



With marketing budgets being scrutinized more than ever, measuring the return on your trade show investment has become a hot topic. There is no one magic formula that will determine trade show success for every company, however, setting objectives relating to ROI will give you important data you can use to determine many factors of your trade show program. In addition to helping you justify your company's participation at a particular show, this information will assist you in selecting the shows that will produce the most for you as well as increasing the participation from your team. Also, having a pre-determined goal for each show can boost the level of cooperation from your booth staff.

There are many objectives that trade shows can help your company achieve. Some of these objectives are quantifiable and can easily be measured while some are intangible and relate to perception. It is also important to remember that separate objectives should be assigned for each individual show, as your goals and objectives can and will change from show to show.

On this table we have listed 23 objectives that can be achieved by exhibiting at industry trade shows. We have divided these objectives into 4 main categories – Sales/Prospecting, Customer Relations, Marketing/PR and Partner Programs.

### **Trade Show Objectives and Related Key Performance Indicators**

	<b>Strategic Objective</b>	<b>Key Performance Indicators</b>
<b>Sales/ Prospecting</b>	Creating new sales leads	Quantity of leads received
	Finalizing sales contracts	Contracts finalized/Revenue
	Selling to existing clients	Revenue of add-on sales to current clients
	Building prospect database	Number of new contacts
<b>Customer Relations</b>	Building relationships with current clients	Number of clients met with
	Client education	Number of attendees at company sessions
	Client satisfaction surveys	Number of completed surveys submitted
	Receiving customer testimonials	Number and quality of testimonials obtained
<b>Marketing/ PR</b>	Regaining lost clients	Number of clients won back
	Marketing new product/service	Quality of feedback
	Building brand awareness	Number of impressions at, during, after show
	Positioning/re-positioning brand	Quantity of attendees and number of impressions
	Demonstrating benefits	Quantity and attendance of product demonstrations
	Boosting financial /investor perceptions	Editorial coverage in financial press
	Developing new markets	Number/quality of contacts from new market
	Generating editorial coverage	Number of articles
	Building relationships with editors and journalists	Number of editors/journalists met
	Competitive Intelligence/Industry Trends	Quality of information received
<b>Partner Program</b>	Test marketing campaigns	Number/quality of feedback sessions
	Researching brand perception	Number/quality of feedback sessions
	Finding new distributors/partners	Number/quality of partners met or signed up
	Supporting current re-sellers	Number of re-sellers met with
	Building your reputation as a partner	Number/quality of prospective partners met

# measuring trade show roi

By JoAnna Forshee, Envision Events

Immediately after a show is the best time to review your objectives and report on your participation. A *post-show report* is a valuable resource in helping you plan your next year's trade show schedule and can be turned into your management team to help justify your participation at shows. Your post-show report should include such information as final costs, objectives met and sales leads generated. Keep in mind, new business can still happen for weeks or months after a show, so be sure to keep your post-show report updated with any changes. In addition to the objectives, this is a good time to reflect on your trade show procedures and make notes of what you can do to make the process easier on you next time.

After the show is also a good time to reflect on the performance of your booth team. Not every salesperson is good at exhibit sales so you may need to decide what salespeople you will use at future shows. Another option is designating an exhibit sales team that attends all your trade shows, however, not all companies can afford such a luxury. If your booth team is lacking, you may want to consider boothmanship training.

Equally important to this process is setting sufficient methods to measure these goals. Far too often, companies set goals and do not make them easy to track. If your goal is set for "number of leads obtained" for example, counting on your salespeople to turn in business cards is not going to cut it. You may want to consider renting the badge scanner from the show. The scanner will collect the attendee's information and then it will be emailed to you in spreadsheet format. This makes the information easy to track as well as easy to distribute to your sales staff. If you would rather collect business cards, consider purchasing a business card scanner for use in the booth.

Sometimes there can be hindrances to your company's success that are out of your control such as a competitor's product launch or special promotion. It is important to take these things into consideration when completing your post-show follow-up report. If you feel that you are at the right show, but aren't getting the exposure that you could be, talk to the show representatives. They can help you find ways to drive traffic and increase your profile at the show.

You've got to start somewhere, and it can appear overwhelming unless you plan ahead. The first time you set goals for a trade show you may find that your numbers are not realistic, but that will change. Keeping this information from show to show will help you start a trend by which you measure your entire trade show program.

JoAnna Forshee ([jf@envisionevents.com](mailto:jf@envisionevents.com)) is President of Envision Events – an events planning and marketing firm specializing in the technology industry. She can be reached at 850.671.4798 or [www.envisionevents.com](http://www.envisionevents.com).