

Virtual Event Sponsorship Best Practices

Put your best foot forward

- Share all relevant information with your on-site staff so they are as prepared as possible. They will be busy during the show, so preparing them ahead of time is crucial.
- Have the “right people” staff your booth. Consider having someone who can be technical and someone who can cover the sale. It is recommended that you have at least one sales engineer and one sales executive to insure that all attendee questions can be answered.
- Give a customer case study. If you have the opportunity to make a presentation, bring a customer to speak on your behalf. It builds credibility and will score you favorability points. Attendees are interested real world scenarios and narratives.

Ensure prime visibility

- Sponsor a high profile activity in order to be highly visible on event day and in all pre and post-show promotions
- Try to meet everyone. Utilize every opportunity to earn face time with attendees.
- Develop a core set of search terms to help attendees find you and other like attendees

Ensure your booth grabs and holds attention

- The most effective way to engage and hold attendees at your booth is by engaging them in a product demo
- Make your content relevant. The content you are presenting throughout the day (collateral at your booth, presentation, demos) should correlate with the topic of the event. Educational messaging works best.
- Incite people to come to your booth more than once. Encourage visitors to enter a contest or raffle for a prize which will draw them back to hold the raffle. Prize examples include GPS system, digital camera, or a product from your company.
- Formulate a plan on how to quickly respond to attendee questions to avoid losing them.
- Be proactive when people enter your booth – use chat
- Showcase what’s new – product, award, market...

Make sure the attendees leave with a lasting impression

- Have something an attendee can walk away with and bring back to management, such as white papers, case studies, etc or product collateral and data sheets. Make it an easy experience for attendees to spread the word.
- Ask for attendee feedback. It’s an ideal way to capture more information about an attendee while learning how to improve the overall customer experience. If possible, create a brief evaluation to generate best practices for the next event.
- Be aggressive about post event follow up. Engage your sales team for immediate follow-up. Take full advantage of your leads!

The Environment and Booth

- **Time for the Web:** When you think about timing, you want to start promoting 30 or 45 days out because people are busy and they lose track. Promote too early and you will lose people, promote too late and people's calendars might be full.
- **Organize Content to Appeal to Attendees with Options:** If you go to a physical event, you're there, so you might sit through sessions you don't care about, but that will never happen with online because people have options. Construct your agenda with that in mind. You can have a featured speaker in the morning, but you should also have one in the afternoon.
- **Promote Interactivity:** There are two reasons people go to events - the first is to be educated, the second is networking. Therefore, you have to keep them engaged with polls and matchmaking of attendees.
- **The introductory welcome:** As users enter the booth, you can and should proactively reach out to those visitors. A "no commitment" type of "Hello and welcome to your booth – I'm here to assist with any questions" message is recommended. If time is an issue, you do not have to reach out to all visitors – but, perhaps just keep an eye out for key accounts.
- **Be Ready for Bluntness--And Take Advantage of It:** People communicate differently in a virtual environment than physically. In a virtual world, if someone's trying to sell you something, people are often very blunt. Be prepared for this when communicating with attendees and keep in mind that they won't sit through a sales pitch if they don't want to.

Messaging and Deliverables

- Just like an offline event, the virtual event booth coordinator should think through the messaging from the sign above the booth to the welcome message, booth title and information desk collateral. All of this should be connected. There should be a breadth of content in various media types (Podcast, Webcast White Paper, Video) and well as a variety informational content (market/problem content, technology information, corporate brochures, case studies, calculators...)
- All the content should be housed in the virtual event environment rather than links that would take the attendee outside the environment. Where possible in the booth, mix in video and audio.
- Include what's NEW, product, customer story, acquisition...in the booth messages and signage. Offer associated collateral to educate the attendees
- Promote the event through your website and house lists to ensure maximum attendance.