

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

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As we've said all along, a tradeshow is a marketing and sales investment. As with any investment, you should expect a return on that investment. The question is "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 exhibit measurement process.

The two primary reasons for exhibit 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 show, and if so to what degree. It can help you identify your exhibit program's strengths and weaknesses. It can provide benchmarks for comparing show versus show, show versus last show, and even shows 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. **Exhibit Budget versus Actual**: What was your total exhibiting budget and what did you actually spend?
3. **At & Post-show Sales Written**: How many orders and what was the total dollar amount of orders written at and after the event? Ideally, you should measure post-show 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 show.
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 show 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 booth traffic. Then divide total show investment by estimated total booth traffic.

These six basic metrics are by no means are all that could and should be measured, but they are a very solid starting point. They will give you a very good picture of whether you are winning the game of exhibiting.

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

Here's a Return on Investment example:

➢ Total post-show sales from exhibit leads:	$250,000
➢ Less cost of sales or gross margin:	-190,000
➢ **Equals Gross Exhibit Profit**	**$ 60,000**
➢ Less Exhibiting Costs:	$ 20,000
➢ **Equals Net Exhibit Profit:**	**$ 40,000**
➢ **Net Exhibit Profit $40,000/Exhibit Costs**	**$ 20,000 = 200% ROI**

And there you have it! In this example, every dollar invested in exhibiting is producing a 200% return on investment. Where else could you invest your money and get that kind of return on investment? What would it mean to your company, and to you personally, if you could convert your tradeshow program from "expensive appearances" into "profit centers"? You may rest assured that the information presented in this series of articles provides a direct path to making tradeshows payoff. It is up to you to put it to work.

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