AKKROO

THE CMO'S GUIDE TO TRADE SHOWS

Before, during and after

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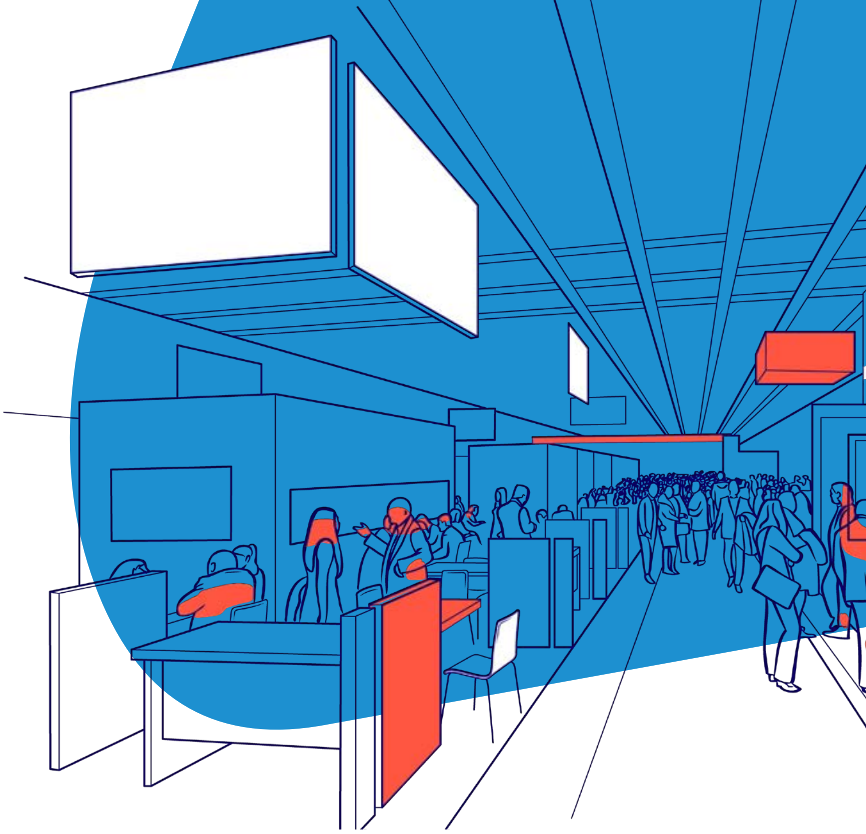

ABOUT AKKROO

Akkroo, for B2B Sales & Marketing Teams, it's time to take the lead. Connect events with your marketing stack: turn conversations into qualified leads and accelerated revenue.

We're at the forefront of event lead capture, replacing outdated, manual methods: business cards, paper forms and rented scanners.

Use Akkroo at all of your events to capture higher quality leads on the show floor, by collecting accurate contact details plus important contextual information. Event Qualified Leads go straight into Marketing Automation and CRM, ready for timely, relevant follow-up, and enabling a streamlined post-event process.

Akkroo is changing the game. It's time for exhibitors to take the lead.

WELCOME

At Akkroo, we spend our time working with enterprise businesses, helping them improve their experience of exhibiting at events. Our team spends a lot of time visiting, speaking and exhibiting at trade shows and conferences: we've seen stands packed-full of visitors, and stands where there's more booth staff than visitors.

That's why we've written this guide: to help senior and C-level marketers and their teams master exhibiting at trade shows and events, and turn them into a measurable revenue channel for your business. We've put together a complete framework for exhibiting at trade shows and conventions, covering:

- Planning and strategy.
- Getting the best people on your stand.
- Top tips for your booth team.
- How your booth team can capture the best quality leads.
- The secrets of successful follow-up.
- Measuring the performance of your events.
- How to accurately calculate and report on the ROI of your event.

If your business exhibits at a lot of events, this is your go-to guide for everything you need to do before, during and after a trade show, to generate the best leads and the most revenue for your business.

"For far too long, businesses have struggled with how to capture and process leads at events, and follow up with them in a timely manner. Traditional, disconnected lead capture methods create a huge gulf between the show floor and the back office, making it near-impossible to accurately measure event success and ultimately evaluate the true ROI of exhibiting."

Chris Wickson | CEO and Co-founder | Akkroo

BEFORE THE EVENT

Whether your company is exhibiting at a huge, industry-leading trade show, or a small table-top event, preparation is key.

Your marketing and events teams are probably already busy putting together the design for your stand and sorting out logistics for the show. And while you trust your team to put together a fantastic-looking stand, there are a few areas where your leadership will be invaluable for making the event a success, and maximising your company's return on investment.

So in this section we will be mapping out your three key strategic priorities when planning your upcoming trade shows, conferences and exhibitions.

LEAD CAPTURE PROCESS

For most senior marketers, their primary reason for exhibiting at trade shows is to collect new leads for their business. And yet for your team, the process by which you capture these leads is little more than an afterthought, with all their focus on the logistics of planning your space at the event.

This is why we still see companies at trade shows clutching notebooks and clipboards, collecting leads with pen and paper, or relying on organiser-owned badge scanners that simply spew out a long list of names and email addresses. Thinking about the process and tools your company uses to capture leads at events should be your key strategic priority. Your marketing manager should be able to give you some insight into the exact tools and processes the trade show team uses, and how efficiently that works.

Consider the last quarterly marketing review that you attended. All your colleagues from different divisions were able to share their numbers, and you could clearly see how much revenue was generated by each of their marketing campaigns. But for events, you don't get the same insights. When your team is using the same lead capture methods that they've been using for 20+ years, it's no wonder events is the only team around the table that can't report on ROI. So it's time to re-think your lead capture processes and tools. Do they give you the data you need, in the timeframe you need it, to accurately report on ROI, or assess the success of your event using real lead data? And most importantly, do they enable you to make a data-driven decision as to whether that show was worth exhibiting at, before you blindly book again for next year?

Imagine how much more effectively you could report on and measure the success of each event, if you had a lead capture process that integrated with your marketing and sales tech stack.

63%

of marketers use trade shows as a form of lead generation

We would hand-write all the leads on paper from each day of the conference and, when we got back to the office, one or two of our colleagues would enter them manually into our system. This process took our customer service team about two weeks to complete.

Danielle Ravenshorst
Marketing Manager
Ocean Optics

CHOOSE YOUR BEST TEAM

Events are the only opportunity your business has to get face-to-face with huge numbers of prospective customers. And while you already exhibit at loads of shows, how often does your events manager think about the people they are sending to be on the stand?

Most likely, you've got a dedicated 'events' team, with the same group of people manning your booth at every trade show, exhibition or expo. But every exhibition is different: you'll be showcasing different products and services, and speaking to a different audience.

It's worth taking the time to think about your big-picture goals for each event, and sharing them with your marketing manager so they can think about who will be the best people to send.

REMEMBER:

You don't need to send the same people to every event – and your best salespeople aren't always the best people to have on your stand.

Could your product marketers or business development reps provide more value to attendees than your usual events team? Different members of your team will have their own areas of expertise. It's worth your marketing manager taking the time to consider who's the best fit for the exhibition, so you've got the best people in place to make the most of this specific event.

> Success isn't collecting as many leads as possible and being happy with that number, it's collecting great quality leads that you can score, compare, and make a quick decision on.

Stefan Cordery
Marketing Manager
Akkroo

WHAT DOES SUCCESS LOOK LIKE?

Before every event your business exhibits at, your whole team should have a clear idea of what success looks like. What is the key metric you're going to track, to measure your success?

For one of our customers, the number of sales qualified leads (SQLs) is their key metric: it provides an instant overview of the success of each and every event they exhibit at. This means the customer doesn't have to wait for a full sales cycle to pass before they get an idea of the success of each show, so they can quickly decide whether or not to book their spot at next year's expo.

DURING THE EVENT

Today's the day! This is where all your team's hard work and planning will pay off. Whatever size of event your company is exhibiting at, this section will help your booth team make the most of their time at each show.

TOP 10 TIPS TO SHARE ON THE DAY

Your team does events all the time, but sometimes best practices can slip. We've been to so many trade shows where exhibitors look disengaged, and even go so far as to avoid eye contact with attendees who want to talk to them.

Share this section with your marketing manager, who can use these points as a refresher in your company's kick-off meeting at the start of each trade show, to keep booth best practices fresh in the mind of everyone who will be on your stand, representing your business.

01 KNOW WHO YOU'RE ON THE STAND WITH

Being on the stand is a team effort. Know who's around you, and what their areas of expertise are. That way, you know who's around to support you if you have some tricky questions.

02 GET TO KNOW YOUR NEIGHBOURS

Find out who they are and what they do. Don't be afraid to send attendees to other exhibitors if their offering could help solve the problem they are looking to address.

> Find out who else is on at the same time as you to support you – it's like a sport, tag-teaming and making sure the right people are talking to the right visitors.

Karen Beasley
Senior Account Executive
Akkroo

03 ENGAGE WITH VISITORS

How often have you walked past a trade show booth and found the company rep glued to their laptop or phone screen? You're not there to catch up on emails; you're there to speak to people and collect qualified leads for your business

04 BREAK DOWN BARRIERS

Don't sit behind a table or stand behind a desk. These all create a barrier between you and the visitor, when what you want is to connect with them. Whenever Akkroo exhibits at trade shows, we always ask for tables to be removed from our stand, to make us appear more approachable.

05 KEEP ENERGY LEVELS HIGH

It doesn't matter whether someone speaks to your reps at 10am or 4:55pm - they need to receive the same high-quality conversation and level of interest from your team. Being on a trade show stand is tiring, but if these prospects are going to buy from your business, they deserve the best from your team.

06 TAKE REGULAR BREAKS

Taking regular breaks is essential for helping keep energy levels high across the team. Make sure breaks are scheduled though, so you don't run into problems when everyone takes a break at the same time - especially around lunch time.

07 WEAR COMFORTABLE SHOES

This isn't the time for towering heels or new shoes that pinch your toes. You're going to be on your feet for the entire day, so opt for something comfortable. This will help you focus on what really matters - the person you're talking to - rather than thinking about how much your feet hurt.

08 FOCUS ON THE CUSTOMER

The first question you should be asking every single visitor to your stand is, "How can I help you?" You want to understand their problems and their needs, in order to understand whether or not they are a good fit for your business.

09 PEOPLE, NOT PRODUCT

Remember: it's not about you. Focus on having a good conversation and getting to know the visitor: what brought them to this trade show, are they looking for a specific product or tool, or are they there for a particular talk? Don't waste their (and your) valuable time with a generic sales pitch that probably won't be relevant to them.

10 CAPTURE LEADS WITH EASE

Whatever lead capture method you choose, you want a solution that allows you to add notes about your conversation and about the prospect, so you can really personalise your follow-up communication and build a human connection with them. Remember: a lead without context is just a contact.

> You don't want to have pitch-heavy, pushy sales people on your show stand.

Simon Roberts
Senior Account Executive
Akkroo

> Not everybody that comes to the event, or even comes to your stand, is going to be a prospect. But it's good to find out – that's what you're there for.

Sarah Penhall
Customer Success Manager
Akkroo

KEY TAKEAWAY: CONVERSATIONS, NOT CONTACTS

When your team is at a busy trade show or exhibition, it's easy to look at the crowd of visitors and try and collect as many people's contact details as possible. After all, they're at the show, so they're bound to be interested in hearing from your business - right?

Wrong.

Not everyone will be a good fit lead for your company - and it's important to remember that. Instead of trying to speak to as many people as possible, your booth team will be better off focusing on having quality conversations with fewer people. When it comes to collecting leads, quality beats quantity, every time.

AFTER THE EVENT

Now your team is back in the office after a hectic show you want to know how the event went, before they move on to planning their next show or head out to their next one, which is probably right around the corner.

In an ideal world, you would get a 1-page report containing all your headline stats and key metrics after each event - just like regional marketing managers share regular reports that detail the performance of all your company's ongoing digital marketing campaigns.

FOLLOW-UP

No matter how much time and money you've invested in planning and exhibiting at a trade show, if your sales and marketing teams can't follow-up quickly and effectively, all that effort will be wasted.

Research by InsideSales.com reveals that 35-50% of sales go to the vendor that responds first. But according to Exhibitor magazine, 78% of businesses exhibiting at trade shows take more than three days to follow-up with a lead - with 38% taking longer than six days to follow up - more than a full working week.

Can your company really afford to wait a whole week before reaching out to trade show leads?

The main reason some companies take so long is down to their lead capture process: if you're collecting leads on paper, or gathering business cards, it takes a long time to get all those leads typed up and into your CRM. Alternatively, if you're relying on organiser-provided badge scanners, this normally takes 3-5 days after the close of the event before you get through your spreadsheet of attendee contact data.

It's worth speaking to your marketing manager about this - is one member of their team responsible for typing up all your leads after a trade show, and how long does this normally take them? If it takes more than a day or two, you might want to think about looking for an alternative process for lead capture at events, so you can improve your follow-up speed and process.

> The time and speed of follow-up has a huge impact on success and ultimately the ROI of an event.

Mike Robinson
Head of Demand Generation
Akkroo

35-50%

of marketers use trade shows as a form of lead generation

78%

of businesses exhibiting at trade shows take more than three days to follow-up with a lead.

38%

of businesses take longer than six days to follow-up more than a full working week.

REPORTING & MEASUREMENT

While all your company's other sales and marketing activities are meticulously tracked and measured, somehow events have been left behind, in the murky world of hearsay and gut feel. Is it really enough to measure the success of an event based on your marketing manager telling you, 'The sales team said it went well'?

So, to properly report on and measure the success of your event, there are three key things you need:

50%

of event exhibitors have absolutely no idea how many of their leads convert into sales.

01 A WAY TO GET YOUR LEADS INTO YOUR CRM – QUICKLY & EASILY

In an ideal world, you would have a system set-up where you collect a lead at an event or trade show digitally, and it's automatically routed through to your CRM or marketing automation system. This means you don't lose any leads, so you get an accurate count of contacts from each event.

02 LEAD ATTRIBUTION

As well as simply getting leads into your CRM, it's essential that they are properly attributed to each particular trade show, conference or exhibition. Whether you do this by sorting leads from different events into different lists, or having a contact field you can filter by, this is essential for being able to measure the success of your shows. This way, if any leads progress to customers, you can directly attribute that revenue to your company's stand at that event.

03 PUTTING TOGETHER YOUR EVENT REPORT

After each event, you should be able to put together a one-page report, to share with the leadership team - much like the digital marketing team do. Pull together all your key stats and metrics, such as:

- Total spend
- Total number of leads
- Total number of SQLs (or whatever you're tracking as your key metric for the event)
- Cost per lead
- Bullet-point highlights from the event, such as keynote presentations, competitor activity and customer activity

This will make it easy to demonstrate the success of your events, and will look much better than sitting down at the next quarterly marketing meeting with nothing concrete to share.

"I can point to a real, meaningful pipeline that gets generated from each event."

Danielle Ravenshorst
Marketing Manager
Ocean Optics

HELP YOUR TEAM MASTER EXHIBITING AT TRADE SHOWS

Trade shows are your best opportunity to get face-to-face with a large number of good-fit potential customers. You can help your team generate the best leads and maximise the return on investment from each event they exhibit at, by ensuring they have access to the best tools and technology to capture leads.

Get to know Akkroo:

Find out how we help companies capture and qualify more leads from events and trade shows.

WATCH PRODUCT TOUR

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