

Trade Shows Generate Highest Quality of Leads

The jury is in and increasingly trade show demand generation is ranked at the top of lead generation strategies. Although other strategies deliver more leads such as demos, email marketing and pay per click (PPC), it is the quality of the leads generated which make the trade show result stand alone.

However, this result comes with a price as trade shows tend to be expensive with booth real estate costing on average \$21/sq.ft. In an increasingly complex tech-driven world where analytics can help explain human behaviours, trade shows offer the best environment to capture and score certain behaviours which explain the high quality of leads vs. cost of the event.

Let's face it not everyone is going to buy on the spot, so sales can be attributed directly to the trade show ROI. It is nonetheless critical to start a buyer's journey whenever possible. The fact that the actual sale event happened a year later tends to skew trade show results when one considers various ROI measurement.

In the strategic B2B world people tend to buy from people meaning the significance of relationship initiation cannot be overstated. This where beacon IOT technology can add tremendous value by collecting behavioural data points on people based on key performance indicators (KPI) to score or qualify individual interactions. RFID and Bluetooth collection technologies are used to capture data from smart IoT beacons which is used to develop user profiles against algorithms to develop sophisticated reports based on the granularity of information. Data granularity is the magic sauce used to identify, correlate and score marketing personas for sales action.

This magic correlation allows for the initiation of contact based on a perceived need, i.e., someone who is in the awareness stage of the buyer's journey based on the type of booth visited, visit duration, seminars participation amongst other qualifying interactions. Clearly, what's being interpreted as "quality" in this context is in fact "qualified." Sure, demos attract more qualified leads, because prospects who want to view the product are inevitably further along in the sales process. But does that mean that demos are the most effective demand gen offer? Far from it. In tests we've conducted over the years, information offers (white papers, case studies, Webinars) generate three times the response compared to demos and free trials. Now, it's true that white papers generate a wider spectrum of leads – some highly qualified, some merely "tire kickers." But a white paper campaign may still yield a higher ROI if the close rate on those leads is more than one-third the rate of a similar campaign in which the sole call to action is a demo.

Ultimately a variety of strategies and tactics are involved in a successful sales process, but one can conclude that there is a direct correlation between trade show investment and the critical importance of the qualifying leads in relation to the buyer's journey. 82 % of B2B marketers believe that trade shows generated leads of either "good" or "excellent" quality. Unfortunately, despite all the technologies available to us, the vast majority of B2B marketers still measure campaign success (and relative effectiveness) using metrics that fall short of the ideal.