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Maximize Your Trade Show ROI with Conversational AI

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Introduction

Accounting for nearly one-quarter of all planned meetings in the United States, trade shows are one of the biggest spends for any organization.[1] Although the intangible benefits are priceless, most marketers articulate success in terms of opportunities generated, so every activity must be focused on and translate to more customer data, enriched leads, and documented interactions with influencers and decision makers. In order to optimize the outcome of trade show activities, your organization should focus on two key items:

> **Creating a solid action plan to roll out during each phase of the trade show: before, during, and after**

> **Implementing conversational AI (artificial intelligence) to maximize your trade show ROI (return on investment)**

In this guide, we will explain how your sales and marketing teams can use conversational AI in every step of planning in order to extract even more value from your trade show attendance.

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What Is Conversational AI?

Conversational AI focuses on producing conversations that can take place seamlessly between computers and humans within specific contexts. Conversational AI is both educational and buyer-centric and delivers information on the spot, while also collecting information about the contact throughout the conversation that can be stored in a customer relationship management (CRM) platform.

One of the most popular forms of conversational AI is the implementation of a sales assistant that can complete specific tasks, so your sales and marketing teams can focus their time and energy on other vital aspects of a trade show. For example, your sales team likely doesn't have the bandwidth to personally invite every single person in your database to meet with you at the trade show, but an AI sales assistant does. This type of conversational AI can help you operate at scale to engage leads in conversation, which frees up your team to focus on the event and running a successful booth. With conversational AI, your already successful sales team gets better information and has the time and energy needed to sell even better.

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Preparing for the event is one of the most time-consuming and important parts of a trade show. Here are a few important tips:

- Organize your internal data and properly segment your audience for pre-show outreach.

- Make sure that the messaging is compelling and in line with where the recipient is in the decision-making process. The messages should drive contacts toward a specific action, such as scheduling office hours or registering for a demo.

- Include audiences beyond your database, such as show organizers, sponsors, vendors, speaker lists, and any relevant lists you can track down.

- Request access to the event's mobile app if possible to research and engage with attendees prior to the trade show.

- Confirm that your lead upload process is clearly defined and that correct lead routing rules are in place.

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When your sales team is gearing up for a trade show, running a pre-show drive to boost lead attendance is low on the list of things to do. It can take seven to 12 touches to convert a lead, and it's important to engage with potential attendees in a timely manner. An AI sales assistant can quickly reach out to your list of prospective attendees—no matter the size—in order to determine who is attending. Then, through the power of conversational AI, your assistant can automatically invite those who plan on attending to specific sessions, your booth, or even VIP events.

The last thing to do before the trade show is to set up your AI sales assistant to engage with trade show attendees in real time after they've interacted at your booth. If you set up these AI conversations in advance, then the moment leads hit your database, your AI sales assistant can begin nurturing them. This is something that most other organizations will not do until long after the trade show is over.

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Once you've spent time preparing, it's time to gather data to engage your leads on the spot. To engage leads in real time, it's important to do the following:

☑ Set up a campaign in your CRM associated with the trade show so tracking data is easy and doable while you are at the show.

☑ Install and set up the right devices (e.g., laptop, tablet, smartphone) so that you can input all interactions into your CRM as soon as the interaction takes place.

By collecting data about your leads and booth visitors (whether via badge scanning or from an iPad or tablet), you'll be able to start immediate outreach—which your visitors won't be expecting so soon after their engagement with you. In fact, most organizations are so deeply involved with pulling off a trade show that sometimes lead follow-up gets deprioritized after an event is over. According to data collected by Statista, 11 percent of organizations reported that they followed up post-event with just 1 to 10 percent of the leads they collected.[2]

Pro Tip

If you contact a lead within five minutes, the chances of qualifying them increase by 21 times or greater than if you wait 30 minutes or more.[3]

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With an AI sales assistant, you can reach out to your prospects via conversational AI immediately after in-person interactions, which will keep your organization on their minds and increase the likelihood of lead conversion. Plus, because you're using an AI sales assistant, you don't have to worry about tying up your sales team. They can continue working the trade show floor while conversational AI nurtures your leads in real time.

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Trade shows are a great way to connect with a large audience and get them engaged with your company. But not everyone is ready for a conversation with your sales team. Many conference attendees are in the very early stages of information gathering and learning about their problem and relevant solutions. Once a show is over, make sure these items are on your to-do list:

☑ Determine who is ready to talk to sales and assign to your reps for follow up.

☑ Ensure that all other leads have been successfully enrolled in your lead nurture process during the show.

☑ Check in to make sure opportunities are assigned appropriately when a lead responds from your nurturing.

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After the trade show has ended, most organizations are overwhelmed by the sheer volume of data collected—you could return from a large event with thousands of new leads—and attendees are often bombarded with hundreds of sales emails. Being able to dig through and qualify leads is crucial, and it's something that AI tools can help with so that the right leads are nurtured at the right time. For example, some of the contacts you've gathered might be ready to talk to sales, while others might need further nurturing before they can be moved through the pipeline.

85%

OF 3,000 BUSINESS LEADERS

Surveyed by Boston Consulting Group and the MIT Management Review, 85% believe that AI has the power to help.[5]

With AI tools, your sales team can use machine learning to analyze the data you've collected and automate tasks in a way that simply isn't possible for even the largest sales teams to accomplish.

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After you've analyzed the data collected, you can start personalized, paced outreach and follow-up—without tying up your sales team or bombarding leads. In the past, following up with trade show leads in a meaningful way could take weeks for your sales team to tackle. With conversational AI, these personalized conversations can boost interaction by 137 percent. This personalization can take place seamlessly in the background of your business operations, while your sales team focuses on nurturing the most promising qualified leads.

And herein lies one more important benefit of an AI sales assistant. As your sales team narrows the list of trade show leads they are talking to, the rest of your contacts will naturally become dormant. An AI sales assistant can take your trade show efforts further by engaging leads long after a trade show is over and keeping them interested beyond the immediate post-event time frame.

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Conversica: Your Conversational AI Solution

With Conversica's conversational AI tool, you can engage trade show leads in a natural, persistent way until they become customers both pre-show, during the show, and post-show. This gives your sales team the peace of mind that comes with knowing that every lead is being nurtured at the right time in the right way.

Throughout the conversation, the AI sales assistant listens for the right moment to alert sales that the lead is ready for a phone call and sales conversation. Conversica's AI sales assistant will consistently contact leads until they close, ensuring revenue and a meaningful and personalized customer experience—saving you time, money, and energy, and letting your sales team focus on the best leads.

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Case Study

Conversica's AI assistant was deployed by NewVoiceMedia to follow up with a sample of 1,000 leads following an event. The assistant was able to generate several meetings, which led NewVoiceMedia to deploy the assistant across the organization, which led to a 10 percent rise in MQLs.[7]

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About Conversica

Conversica is the leader in conversational AI for business and the only provider of AI-driven lead engagement software for marketing and sales organizations. The flagship Conversica® AI Sales Assistant helps companies win more customers by automatically contacting, engaging, and following up with leads via natural, two-way conversations over email and SMS text, using multiple languages. Used by more than 1,200 companies worldwide, Conversica's assistants are built on a proven AI platform integrating natural language processing (NLP), natural language generation (NLG), and machine learning (ML) capabilities.

To learn more about Conversica, call +1 (888) 778-1004, email sales@conversica.com, or visit conversica.com to set up a product demonstration. You can also follow us on LinkedIn, Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter.

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