



## Six Skills Professional Engagers Use to Maximize Lead Generation.

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**Q:** I've invested a great deal of time and money in our tradeshows, but my staff is not proactive when it comes to engaging new prospects. What can I do?

**A:** It's time to bring in the Hired Guns.

Have you ever noticed that your booth reps often spend the majority of their time in the exhibit talking with *current* customers and *current* strategic partners or industry associates, rather than engaging unknown, new attendees, qualifying them, and perhaps build NEW relationships? The reason is simple: it's easier (and more immediately fruitful) to build on an existing relationship than it is to start a new one.

Yes, conversations with existing clients (or prospects) can be productive and drive new business, but while your staff is staying in their "safe zone," a stream of potential prospects/clients are walking by the booth. And within that stream floats a *lot* of possible business.

The truth of the matter is, most staffers aren't comfortable approaching and engaging strangers. They're afraid of appearing pushy, and even more afraid of rejection (not everyone recovers quickly when their "hello" goes ignored). Identifying, qualifying, and connecting with NEW qualified prospects is hard work.

If this describes your tradeshow staff, it may be time to bring in to bring in the ***hired guns***. By that I mean, supplement your company reps with Professional Booth Staffers.

This does not refer to Models who are hired to stand at the reg desk and offer brochures or peppermints to attendees within voice range. I am referring to concierge-level professional business communicators who are thoroughly trained and bring a solid business sense to the show floor. They understand that, in addition to the average duties of a booth staffer--swiping badges and helping manage the logistics within the exhibit--they are the conduit between customers and staff. They

New business is streaming by your booth, but your staff is staying in their "safe zone."

know that when they do their job properly, they are freeing your sales reps to do what they do best; meeting with qualified prospects and filling the sales funnel.

Which brings us to the question: what qualities should you look for when hiring Professional Tradeshow Staff? Here are some suggestions:

**Service Mentality.** When you hire the right Professional Staffers, they are motivated to do everything they can to help make your show a success. This is the best possible start. In an interview for this blog, one of our most experienced Professional Staffers said, *“Our team starts every project with a briefing on the client’s goals, and then we work as hard as we can every hour of every day to make sure the client is ecstatic about the results.”*

**Fearless Engagers.** A Professional Staffer has “no skin in the game.” He or she isn’t shy about approaching people, even if it means walking with them in the aisle near your exhibit. Many attendees won’t consider entering an exhibit until they have been invited. This is why Professional Staffers never let up on the invitations. Wayne Gretzky was right when he said, *“You miss 100% of the shots you don’t take.”*

**Skillful Qualifiers.** Most companies want *great quality visitors* rather than a *great quantity* of visitors. Properly trained and experienced Professional Staffers can quickly identify attendees who fit the qualifying criteria you’ve defined. If, based on this criteria, the staffer determines the visitor is *not* a good prospect, the Professional Staffer knows how to politely and efficiently disengage with them, and move on to the next opportunity. This is a skill many non-pro staffers have a difficult time performing. Spending too much time with the wrong attendee, or with a toxic attendee, can quickly eat up a rep’s time, and cast a pall over the exhibit.

Case in point: One of our top staffers recalls the time she noticed a visitor who had cornered a sales rep and was audibly complaining about the company. Our staffer quickly took control of the situation, discreetly took the visitor aside, asked for his concerns, thanked him, and told him she’d forward his comments to customer service. She then efficiently escorted him out of the exhibit before he could further contaminate the booth, or take up more of that sales rep’s valuable exhibit time. The sales rep expressed his gratitude to her and so did the company; they routinely request her participation at every show.

**Speedy Briefers.** The most in-demand Professional Staffers are those who can effectively offer “Speed Briefings” -- quick, high-level overviews of your company and what you’re promoting in the booth. These Pros appear articulate and informed, present a positive image of your company, and don’t appear to be a kid fumbling for lines in a middle school play.

**Expert Conduits.** When the Professional Staffer understands your company and qualifying criteria, and knows *Who’s Who* in your booth, he or she can escort the qualified prospect to the right people and perform a professional handoff. The prospect feels as if their time is being respected and will remember your company as an outfit that “knows what it’s doing!”

Professional Staffers have no skin in the game, and are not shy about approaching new prospects.

Want to maximize your event investment; let the PROS fill your sales funnel.

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Professional Staffers fill your Sales Funnel, and make your reps' job simpler.

**Great Attitudes.** The best Professional Staffers are charming, upbeat, and assertive. As another of our top staffers put it, *"You have to be able to impose without being imposing."* Professional Staffers must enjoy people and the challenge of generating leads. Behavioral flexibility, too, is a plus. It's almost impossible to quantify the value of a Professional Staffer who can quickly and accurately identify different personality types, read subtle body language signals, and adapt his or her approach accordingly.

**Conclusion.** If you supplement your exhibit sales team with the right Professional Staffers, I guarantee you'll want them back for every show. And so will your reps. They are on the front lines and will notice IMMEDIATELY the increase in qualified booth traffic, and how much simpler THEIR jobs have become.

In the end, your rep's time is optimized, your prospects and customers feel taken care of, your sales funnel gets filled, and the Professional Staffers are thrilled to make a difference.