

Tracking Leads Through Sales Cycle Milestones

By Jefferson Davis, Competitive Edge

Many companies in this industry have long and complex sales cycles. This can make it appear difficult, if not impossible to determine the value of a tradeshow interaction or track a tradeshow lead through to the ultimate conversion.

One approach that can help address this challenge is to think about lead tracking in terms of movement through the key milestones of your sales cycle. I define a milestone as a significant action or step that moves the buyer to the next step in a sales cycle.

The key milestones of a sales cycle might include:

1. Creating customer awareness of a problem or opportunity
2. Identifying and engaging the decision team
3. Doing a needs or situational assessment
4. Analyzing and presenting the findings of the assessment
5. Conducting a test or trial demonstration or presentation of capabilities
6. Presenting the findings of a test or trial
7. Preparing and submitting a proposal
8. Reviewing, discussing and negotiating the proposal with the entire decision team
9. Signing a purchase contract or agreement

Every company should take the time to break their sales cycle down into the major milestones. Then, you as part of your lead capture process you can document what milestone each visitor is at in the sales cycle when they visit your booth.

After the show you can ask your engineering and/or sales team report back when a lead moves from one step to the next in the cycle. If you are doing tradeshows properly you'll find that tradeshows can shorten the length of your sales cycle and help you win more business.

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Since 1991, his consulting and training services have helped clients improve their tradeshow performance and results to the tune of over \$500M. Mr. Davis is co-creator of the JD EVENTS Online Exhibitor Solution Center program. He can be reached at 704-814-7355 or jdavis@tradeshowturnaround.com.