



TRADE SHOWS *are* IMPORTANT... *but do* THEY HAVE *to be* THIS HARD?

IF YOU'RE IN ARCHITECTURE, ENGINEERING, OR CONSTRUCTION, THEN YOU KNOW A TRADE SHOW CAN HELP GROW YOUR BUSINESS

These events can be the best way for your Marketing and Sales teams to promote your firm and connect with important prospects, customers, and partners from around the industry. It's no surprise that so many firms count on trade shows and industry conferences to drive the majority of their new business leads each year.

BUT THERE'S A CATCH - THE HUGE MANUAL EFFORT REQUIRED BEFORE, DURING, AND AFTER A BIG TRADE SHOW DRAINS THE ROI

Firms that invest in a major trade show presence or sponsorship are counting on a substantial return. But even when a trade show produces a good number of qualified leads, many firms still come away frustrated by the inefficiency and time-consuming processes.

Read on to see 4 ways that low productivity could be preventing your firm from maximizing its trade show ROI.

PAST PERFORMANCE: HOW DO WE KNOW WHICH TRADE SHOWS TO ATTEND?

Each industry has its handful of can't-miss trade shows, but with limited resources there are always decisions to make. Before deciding, you'll want to review how a particular event performed for your firm in the past. But what if your most recent participation was a few years ago? And what if the person who managed those events is no longer with the firm? Simply gathering past performance data into one view can be a huge effort, let alone analyzing that data and making decisions. Centralizing all your trade show and event marketing data into a unified platform is a must in 2019.

CRITICAL CONNECTIONS: WHO'S GOING TO BE THERE (AND WHO HERE KNOWS THEM)?

One of the main benefits of a great trade show is the opportunity to connect with so many valuable industry contacts in one place, including potential customers, partners, and suppliers. But to make the most of a trade show, your team will need to focus on which target customers or prospects will be attending and how best to connect with them, ideally through warm introductions or mutual connections. Searching LinkedIn and manually cross-referencing your internal contacts and sales pipeline is a time-consuming way to prepare for a trade show.

MOBILE MANAGEMENT: HOW DO WE STAY PRODUCTIVE DURING THIS EVENT (WITHOUT OUR LAPTOPS)?

While you're at a trade show, you're busy attending sessions, exploring the exhibitions and demo booths, and finding time and space for impromptu meetings and phone calls. It's difficult to find room (and a power outlet) to keep your laptop available throughout. And if you don't have access to key customer and bid information, it's hard to make the most of every meeting and conversation. After an introductory conversation, you'll want to quickly add notes to your new contact before you forget the details.

FLAWLESS FOLLOW-UP: CAN WE BEAT OUR COMPETITORS TO THE PUNCH?

It's common to come home from a big trade show with a pile of business cards, but those cards represent a big project: you'll need to manually capture those contacts in your sales system, add the notes or contextual details that you recall from your conversations, and then begin the follow-up process. All the while, the clock is ticking and your new lead is becoming colder. To make the most of a trade show, you need a seamless way to capture your new leads and let your follow-up process begin before you've even boarded your flight home.