



TRADE SHOW MEETINGS AND FOLLOW UP

A little planning now, will ensure you maximise your appointment time at trade shows.

- Arrive early and be organised. Make sure you have everything set up for the day before your first appointment.
- Know your client. Use your research and have a clear outline of the information or questions you need to ask. Make sure you are fully aware of the different markets and cultural expectations.
- Use your appointment time wisely. Listen for 80% and sell for 20%. Ensure you give the buyer opportunities to ask questions throughout the meeting.
- Pinpoint one truly amazing thing about your product or region and open with that. Focus on your compelling selling points and what really makes you stand out from competitors.
- Make it relevant. Tailor your presentation to each buyer and their market so it is relevant to them. Buyers want to feel that you really want their business, not that you are just repeating the same thing over and over.
- Thank buyers for existing business. Review sales with them, ask for customer feedback and update them on changes or new products. Don't be afraid to ask why their sales have increased or decreased.
- Make your product memorable. Even if the buyer only walks away with one piece of knowledge, as long as it stays with them, you have succeeded. Remember, you will be providing the buyers with detailed information in your follow-up.
- Ask questions. This is your product development opportunity to ensure you are meeting the customer's needs and to ask the hard questions. What can you do to improve the business? What are their customers looking for? Are they aware of your product or even the destination?
- Avoid the use of slang or colloquialisms and be mindful that English may be the buyers' second language.
- Use the correct commission levels in your discussions. Make sure you understand where they sit in the distribution chain.
- Take notes at trade shows – it demonstrates your commitment. You can use a pre-prepared template for this.
- Invite buyers to experience your product through trade famils.
- Don't give out brochures or information packs. Use your follow up to further showcase your product.
- Understand your outcomes. It is important to have clear objectives for each appointment. Aiming for leads, awareness and relationships in order to successfully promote your product. Conclude each appointment by summarising your follow up actions and agreed path.
- Seek opportunities for further discussion. Invite the buyer for a drink or coffee during any free appointments, breaks and networking opportunities.
- Ensure your booth is attended at all times. You don't want to miss that great 'passing by' opportunity.
- Review your progress and make any necessary changes to your strategy. This can be done either during breaks or at the end of each day.

THE APPOINTMENT IS ONLY AS GOOD AS THE FOLLOW UP

Following up with the buyers you met is the most critical component of any trade show.

- Timing is imperative - follow-up should be done either during or immediately after the trade show.
- Send all the material and information that you promised.
- Categorise your trade show appointments and leads in order of priority and complete your follow up in this order.
- Personalise and thank – each buyer should receive an individualised follow-up specifically referring to the content of your appointment and always thank the buyer for the business and their ongoing support.
- Use your meeting template to prompt you and personalise your follow-up – make reference to your discussions during the trade show.
- Post trade show planning should include a multiple contact plan until you meet the buyer again. Keep the buyer updated and focus on strengthening the relationship. Consider using your social media channels, such as LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter to boost your social media activity.
- Ensure your follow-up includes all partners in the distribution chain – if the buyer partners with a local Inbound Tour Operator (ITO) ensure you also follow up with the ITO directly as well.
- Prepare and distribute training material to buyers – this extends the reach of your appointment to the front line reservations teams.

Other follow-up tips:

- Remember to also follow-up with complementary sellers and industry associations – continue to work together and seek out joint opportunities.
- Be in regular contact with your State and/or Regional Tourism Association to jointly promote the region and the products offered and to seek out opportunities.
- Be patient – it takes time to establish a relationship and to be selected for brochure/online inclusion.
- Add new contacts to your database and track if business is generated from them. Keep the buyers updated on their sales achievements.
- Update your teams on the outcomes of the trade show and any required actions specific to each buyer.
- Measure your trade show success against your objectives. Consider what worked and what could be improved next time. Did you meet the right people? What did you learn from others? What did you learn about the competition?