



COMPANIES - SECTION 4

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

2021 EDITION



Prospect Research

Prospect Research

Whether working with a matchmaker or doing your own research, your objectives in-market must be crystal clear. Ideally you can find clones of your existing customers in that market and will be able to follow the same sales strategy. Seek leads in all of your discussions and use online sources to study those prospects.

When working with a matchmaker, ensure they completely understand your objectives. Check in with them regularly. Get a long list of potential leads and help them prioritize. Identify the title or role that your preferred customer goes by. Give them a second option in case they can't get the first. Suggest a few companies that you have identified and use it as an illustration of how you zero in on prospects. Continue identifying and profiling companies and see if you can make a couple of choice meetings on your own, with agents/distributors, VARS, industry associations, and corporate executives of new or existing customers.



Virtual trade events start long before the actual event dates and may run long after, both of which add value to your participation. Trade shows usually release profile information on exhibitors much earlier, sometimes they provide info on attendees; but, if they don't, you will have to gather that info yourself.

Attendees will be on social media to network their participation. Follow the hashtags (#) for the show and for subjects of interest to your company. Use social media groups like LinkedIn and Facebook Groups. Mine industry associations, delegate lists from previous events in that market, Google searches, and Google Markets to identify and more fully profile your prospects. Consult with Trade Commissioners and EDC regarding potential prospects.

Identify as many attendees as you can in advance of the show and engage with them. And, while exhibitors are generally viewed as sellers, and attendees as buyers, you may well have an opportunity to sell to other exhibitors. Research them as well and develop a target list for communication in advance of the show. Also, don't neglect speakers or sponsors as they may be able to help advance your objectives, or provide you valuable information on other vendors or sponsors.

“

Mine industry associations, delegate lists from previous events in that market, Google searches, and Google Markets to identify and more fully profile your prospects.

”

When attending Virtual Trade Shows or Conferences, learn the technology platform and seek prospect information within the system. If participant lists are not provided by event organizers in advance, they may be accessible as the event starts so companies should learn how to take screen shots so interesting information can be captured from chat rooms, booth visits and networking sessions. Be ready to build profiles on these leads.

Create a pre-event initiative to gather people around topics of mutual interest to build a community with your company as a prime mover. Discussion sessions on speakers and topics, the exchange of tips on using the technology, surveys on promising new products, welcoming first time attendees – these are all ways to piggyback on the show with sales initiatives that you can manage. Position your company as a thought leader, make new contacts, network, seek customer intelligence, and build profiles on leads by building a community that can endure during and after the show. Build your social media presence, across key social platforms and grow your follower base with the information you create and share.

