

## Trade Show / Conference Monitoring

### *Why It's Necessary*

Businesses invest a lot of money to participate in trade shows and conferences ... and with good reason. For both exhibitors and attendees, these events afford opportunities that are unmatched in terms of the wealth of industry information and insight that can be gained—not to mention potential customer leads and partners. After all, trade shows and conferences bring together industry leaders and startup vendors (including your competitors of all sizes), suppliers and partners, industry analysts and trade press, and of course, customers and prospects. In an environment where vendors are eager to share their new products and services, information flows freely and tremendous value can be derived just by being present.

Sometimes, though, exhibitors leave an event and realize that they have plenty of leads, but they don't have any document that consolidates all of the insight that was gained about industry trends, competitors, booth lessons, etc. Sure, a few company representatives sat in on select sessions, but did they prepare a summary that could be shared with others? Did the marketing department note what competitor booths displayed or offered as giveaways? Was any insight about competitors' plans actually gleaned at the event? So often impressions are stored in participants' memories ... which fade after a few days back at the office and never get collected and documented to improve future event strategies and decision-making.

### *Goals & Objectives*

- **Informed trade show selection.** Way before an actual event, determine when and where to invest your money. Decide which shows to put on your "must attend" list and when to schedule the release of new products and services so the announcements can be made at the event.
- **Session monitoring.** Receive highlights from important sessions, along with comments about session attendance, Q&A, etc.
- **Insights about competitors.** It's virtually impossible for a vendor to (ethically) visit a competitor's booth and get any valuable information—most vendors won't say much to a competitor. Trained third-party professionals can visit the competitors' booths and have a much better chance of getting valuable information.
- **Insights about your own booth staff.** The same person who visits your competitors can also visit your booth to try to learn the same types of information. You'll get an objective view of how a booth visitor perceives your staff ... and whether they're sharing too much information or just the right amount.
- **Documented comments about the event, participants, etc.** You will receive an overview of the event from many perspectives: themes, overall organization, anecdotal comments made by participants, types of booth displays and giveaways, and statistics and demographics (if made available by event organizers).

## How It's Done

- **Before the event** you'll need to identify:
  - Which sessions are most important for a research analyst to attend
  - Key intelligence topics (KITs) and key intelligence questions (KIQs) to have answered
  - Which competitors should be visited
- **At the event** you can tend to your booth full-time; you won't need to do anything related to the intelligence collection ... except possibly answer a question or two that may arise during the course of the event. Everything else will be handled by the research analyst(s) that are onsite.
- **After the event** you'll receive a report detailing the content that was learned in sessions and at booths. Any anecdotal insights that may be relevant will also be included. The research analyst can present the findings either in person or electronically.

## Results

**Insight** ... and lots of it. You'll have an all-in-one document that contains information you simply wouldn't be able to get in any other way:

- **Competitor information.** Responses to your questions from parties that wouldn't share it with you directly.
- **Industry trends.** Notes from important sessions that you can review when you are ready to strategize.
- **Event insights.** Comments about the event organization, attendees, giveaways, etc. so you won't have to rely on memory or try to reinvent the wheel each time you plan to attend a new event.

The **trade show/conference report** typically includes these sections:

- Executive summary
- Background information (conference themes, overview of event, description of intelligence collection process)
- Competitor info (booth size, sponsorships if any, responses to KITs and KIQs)
- Conference sessions

## About Insight Researchers

Insight Researchers helps businesses reduce the risks involved in making strategic and tactical decisions. We provide insight into what's happening beyond the four walls of your business: customer needs, the competitor landscape, market opportunities (and threats), industry trends, and more. We use both primary and secondary sources to give you the confidence to grow your business. We work primarily in the B2B space, helping businesses in a variety of industries and of all sizes: from start-ups and individual consultants up to and including Fortune 500 companies.