 or more relevant pieces of collateral, attendees spend more time with your reps because they get more questions answered, resulting in deeper interactions and more sales-ready leads. Each iPad is also equipped with a lead qualification tool that is customized to match your company needs and CRM (see the free articles, "What Questions Should Be On My Lead Form" and "Aligning Trade Show Leads With Your CRM"). When the attendee is ready to leave your booth, two things happen: the booth rep details

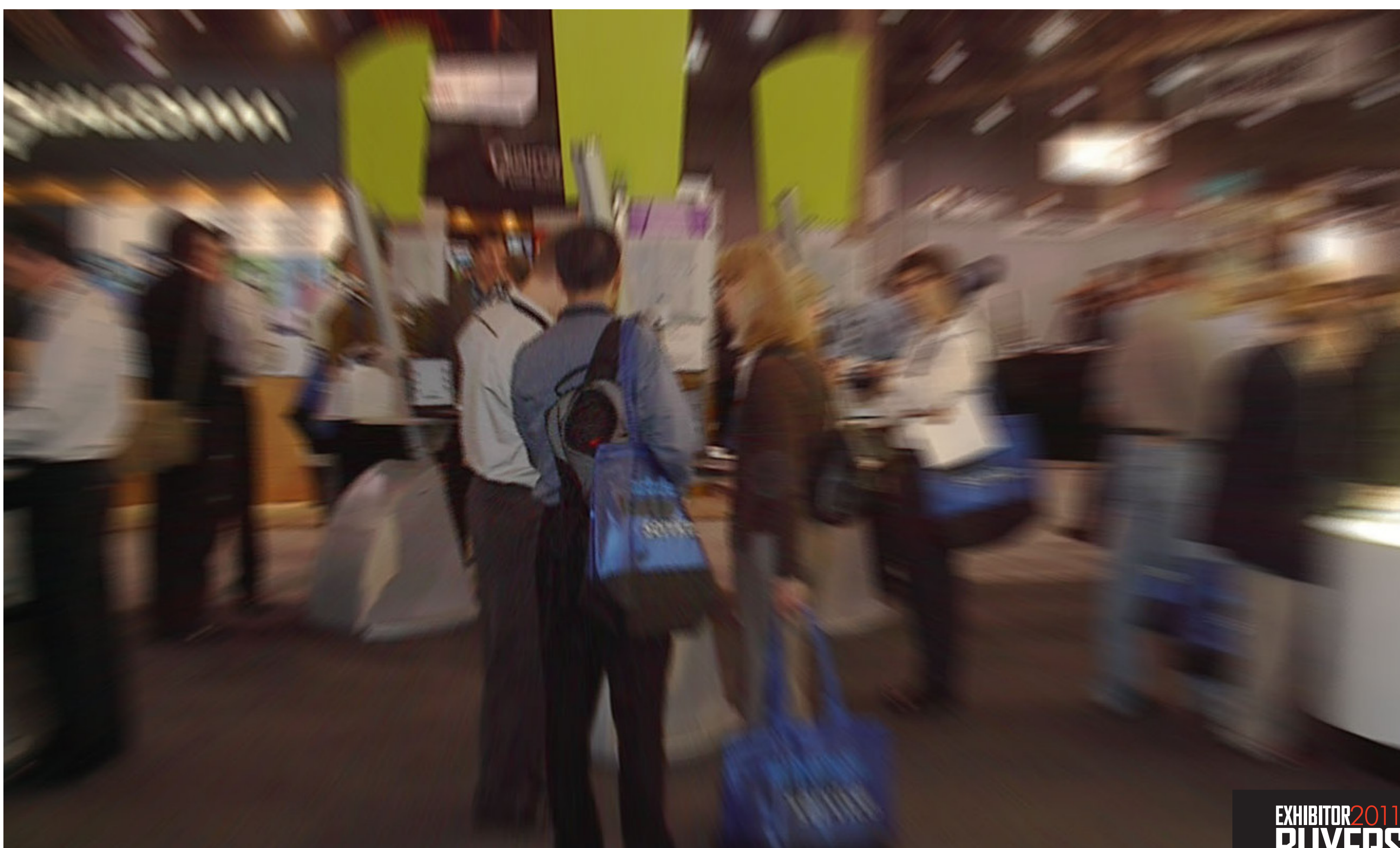
the lead by verifying the attendee's information and ticking off attendee interests, opportunity size and timeframe on the iPad, and an instant email is sent to the attendee with links to the products and services for which they indicated interest.

Analysis of the NewLeads Process

As a marketer, you will have made every rep in your booth an interactive kiosk and lead-taking system, giving each of them a library of easily accessible information and a method to detail the leads. You will eliminate the lost opportunities where static information areas and shared lead stations in your booth might be inaccessible or lacking enough information. Think back to the description of being able to show an attendee all types of collateral—videos, PDF's, sell sheets. Wouldn't you love to see that information? NewLeads captures all of this behavior and displays it in summary reports so that you may understand the most popular pieces of collateral and the times spent visiting each.

With this information, you can change your strategy in determining how to allocate your booth space, reassign underperforming booth reps, adjust your pre-show and post-show marketing, and re-assess the effectiveness of certain collateral pieces based on time viewed. This analytical view of attendee interaction is more precise than any other method because it measures actual activity, not passively gathered (RFID) "loitering" time in the booth—that time attributed to attendees standing in certain places but with no idea what their activities might have been (texting, talking on their phones, chatting with an old friend or watching a demo). It is also available for every show, regardless of the trade show badge type, and it even works if your only option is to scan business cards. Data gathered by NewLeads on attendee collateral viewing behavior is also delivered as part of the notes section to sales reps to help them understand the education delivered to the sales lead (attendee).

If you would like to discuss best-practices and your needs with one of our consultants, please call 805-604-4444 ext 106 or email sales@newleads.com



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