# POST SHOW EVALUATION

The show is over and you've returned to your office. Now begins the task of putting all the leads you gathered at the show to good use. Not only will you want to get the leads to your sales staff for prompt follow-up, but also you will want to analyze the leads you have. What was the buying power of the visitors to your booth? What product demos received the most interest? Almost any type of information you need can be derived from your leads.

How to Obtain Leads

What type of information can I get? That depends on how you obtained your leads.

• **CES's Official Registration / Lead Management Company** CES has secured ExpoExchange as the official company to provide all registration and lead management services for the 2004 Show. They provide exhibitors with a number of different tools to capture leads, ranging from badge readers, which capture demographics in print to computerized connectivity. The details and brochures, explaining the different lead management tools are located in your Exhibitor Manual.

• **Business Card in the Fishbowl** This method consists of placing a fishbowl on a counter or tabletop in your booth and having visitors leave their business card in the bowl. Often an exhibitor will offer a trinket (i.e. a pen or key chain) in exchange for a business card. This is the oldest method of lead retrieval in the business, however this is not an effective lead retrieval system. Business cards do not provide you any insight into the interests or buying power of the attendee, or the preferred follow-up method or time frame for the purchasing decision. A much more effective lead-gathering tool is the custom lead card.

• **Custom Lead Card** Using a custom lead card allows you to tailor the information received from potential buyers, depending on the questions you include. Have your sales team give input as to what type of information will help them in the follow-up stage. Make it easy to ensure that busy booth staff fill it out completely and correctly. Some information you may want to include on your lead card are:

Prospect name and title
Company name
Address and web address
Phone/fax numbers/e-mail address
Company location - is it in your distribution area?
Problems prospect is looking to solve
Needs that exist for your product/service
Plans for using your product/service
Product/service currently being used
Changes in the prospect's organization that warrant the purchase of your product/service
Quantity needed
Influence/authority the prospect has in decision-making
Resources available for purchasing
Time frame for making a purchasing decision
When the company plans its budget
Literature requested

Your booth staff should be aware that they should not ask questions directly from the lead card. Coach your staff to ask the questions in a flowing manner to make their inquiries seem more like a conversation than an interrogation.

**Six tips to help you keep your lead forms useful and user-friendly.**

*1 Produce them in a size that's easy to hold in your hand.* Choose a size that fits in the hand comfortably or into a pocket or purse. Put them into 50-75 sheet pads with cardboard backing, making it easier to write on. Keep a stock of them in your exhibit.

*2. Put the contact information area at the top of the form and make it the same size as a standard business card.* Staffers can attach a prospect's card to that area without losing valuable space below.

*3. Limit the number of checkboxes.* Too many boxes can be confusing or hard to find during a discussion. Base them on the product or service areas most pertinent to your show-specific objectives. Remember, even though an "area of interest" was checked, it does not describe the prospect's level of interest.

*4. Leave at least half the lead sheet blank so staffers can write down important details about the prospect's needs, interests and attitudes.* This is the information a salesperson really needs to know in order to make an intelligent and informed follow-up call.

*5. Create a grading system and a place for staffers' initials at the bottom.* Whether you use A-B-C, *1-2-3* or hot/warm/cold, encourage staffers to grade leads based on their assessment of the quality of the prospect. Make sure they initial their forms so you can turn to them for clarification or to decipher handwriting.

*6. If you are using an electronic lead-gathering system, mirror the traditional paper lead sheet to make data input easier.* Provide an easy way for staffers to input conversation notes into the electronic record. Make certain your electronic record will accept infinite text notes. Some exhibitors have one staffer on-site to do nothing but enter lead details so information can be fired off via e-mail to the sales staff.

**Is the Lead Hot?**

Your booth staff should indicate the seriousness of the lead. Is this buyer ready to buy now, or is he/she undecided? Qualifying attendees can help you determine if an attendee has a want, need or desire for your products or services, as well as determine that attendee's buying power. Using your lead cards and having booth staff converse with buyers in your booth will help you separate serious inquiries from non-interested parties. Knowing what leads are "hot" and which ones are not so "hot" will help prioritize the leads for follow-up by your sales staff.

**Lead Follow-Up**

Once the leads have been gathered, how are you planning to use them? A computerized database is a useful lead management tool. There are several types of databases, and most likely your company already has one in place. The database will allow your sales staff to keep track of what happens with a lead. Did the lead produce a sale? Should the lead be kept for future use? Maintaining these notes in a database gives you the ability to make sure lead follow-up has been done in a timely fashion (usually within three to five days).

Did your actual and projected sales from this show exceed the cost of participation in the show? A good lead management program is essential if you want to measure your return on investment.

Whether you use a standard spreadsheet, a custom database, or one of the lead management software packages included in this section, managing your show leads can provide more than just sales. Analyzing your customers' data can also help keep your marketing strategy on top of the game.