



Event ROI: Maximizing Quality Lead Generation

Many marketing professionals from companies who deliver and sponsor events often define the ROI for an event simply as the total number of leads they receive from their involvement in the event. They just look at the total number of leads mined from an event registration and/or attendee list(s), and they are done. At best the number of leads is a component of event ROI. That being said, it does represent a key component of event ROI that needs to be examined in the right light. This article is about offering companies actionable advice to maximize the number of quality leads they receive from delivering or sponsoring events.

The initial step in maximizing the lead component of event ROI is to refine the definition of lead optimization from maximizing the number of total leads to maximizing the number of quality leads. In the spirit of “Keep it Simple (KIS)” here is the argument: quality leads drive sales growth, and one quality lead that delivers new business is worth endless poor leads. The number of quality leads that a company receives from an event can be defined as the sum of two components: direct leads and indirect leads. Direct leads include attendees and registrants for an event while indirect leads include all quality prospects garnered after the event as a result of leveraging the company’s involvement in the event.

In terms of defining a quality lead for an event, you need to clearly identify the demographics of a prospect you value in a sales lead from a given event. Some events may be designed to support a specific product. If an event is designed to support a product that is to drive sales for a \$1 million product, then you would not value a lead delivered for a one person CPA firm. You also need to effectively communicate this definition to everyone internally who are involved in the event, and if you are sponsoring an event then this also involves communicating this to the organization putting on the event. If you sponsor an event, don’t give the organization delivering the event credit for offering you leads that do meet your objectives in sponsoring an event. Again, you need to make sure that all those involved in marketing an event clearly understand your company’s definition of a quality lead. If that is not done then you have no chance in optimizing the amount of quality leads received from an event. Maximizing the number of direct leads acquired from an event starts with having a clear definition of what your company considers a quality lead and effectively communicating this to each and every person involved in marketing the event.

Once have identified who you want to come to the party (the event) then you can focus on how to get as many of the right people to the party as possible. This is all about effective marketing. Effective marketing involves understanding not only the messaging that will resonate with your target audience, but the channel(s) through which they will be most receptive to the messaging. You need to identify and/or work with the organization delivering an event to identify the marketing channels that will be most effective and develop a strategy to optimize each channel. Potential marketing channels include: direct e-mail, newsletters, social media, blogs, banner ads, event calendars, and affiliate marketing. This is not an exhaustive list, but it does identify several key potential marketing channels. The effectiveness of each channel depends on the demographics of your target audience and the behaviors of those within your target demographic. You do not want to invest time and dollars into channels that will not yield event registrations, but you also do not want to leave registrations (leads) on the table by ignoring a viable, cost-effective marketing channel. To offer some context, if your target demographic is those who are age 50 and over then a big investment in social media may not makes sense. Conversely, if you target demographic includes those who are age 20-25 then ignoring social media as a marketing channel could be a big mistake.



Many companies make the mistake of ignoring indirect leads, leads mined after an event, as they believe once the event is over that the lead generation from the event stops then and there. This can be a costly mistake. If your company has the right strategy in place the number of indirect leads can be just as large, if not larger, than the number of direct leads mined from an event. Maximizing indirect leads for an event is all about leveraging the content delivered in the event. If your company creates resources based on the content you can share them with not only event registrants, but your entire target audience to capture quality leads. If you are delivering or sponsoring a webinar then there should be a webinar recording. This can be a valuable resource in generating quality leads. Other resources that can yield leads are whitepapers, articles, session presentations at other organizations' events, and blogs. If your company is not able to create these resources in house there are many consulting firms out there, including 360 Thought Leadership Consulting, which can offer guidance in creating and effectively mining leads from these resources. Events can be the gifts that keep on giving, so companies would do well not to leave leads on the table by ignoring indirect lead channels.

In summary, in order to optimize the number of quality leads from your investment in any event:

1. Clearly define your definition of a quality lead for an event
2. Effectively communicate this definition to all parties involved in the event both internally and externally
3. Assess both direct and indirect marketing channels in developing your event marketing strategy
4. Identify & optimize direct marketing channels that offer cost-effective quality lead generation
5. Identify & optimize indirect marketing channels that offer cost-effective quality lead generation

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