



COMPANIES - SECTION 6

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

Participating in the Event

2021 EDITION



Participating in the Event

Make the most of your Speaking and Pitching Opportunities

- Prepare for video calls: clean up your desktop and have documents open and ready for screen sharing, tidy up your background, framing yourself to ensure you aren't too close or at an odd angle to your computer's camera, check your audio levels, and adjust your lighting. These are all small adjustments you can make to ensure you come across as professional and at ease when the camera is on you.
- Test technology ahead of time and practice presentations. Many virtual technologies have diagnostic tools that can assess your device ahead of the event to ensure it is fully enabled.



- Practice using the same technology you will use in your meeting or event, whether it is MS Teams, Skype, Zoom, or any other web conferencing technology. Make sure all of your tech tools are charged. Plan for technology failures, and double check everything to ensure they don't occur. Always have a backup plan.
- Your profile for the event should link to custom landing pages on your website. Potential customers (attendees) will be taken directly to your targeted marketing for each event. You can maintain control of information delivered to each prospect, who responds to which message. Use web analytics to profile and track responses from each event. Your web pages and other digital materials should all have the same branding; you want a prospective customer to recognize the web page they've landed on from other materials they've seen from your company.
- Ensure high production value for all video and digital materials, but also have lower resolution versions of your image files for email and web communications where needed. Check page load time. Even a few seconds too long can cause potential customers to quit.

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- Create questions in advance to cut and paste into the discussion in the chat room. This way, coherent questions can be quickly asked at an opportune moment without missing out on either timing or the ability to concentrate on the speaker because you are busy working out the words you want to use.
- Speaker/moderator may respond to questions more frequently to bring attention to your firm.

Best Practices for the Virtual Trade Event

- Be prepared and online in time (or slightly early) for any virtual activity.
- Have staff ready for busy periods. Identify the roles they will play.
- Have someone, who is not also occupied with other significant roles in the event available to field technology-related questions during the event.
- Have the right technology tools for the type of virtual trade activity. You may need a second computer or smart phone to efficiently participate in a webinar and be able to submit comments, questions, and chat. Download any required apps in advance.



- Have a backup plan for all technology being hosted, including your Internet connection.
- Have profiles of your best prospects readily accessible in your virtual booth so your team know who is participating and can recognize them. When the booth gets busy, you might not notice that your best prospects are there unless your entire team is aware, on the lookout, and has been coached on their role in making contacts. Choose the best prospects. Don't lose people while they are waiting to speak to you.
- Be ready to respond quickly to enquires at trade shows. Have template emails and pre-packaged samples with letters, prepared and ready to send to companies after the call. The virtual trade expectation is a continuation of the discussion within the same day, or even immediately following the virtual encounter.
- Chat messages should be saved or copied into another document in real time.
- Create and be ready to share a 2-3-minute pitch video in advance of full meetings.
- Don't forget to recreate the kind of chance encounters that happen onsite by seeking opportunities for social interaction, or even host your own virtual event before or after the show.

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Tips for One-On-One Meetings

- Study every scrap of information on each company who will attend. You may have 20 minutes online with a customer and might not soon get a second chance at that opportunity. Learn what you can about the person with whom you will be meeting.
- Arrange one-on-one meetings with leads before, during and after a trade show. Prepare for these meetings as you would for your normal sales calls or trade mission meetings. Plan on having a shorter meeting, unless it turns into a big opportunity, in which case you can extend or schedule a second meeting on the spot. Consider having a sales support person pre-screen companies who request to meet with you so routine questions are answered, materials exchanged, and the buyer's interest qualified. This will let you get right to business when you are on the call.
- Consider having a colleague participate (in the background) so they can seek out information or digital assets for emailing in real time, or to share on screen during the call. Set the call on your web conferencing subscription so you can record it for reference and critique afterwards.



- Have a clear objective for each call. You likely won't complete a sale but what milestone would you like to achieve? Have a post-call plan in place and get the company to agree that you will follow up with something to review, even if the call does not go the way you had hoped. Keep the door open.
- Start on time, plan to finish in the allotted time and only go longer if they agree to extra time. Be polite. Remember, you may be dealing with cultural issues so do not assume the worst, stay positive, stay enthusiastic, but real. Remembering that this is a human person on the line, even if everything is technology driven. Incorporate some personal interaction at the close of the call. Have some fun, this is what you do in your life!
- Have a follow up plan in place and do as much as you can before the event to enable a rapid follow through with leads identified. Engage your team in follow up, don't be left trying to compose individual emails in the evening after you have worked the whole day. Get your marketing and sales team in gear, adding extra resources if need be with the budget savings on travelling expenses.

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Post Event Evaluation

An important element of creating a clear focus for a Virtual Trade activity is articulating the outcomes you would like to achieve. Not many companies have had enough experience with virtual trade activities to be able to identify them as the source for subsequent sales. This will evolve as more activity takes place. Outcomes are a progress report en route to sales. Some typical outcomes are:

- Data provided by event organizer: registrations, profiles, surveys, participant feedback
- Introduction to qualified prospects
- Significant information exchange that confirms the target is a qualified prospect
- Number of companies who participate in a virtual product demo
- Number of prospects who agree to engage in your sales process
- Number of companies with whom you will be following up, for future sales



- Analytics obtained from any technology provider whose platform was used in organized virtual events will add dimension to the data gathered from your own sources. This includes activity on your digital channels by conference attendees, email response rates, engagement on your LinkedIn or other social media pages, or other online data accessible through web analytics during the sales period as compared to other periods

