Exhibiting Measurement Made Easy: How to Measure Results and Return on Investment

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An exhibition is a marketing and sales investment. As with any investment, you should expect a return on investment. Are you getting a return on your exhibiting investment? For most exhibitors, the answer is either "we don't know" or "no". When it comes to investing human and financial capital, both of these answers are unacceptable. The primary reason why many exhibitors answer this way is the lack of an exhibiting measurement process.

The two primary reasons for exhibiting measurement are to 1.) justify the investment and 2.) gather information to make your investment more profitable. A good measurement system can help you determine whether you should continue exhibiting at a specific exhibition, and if so, to what degree. It can help you identify your exhibiting program's strengths and weaknesses. It can provide benchmarks for comparing exhibitions, a current exhibition versus the last exhibition, and even exhibitions compared to other sales and marketing media. If you're going to win the game of exhibiting, you must have a score keeping process.

Exhibiting measurement can be as simple or complex as you want to make it. The specific metrics you use to measure will be determined by your exhibiting objectives.

Here are six basic measurements that almost every company should be measuring:

1. **Return on Objectives**: What specific goals were you pursuing and what progress did you make toward those goals?
2. **Exhibition Budget versus Actual**: What was your total exhibiting budget and what did you actually spend?
3. **At & Post-Exhibition Sales Written**: How many orders and what was the total amount of orders written at and after the event? Ideally, you should measure post-exhibition sales at the 90 and 180-day points, or longer if you have a long sales cycle. Also take into consideration the frequency of the exhibition. Is it annual? Every 2 years?
4. **Quantity and Quality of Leads**: How many leads did you capture? How many were A – B – C leads? What is the estimated total sales value of the leads?
5. **Cost Per Lead**: What was your cost per lead? Divide total number of leads captured by total exhibition investment to determine this number.
6. **Cost Per Interaction**: What did it cost you to generate a face-to face contact? To determine this number simply multiply your total lead count by 2.4. This will give you a pretty accurate method way of determining your total stand traffic. Then divide total exhibition investment by estimated total stand traffic.

These six basic metrics are by no means all that could and should be measured, but they are a very solid starting point.

There is one final metric that all exhibitors should attempt to measure – the elusive exhibition Return on Investment. To determine ROI accurately you must first be able to track at- and post-exhibition sales revenue. Once you have that, simply follow the formula below:

Here's a Return on Investment example:

➢ Total At- and Post-Exhibition Sales Revenue	$250,000
➢ Less Cost of Sales (75%)	- 187,500
➢ **Equals Gross Exhibition Profit**	**$ 62,500**
➢ Less Exhibition Costs	20,000
➢ **Equals Net Exhibition Profit**	**$ 42,500**
➢ Divided by Exhibition Costs	$ 20,000
➢ **Return on Investment**	**213% or $2.13 to $1**

And there you have it! In this example, money invested in the exhibition is producing a 213% return on investment. Where else could you invest your money and get that kind of return? What would it mean to your company, and to you personally, if you could convert your exhibition program from an "expensive appearance" into a "profitable investment"?

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