



Using Web Seminars to Land Your Tradeshow Leads

Back To Reality

It's Monday morning and you're back in the office after last week's tradeshow. It was a good tradeshow. Your booth had lots of traffic, none of the demos crashed, and everyone seemed genuinely excited about your new software release, which is coming out...um...soon. You were finally able to get rid of that motley collection of trash and trinkets left over from previous trade-shows, so now you can finally order something fun and exciting for the next one – maybe some of those nifty logo bungee rockets.

And of course, you came back with a fishbowl full of business cards and sheaf of leadsheets to deal with – many more leads than you expected, in fact. The thing is, your email and voicemail boxes are full and you'd really like a couple of days off to recover. You're not the only one. The whole marketing department is fried.

You've got the tradeshow follow-up blues.

Make The Most Of It

Tradeshows cost way too much not to get the most that you possibly can out of them. How effectively and efficiently you follow up on the leads you've collected and convert them into sales will determine the ultimate success of your show. And that will decide whether or not you'll get the chance to hand out those bungee rockets at the next one.

Everyone knows what you should do now. You should follow up quickly, before the leads grow stale. Some experts say you should contact all your leads within 48 hours of the show. Of course, like you, they also have real jobs that they neglected while they were at the show, so not all of them will be that anxious to hear from you so soon. In any case, the leads are going to start to go bad by the end of that first week back. After two weeks, they'll be positively moldy.

Before you start working the leads, though, you should sort them to see who's hot and who's not. After all, you're not doing your Sales organization any favors by passing off a bunch of looky-loos to them. Sorting leads after the show can be really frustrating if you didn't take good notes and you're low on sleep. That's why you should have done it each day during the show instead of going to all those evening parties. Maybe next time.

After your leads are sorted, you should decide what's the best way to follow up with each of them. E-mail? Phone call? Direct mail? Send them another trinket? Product info? A whitepaper? Pass them immediately off to Sales for cultivation?

Most likely, you'll use all of these follow up tactics. But really, how effective are they? The bottom line of tradeshow follow-up is this: how can you grab their attention and hold it to the close?



Web seminars are a great way to spend quality time with your leads at a relatively low cost. They provide the interaction of a face-to-face meeting at a fraction of the cost, and can be easily targeted toward different groups of leads in different stages of the sales cycle.



Readytalk’s built-in communication capabilities:

- Pre- and post-event surveys
- Automatic and manual registration confirmation
- Pre- and post-event emails

You Could Really Use a Good Web Seminar Right Now

Your goal is to convert as many of those tradeshow leads into sales as quickly as possible, at the lowest possible cost. So while you’d meet with each lead if you could, the time and cost to do so is out of the question.

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Method	Benefit	Shortcomings
Email	Easy and cost-effective	Easy to ignore; spam filters; not permission-based
PhoneCall	Person-to-person interaction	Hard to get in touch with people; easy to ignore; not permission-based
Direct Mail	Won't get caught in spam filter	Easily lost in the daily mail; expensive; not permission-based
Web Seminar	Personal interaction; Ability to qualify, profile and close; permission-based	More complicated to set up than the above 3 communication techniques

When you invite your leads to attend a web seminar, you are establishing a communications channel that does two things. First, it helps qualify the leads: if they register for your web seminar, they are interested. Leads who don't register may also be interested, but require a different follow-up approach.

Second, the act of registering creates multiple, meaningful contact opportunities with prospects before and after the web seminar, such as confirmation and reminder e-mails, and registration and post-seminar surveys. These communications allow you to progressively profile your leads, and collect qualifying information before and after the web seminar.

Last, but not least, your recorded web seminars become valuable collateral that you can reuse in other marketing contexts at no additional cost. It's always nice to get something for free.

First Things First

A web seminar follow-up to your tradeshow is a good idea, but not if you don't think of it until after the show. You wouldn't wait until after the show to put together a direct mail piece to use in your follow-up campaign. So don't wait until after the show to create your web seminar.

Not only does it take time to line up your presenter and create the content, your web seminar will be most effective if it reflects your show's objectives. Are you introducing new technology

or products? Are you trying to gain or consolidate marketshare? Are you going after your key competitors? Your web seminar plan should be a part of your show plan, not an afterthought.

Create your web seminar before the show, but allow yourself some flexibility to make changes to it based on input that may come out of the show itself. For instance, you may find out that the big new wonderful software release that's the centerpiece of your show raises serious concerns about transition issues among the attendees. You'll probably want to address those concerns in your follow-up web seminar.

One web seminar might not be enough. Depending on the focus of the show, the projected attendance, and the possible mix of attendees, you may need different web seminars targeted toward individual audiences. You might need a detailed demo for users and techni-

Using ReadyTalk's campaign feature allows you to track which campaign is most effective in driving attendance:

Campaign Name	Campaign Registration URL
Web Site	https://cc.readytalk.com/r/gm0zy1q45kph
Email Newsletter	https://cc.readytalk.com/r/1a1m88kqrdm
Mailer	https://cc.readytalk.com/r/zt0mgmqb0b7
Blog Link	https://cc.readytalk.com/r/169d81tbr6n0



cal buyers, for example, and an ROI analysis for economic buyers. More people are likely to sign up for the web seminar if they think you created it specifically for them. Even those looky-loos who just stopped by to trade their business card for a bottle opener might be interested in a short product overview web seminar.

Consider teaming up with a technology partner or a key customer for the web seminar. Nothing builds credibility like the tributes of others. Case studies are a natural for this. For example, having a customer explain how they used your product to solve a difficult technical problem or reduce development costs can make a very powerful statement. Maybe they'll even participate with you in the show. In any case, you'll need time to work with these partners.

And finally, think about how you'll advertise your web seminar. You may want to include it with your tradeshow advertising in pre-show publications, emails, and websites. Planning your web seminar far enough in advance lets you take advantage of advertising opportunities that extend your reach beyond the boundaries of your booth at the show.

While You're At It

During the show, your goal is to collect as many new leads as possible and figure out where they belong in the sales funnel. Having a follow-up web seminar to offer them provides a mechanism

for evaluating their needs and interests.

There are many ways you can use the web seminar to your advantage at the show. One obvious approach is to ask the prospects you talk with if they would be interested in attending a web seminar after the show. This helps you gauge their interest not only in a web seminar, in your products as well. For those who are interested in attending the web seminar, solicit their input for what they want to get out of it. This demonstrates your regard for their needs, and the information they give you can be used to tweak the web seminar for maximum effectiveness.

You can also advertise your web seminar and invite people to register for it at the show. If you use on-line registration, you can set up a registration station for them to do it right then and there. Or, you can use a sign-up sheet or collect business cards to send out registration invitations later. Again, it's a good idea to ask them what they want to learn more about so that you can modify your web seminar accordingly. A good way to do this is by customizing the registration page.



The screenshot shows a registration form titled "Register for this Meeting". It includes fields for Name, Email, Phone, and Company. Below these are dropdown menus for Job Function, Department, and Number of Employees. A section titled "What types of online events are you most interested in attending?" contains checkboxes for Sales, Marketing, Management, Strategy, HR, Training, IT, and "All of the above". Another section titled "What is the best day and time for you to attend events?" contains checkboxes for days of the week (Monday through Friday) and times of day (Morning, Afternoon, Evening). A "Required Field" asterisk is present at the bottom left, and a "Register Now" button is at the bottom right.

Example of a ReadyTalk Meeting Registration Page

In any case, make sure your entire show team knows about the web seminar and understands how to position it during the show. Remember that the web seminar isn't just something else to "hand out" at the show. It's a powerful tool in the sales process to educate and nurture prospects.

Make It a Moving Experience

The whole idea of the follow-up web seminar is to move qualified leads another step along the sales process by educating them and spending some quality time with them. Some of your show leads may not need what your web seminar will provide. Others may be ready for the personal attention of a sales account manager. Try to manage your invitations to make sure everyone who attends your web seminar gets something positive out of it.

So, your first job after the show (or better yet, during the show) is to evaluate your show leads and determine which ones it makes sense to invite to your web seminar. This depends on the leads as well as the content of the follow-up seminar. Ideally, you'll offer a choice of seminars, tailored to the needs of each lead category.

If you advertised the web seminar at the show, some of the attendees may have already registered there or told you that they want to register. In doing so, these leads have demonstrated their interest in your product, so you definitely want them to attend the seminar. This is also true of everyone who may have registered for the seminar through any advertising you did outside

Depending on your goals of the tradeshow there are several measurements you could make:

1. Estimating ROI from collected sales leads
2. Projecting ROI from distributor recruitment
3. Projecting ROI from Sales Conversions
4. Calculating cost savings
5. Impact on customer relationships
6. Estimate promotional value
7. Calculate payback ratio

the show.

Depending on the size of the show, the mix of traffic through your booth, and the content of your follow-up web seminar, you may just decide to invite all your leads. If so, be sure to let them know in the invitation exactly what the web seminar will cover so they can make an informed decision whether or not to register. Ultimately, they will be the ones to decide, but you want to minimize the possibility that they will attend the seminar and leave disappointed in what they got out of it.

Once you've decided whom to invite, send out the invitations. The best way to do this is by e-mail with instructions on how to register. If possible, try to get the invitations out within 2-3 days of the show to keep the leads warm, and to give yourself time to make final preparations for the seminar. Keep in mind that some of the people you invite may be new to web seminars and uncomfortable with the concept, so make it clear in your invitation how easy it is to sign up and attend.

Don't forget to collect input for the follow-up web seminar from show attendees and your show team. This is valuable information for perfecting your seminar. As you develop and refine the seminar, try not to simply "replay" the show; they've already been there. For example, if you gave an overview demo of a new product at the show, consider giving a detailed demo in the follow-up web seminar, showing how the product solves a specific problem or meets a certain need. And, unless you advertised your web seminar as a sales presentation, focus on delivering useful information and keep sales hype to a minimum.

It will take some time for invitees to register and for you to put the finishing touches on your web seminar. Don't wait too long to hold it, though. The show attendees will return to work and get busy, and their interest in your product will quickly be replaced by the pressure to get things done. Try to hold your web seminar within 2 weeks of the show. If you can, offer the seminar more than once so invitees have a choice of times to attend.

During the follow-up web seminar itself, make it as interactive as possible. This is another "face-time" opportunity with your prospects, and the more you can involve them, the better. Use the chat feature, encourage attendees to ask questions, and leave plenty of Q&A time at the end. Don't, however, go over your time limit. Respect the fact that you attendees have other things to do.

Always record the seminar for later use, and follow-up with the attendees to get their feedback on the seminar. Offer a variety of ways for them to get more information and encourage them to contact you with further questions. You can use their feedback to the web seminar, or lack thereof, to help determine the next step in the sales process.

And That's Not All

With a little planning, some inspiration, and good execution, your follow-up web seminars will be successful. But they can always be better, so build a continuous improvement process around them.

Work with your show team, marketing, and sales to evaluate the content and effectiveness of the web seminars. Look for ways to streamline the development process. Feedback from web seminar attendees is also essential for polishing the content and your delivery.

And finally, how do you show that this is all worthwhile? If you haven't already done so, set up a process to track show leads throughout the sales process to see which ones turn into sales and how long it takes to do so. Decide how you are going to assess your tradeshow ROI, and do it. Don't forget to include the costs of follow-up. You'll probably also want to take into account intangible benefits from the show such as brand awareness and relationship building.

Making your tradeshows count means a lot of work before, during, and after. Following up your tradeshows with web seminars probably won't make your job easier, but they can definitely make your tradeshows more worthwhile. So while you may not totally get rid of those post-show blues, there just might be some bungee logo rockets in your future.