



COMPANIES - SECTION 2

**EXPORT GROWTH IN A VIRTUAL WORLD:
A STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE**

Event Readiness Preparations

2021 EDITION

Event Readiness Preparations

Virtual Trade Market Readiness Assessment

Once your company has decided to participate in a Virtual Trade Activity, carefully consider each phase of the process to help you identify work that needs to be done to optimize success. Many of the activities will be the same or similar to traditional sales but will be turbo-charged with digital media.

While you will save on travel budgets, you might need a technology upgrade, more support staff with relevant skills, or more digital sales collateral. There are government programs that are beginning to fund some of these needs, and marketing firms are expanding their product offerings to help transition clients to virtual selling.

It will be very important to prioritize needs based on a comprehensive assessment of your business, your customers,



and your timeline for making this transition from in-person trade activities to virtual events. It may take longer and be more expensive to attend virtual trade shows where the market is de facto global, versus trade missions where your delegation has zeroed in on a particular market.

Trade Show organizers will determine the tech platform that attendees and exhibitors will use, so companies will have to adapt to new platforms and be thoughtful and creative in supplementing such platforms with compatible tools they might want to use. It may well be that virtual events require more preparation time than face-to-face events, making detailed planning all the more imperative.

Integrated Marketing, Sales, and Customer Service

Write a strong company profile tailored to each mission or trade show. If you don't have one as part of an existing Brand Platform, create a one-line positioning statement that is easily understood, and that projects an image of a company with whom people want to do business. This will be your digital elevator pitch, enticing prospective customers to click

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for more information about your company. Identify specific digital collateral pieces you want to have on hand in the virtual booth, or that you would like the matchmaker to provide to the companies in-market in advance of your call.

Be ready and available in case a company requests a meeting with you right away. In a trade show situation, this means having adequate support staff working in the virtual booth or helping you outside the platform. In a trade mission situation, know that virtual meetings are not all confined to the official dates of the mission. Let your matchmaker know your schedule of availability for meetings.

Review all of your sales materials and ensure they are available in digital format, and easily accessible. Everything you include should be reflected on your website as well. A recent report from EDC indicates that digital media is no longer considered a competitive advantage. It is now the cost of entry to just be in the game. Your only contact for the foreseeable future may be virtual, which means potential customers get to study up on your company before agreeing to a one-on-one meeting. If you provide everything they need to answer their questions and resolve their concerns about your products and your company, they will be eager to talk. But you must manage the



process of getting them prepared to talk. At each step, when a potential customer requests additional information, you have an opportunity to obtain a bit more information from them, building their prospect/customer profile within your sales system.

THINGS TO CONSIDER BEFORE COMMITTING TO VIRTUAL TRADE ACTIVITIES: ARE WE READY?

- Our Marketing and Sales teams use virtual tools alongside traditional sales activities and materials.
- We follow customers and target prospects online with LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook Groups, and through intermediary sites such as industry associations, directories, and government sites.
- We regularly use targeted email campaigns to generate new prospects, and we track them.
- We have a Customer Relations Management (CRM) system to ensure our sales and marketing and customer service team know where we are with clients and prospects. We are constantly gathering leads.
- We train support staff to help implement sales, marketing, customer service initiatives.
- We have a communications scheduling process that gets our message out across all social media to clients, prospects, and allies in industry and government.