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NO SHOWS – THE UNANSWERED QUESTION

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The Unanswered Question:

In B2B sales, the single most unanswered question is why didn't they buy? As only 10-20% of qualified leads turn into customers, wouldn't you think that companies would want to know **why they lost the other 80-90%**? Surprisingly, most B2B firms don't determine the answer to that question and continue to plow forward without knowing. If asked, the sales staff will default to the standard reason – price. There are actually many reason leads don't turn into customers and price is only one, and usually not the main one.

Much is the same in the trade show industry as the unanswered question is **why didn't those attendees who registered not attend and become No Shows?** For many trade shows that are held every year the even more vexing question is why those who registered multiple times didn't attend even once?

There are **two ways to determine the answer** to this question – survey the No Shows or dive into the registration data. Surveys are difficult, costly and take time. So let's explore what can be learned from the registration data organizers have at their fingertips.

We are looking for statistically significant differences and insights between those who registered and attended vs. those who registered and didn't show up. This will lead to:

- **Improved targeting and segmentation to improve attendee acquisition marketing**
- **Pre-show focus on segments and individuals who might not show up**

Data analytics for a Single Show: Depending on the data collected at registration, here are the most logical data comparisons that can be determined on a single show.

- **Geographic distance from show city.** With the exception of Las Vegas and perhaps Orlando, an analysis of the distance from the show location for registrations vs. verified attendees will yield the rate of drop off as the distance from the city increases. A few destination venues like Vegas should be considered a special situation due to the large number of shows and separate attractions it offers. Certainly Vegas can be analyzed but comparing it to other geographical locations probably is not a valid comparison. The key here is to understand if there is a geographical bias for no shows.



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- **Data of registration.** If the show charges a fee for attendance and offers discounts for registration, an analysis of those who take advantage of the early bird specials is another segment. But, most trade shows are either free or charge a modest amount to register. The analysis of the date of registration compared to the “no show” rate might well provide opportunities for a timed marketing effort to increase the attendance rate.
- **Title and function.** Is there a difference between senior vs. middle vs lower level titles and functions? One might postulate that senior level registrants show up at a lower rate than middle or lower level, but is that true? As most exhibitors want senior level attendees, if this analysis confirms this trend it might well lead to increased marketing communications to drive a verified attendance. In addition are there specific functional areas that have higher no show rates.
- **Industry type.** Most registration forms do ask for the general description of the business type the individual represents. But, these categories are usually too broad and a more specific definition would be to enhance the data with a 4-digit SIC or 6-digit NAICS code. This type of analysis would improve targeting and list acquisition for future shows as well as identify industry codes that may be contributing more than their fair share to the no show rate.
- **Other registration data.** Any other data that is collected at time of registration also has the potential for this analysis. A typical area to examine is registration code types or specific show verticals. We have seen no show rate variances in these areas. A look at the show’s demographic questions will provide guidance for areas that may warrant further analysis and investigation.

Data Analytics for Multiple Shows

While analysis for only one year will lead to valuable insights, the real payoff is to take 3-5 years of registration data and analyze trends over time. In addition to the reports above here are several additional reports the registration vs. verified attendance analysis would generate:

- **All of the above.** If single show data analysis unveils insights that help improve marketing and boost attendance, then doing these same analytics over a period of time will add deeper insight. Trends over a 3 to 5 year period would be particularly helpful as only a single point in time is not a trend.



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- **Individual behavior.** There are some people who repeatedly register and never show up or register and show up every other year. Obviously, some individuals register and come every year, and those are repeat attendees that are identified in the show's database. Finding individuals who periodically attend might give rise to a focused marketing communication and offer to encourage them to attend each year.
- **Company behavior.** Over time companies will register multiple individuals to attend industry specific shows. How many of these individuals show up? Knowing the number of individuals and attendance rate from each company opens up the opportunity to do some account based marketing.

To Sum Up:

Deploying the No Show analysis steps that were mentioned and comparing the registration data vs. those who actually attend the trade show will provide multiple insights that will help reduce the trade show No Show rate. It will also provide marketers with relevant information that will sharpen campaigns and produce higher attendance. Higher traffic levels fueled by a reduced No Show rate will be appreciated by the exhibitors and lead to their overall retention and success at the show. That's what all shows want.