

# Tradeshhow Tip Sheet

This month: Follow Up Those Leads

- > 1865 Beach Ave NE
- > Salem, OR 97301
- > 503-371-9411
- > Fax: 503-371-9402
- > [www.interpexhibits.com](http://www.interpexhibits.com)
- > [info@interpexhibits.com](mailto:info@interpexhibits.com)
- > Editor: Tim Patterson

## Now What Do We Do With All These Leads?

Okay, going to a tradeshow as an exhibitor is great. You get to expose your product or service to new prospects, clients, media and public relations folks and other people who may or may not remember what went on at your booth. And by golly, you managed to put a lead collection system into play that actually gathered a lot of solid leads. You'd managed to rank them in some way that shows your sales team what level of interest each company has. But wait – before you get carried away and put that follow up plan into action, let's take a look and see exactly what the plan is!

Are you sending the right material to the right folks? Are you putting lukewarm leads in to a

'drip' file so that they get information, knowledge and maybe even a few cool freebies from you over the next year? Are you automating any of this stuff?

In other words, are you really doing the best you can with the leads you bring home? Let's explore a few ways to follow up with your tradeshow leads – in a way that puts the prospects into your sales funnel that benefits both them and you. After all, if your product or service is as good and useful as you say it is, wouldn't these potential clients want to know all the great ways you can help them out, help them save money, improve productivity or sell more products? Of course they would!

## Judging the Leads

As you're gathering leads, make sure your lead-logging sheet has an area where you can gauge the interest of your prospect: cool, warm or hot. Or lukewarm, tepid, fire-eating. Whatever. As long as your team knows what the terms mean.

If you collect a business card, jot a note on the back that helps jog your memory: *"Jerry loves the Sonics, hates to see them leave Seattle; wants a follow-up call in 45 days – may want to move to step one then."* This gives you a frame of reference for when you call or e-mail Jerry. Mention how you hated the Sonics to leave, too, and you immediately build a little rapport. Of course, if you're in Oklahoma City and are looking forward to the 'former' Sonics perhaps you'd better hold your tongue.

The more information you have about a pros-

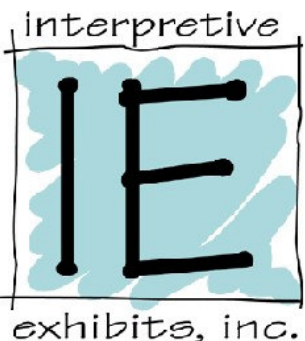


pect's interests in your products, the better off you'll both be. You'll have a suitable and timely response for him which he'll appreciate.

Rate your leads:

- \*Limp
- \*Halfhearted
- \*Scalding

whatever—as long as your team know what the terms mean and are ready to follow up



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The oft-repeated factoid in the tradeshow industry is that 70 to 80 percent of all leads are simply not followed up on

## Follow Up From the Show

Instant follow-up from a show impresses. When your prospect gets back to their desk after the show, what would they think if there was a letter, post-card or package waiting in their in-box?

Depending on your business, you may be able to prepare a variety of responses to the folks you meet at the show and have them sent out immediately – even as early as the day you first meet the person. The mailing could be preceded by a short jaunty e-mail that basically says ‘Hi. Glad to meet you. As per our conversation, you’ll be receiving XYZ from us by next Tuesday...’ How impressive would it be if they received that email the same night on their laptop?

By doing that, you communicate a not-so-subtle message or two., such as: *“You’re Important!”*

## Preparing Your Follow Up

What do you actually send to your prospective client? Again, it depends on your business, so it really could be anything. If you’re responding to a specific question about an aspect of their business, just answer the question, tell them how you can help and go from there.

But if it’s more generic, let’s offer some suggestions:

Examples of past successful jobs: testimonials from happy clients are always impactful. And when you ask your clients for testimonials, the more specific their response, the more effect it has on the reader or viewer.

## Bottom Line

Follow up is everything. You may have the greatest service or coolest widget on the planet, but if you don’t get back to prospects in a timely manner, it simply doesn’t matter. With so much on the line, why wouldn’t you take the time to craft the proper responses to potential clients no matter where they fit in the evaluation?

and *“We Act Quickly!”* The power of quick response engages their brain and they can’t help but feel that it would be great to do business with a company that offers such a rapid response.

So if you say you’re going to follow up within a week, do it within a couple of days. If you say it’ll be within a couple of days, do it within 24 hours. Under promise and over deliver – a great way to make a terrific impression.



Offer your prospect the chance to view a quick 2 – 3 minute video. Include a link to your video in your e-mail response: *‘oh, by the way, you might enjoy our short video – just 2 minutes of your time.’*

Snail mailings can include anything from postcards to sales letters to samples to discount coupons to an appropriate tchotchke or giveaway. Postcards can be small and clever and memorable; a larger package that lands with a ‘thud’ can make a great impact.

The oft-repeated factoid in the tradeshow industry is that 70 – 80% of all leads are not followed up on. At all! If you can create a system and conscientiously follow up quickly with your tradeshow leads, it’ll help you lead the field.