Using Segmentation to Drive Registration
By
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Who Attends Trade Shows?

The answer to this continually asked question can be complex in these days of advanced data analytics and AI. As most of you know, we have been immersed in data analytics for many years but, let's step back a bit and **simplify the answer** as at times this data world gets too complex.

Here's one simple answer.

> **Repeaters** – those who come to the show every year and some for many years
> **Skippers** – individuals who skip one or more years and then have shown up again
> **Past** – have attended before but not last year or years
> **First Timers** – attendees who came for the very first time last year
> **Prospects** – those who we think should or could attend the show but have not

These **five segments** encompass the universe of all potential attendees, and our marketing objectives for each "behavioral segment" are rather simple.

> **Repeaters** – insure they repeat
> **Skippers** – eliminate the skips
> **Past** – bring them back
> **First Timers** – sell the second time
> **Prospects** – drive the first time

Not only can we easily identify these segments, but the individuals also know what segment they are in unless Alzheimer's has set in!

Most pre-show communications do not recognize these segments, and just blast away with the "show facts" to all in a clear, forceful and frequent manner. We assume that this communication approach is all that it takes to achieve registration objectives. This harks back to the old sales strategy of **"spray and pray"** – shoot, enough FAB's and you are bound to hit buyer's needs and make a sale. Unfortunately, in these days of communication clutter, spray and pray does not work well. The following formula does work, and will break through the ever-growing clutter.

SEGMENTATION $\longrightarrow$ **RELEVANCY** $\longrightarrow$ **ENGAGEMENT** $\longrightarrow$ **ACTION**

The guiding axiom is – **the more relevant the message and offer, the greater the engagement and action**. The key that opens the "relevancy" door is segmentation, so let us dive into what data is available to describe the four behavioral segments to drive relevancy.

Behavior + Data = Relevancy

When developing any events marketing communication plan, start with these five behavioral segments and **add demographic data to create relevancy**. Here is a logical list of captured data from past registrations or is available from new lists.

- Job title or function
- Company or organization type
- Geographic distance from show venue
- Buying or purchasing influence
- Number of employees or company revenue range
- Product and/or service interests
- Other demographics captured or available

The combination of attendee behavior and several demographic facts can easily produce highly relevant messages and offers. Here's an example for email:

Behavioral segment: First timers
Demographic data: Company name, title and geographic distance

From: *<name of sender>*
To: *John J. Sample*
Subject line: *This year's show has more exhibitors for you*
Hi John,
We trust you enjoyed <name of show> last year, and we know it was your first time attending, and are very much looking forward to your return this year. To pique your interest in returning we have added a number of new exhibitors that should be of value to <name of company>, and in your position of <title> I'm sure you'll want to visit them and check out the new exhibitor list by clicking on <link to new exhibitor list>.

You will probably be flying in from <city>, and we have arranged for a group discount with these hotels <link to hotel list>. Last year these special rate rooms filled up on average 21 days ahead of the show so we encourage you to act now and reserve your preferred hotel location. You can always cancel if plans change.

Finally, only for our first timer, we have arranged for a special discount for dinner at <name of restaurant> during the show. Their food is great and to download or print out your deal, click here <link to coupon>.

Registration is now open, and here is your customized link to use – please correct any data we have pre-populated as things do change <pre-populated registration form>.

Sincerely yours,

<name of sender>

Now this may seem a bit much to execute, but ask yourself the question – is it relevant and will it drive engagement. We think the answer is yes. Of course, this type of communication can be delivered with multiple variations dependent on the data elements in the database.

Progression of Communications

At the start of registration, all of the five segments are in essence – static. The facts are the facts and until registration starts everyone is unregistered. The first communications should be relevant as possible as the preceding example demonstrates.

Then the registrations roll in and the static state changes to dynamic – those registered and those not! Relevancy to drive engagement and action is now even more important as the show date nears. The five segments plus demographic data when viewed through the lens of who has and has not registered should be the basis of even more powerful communications.

Of course, even with highly relevant and timely communications you are not going to convince those who have decided not to or cannot attend to register. You are actually marketing to those on the bubble, and have not yet reached a decision. This is the exact moment where the relevancy and frequency of the message moves the registration needle.

Looking Ahead

Typically, we end our blogs with a quick summary of the topic, but not this time. If you agree with the points made then you will like to know that soon we will be introducing a data system and tool that makes the task of delivering these relevant and timely communications a great deal easier. Stay tuned for an announcement in the upcoming weeks.

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John has partnered with Direct Hit Marketing and is responsible for adding new trade show clients and thought leadership. John is also President of B2BMarketing, LLC. His background includes experience in both sales and marketing. On the sales side, John was a field salesman, national sales manager and executive in charge of both sales and marketing for three major B2B firms. On the marketing side, he was president of a B2B direct marketing agency for 10 years, was National Campaign Manager at IBM, Sr. VP of B2B at Rapp Collins Worldwide and President of Protocol B2B. John is also the author of *The Fundamentals of Business-to-Business Sales & Marketing,* published by McGraw-Hill. John's next book co-authored with Steve Juedes, President of DHM is titled *Data-Driven Trade Show Marketing & Sales for Organizers and Exhibitors* is due for publication in late 2019. He can be reached at 602-402-6588 or by email at JohnC@DirectHitMarketing.com.