

SPONSOR & EXHIBITOR CHECKLIST

MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR INVESTMENT
BY NURTURING HAPPY CUSTOMERS



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SPONSOR AND EXHIBITOR CHECKLIST

MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR INVESTMENT BY NURTURING HAPPY CUSTOMERS

In-person conferences and events are the best places to showcase your product or service, meet face-to-face with your current and potential customers, and listen to the needs of the industry.

With such a large investment of time, money, and woman/manpower, it's no surprise that management expects great returns on each event that your company sponsors.

We want to arm event sponsors and exhibitors with some ways to prepare for the event, run an amazing on-site experience, and then follow up on leads, post-show.

Based on attendee feedback on our sponsors' post-show follow-up tactics, we've put together a few tips to help you shine while avoiding the dreaded "report as spam"/unsubscribe conundrum or responding to public complaints on social media. Remember: You are marketing to marketers – your peers – so you'll need to be savvy and on-point to capture and keep their attention.

On behalf of the Content Marketing Institute team, we're all here to help you. We're ready for a great year, complete with epic events, exciting sponsor offerings, and customers advancing the practice of content marketing because of partner relationships built at our events.



Peter Loibl

Head of Sales



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Strategic Account
Manager



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PRE-EVENT

PRE-EVENT

☐ **COMMIT TO YOUR SPONSORSHIP EARLY** – Many events let sponsors/exhibitors choose their booth location on a first come, first served basis. If you know you're going to commit, then keep pushing your team to get the event contract signed and returned quickly. This will enable you to secure the ideal sponsorship package for your goals and needs – whether it's a booth in a high traffic location or a speaking engagement.



☐ **COMPLEMENT THE EVENT THEME** – Find out if there is a theme to the event. For example, the Content Marketing World 2022 theme is Driving Forward. Rather than bring branded pens or stress balls, consider bringing something more-closely tied to the theme. Make your brand an extension of the conference.

☐ **THINK LIKE AN ATTENDEE** – When attendees come to events, they're generally coming for two main reasons: to network and to learn. And while they're at an event, they're often extra thirsty and extra hungry. How can you appeal to these folks? Water bottles, notepads, coffee, and comfortable furniture are big winners at events. Make sure your booth is inviting, and consider investing in a giveaway that will entice people to visit and take interest in your product or service.

PRE-EVENT

- ☐ **GET SOCIAL** – See if the conference will give you pre-written or suggested social media ideas – but don't just cut/paste. Customize them to your audience, use the official conference hashtag, and differentiate yourself. Find out if your brand can get a unique discount code, so you can offer personalized value to your followers.
- ☐ **PLAN FOR THE RIGHT TEAM** – Who are the attendees? What are the job titles? Who from your team is best suited to engage with and understand this audience? Bring team members who are the most energetic and passionate about the event and the attendees, and who understand their particular pain points.
- ☐ **SCHEDULE MEETINGS AHEAD OF TIME** – If you know a client or prospect will be at the conference, send them an invite for a meet & greet. Use the event's mobile app networking features or connect on social media. Be sure your booth is staffed to accommodate scheduled meetings and walk-up traffic.



PRE-EVENT



☐ **LEARN THE LAY OF THE LAND** – If you're exhibiting in a town you know well, why not prepare a blog post or some social media content that helps attendees navigate the area? Or, if it's a new location to you, take time to learn about it ahead of time. Maybe even come in a day early to see the sights yourself (it may be your only chance to see daylight for the next 48-72 hours).



☐ **BECOME FRIENDS WITH THE EVENT PRODUCERS** – They're the ones making sure your boxes are received - on time, undamaged, and in their entirety. They can help you with cables, batteries or even equipment you may need. Better yet: triple check your power supplies before you leave and pack two of everything. Event producers can help you rent cords and monitors, but save yourself those unexpected costs and run through your checklist with a colleague.



☐ **THINK GREEN** – We are trying to eliminate as much paper as possible. You can share content with attendees through a digital conference bag accessible in our mobile app.

DURING THE EVENT

DURING THE EVENT

☐ **START EARLY** – The early bird gets access to the most help from the support staff. Additionally, being one of the first in the expo hall gives you extra time to rectify those inevitable little hiccups well before the show begins.

☐ **GET IN YOUR STEPS** – Don't hunker down in the back of your booth space. If you have a 10'x10' booth, that's 100 square feet of ground for you to cover. Sitting behind a table or checking work emails doesn't scream "We can help solve your problem!" to an interested attendee. Stand up, walk around, come toward the front of the booth, and be ready to engage passers-by.



☐ **SHOP LOCAL** – Find some local vendors and products for fun partnerships. For example, one exhibitor at Content Marketing World partnered with local coffee companies – and the line out the door proved it pays to know what attendees want!

DURING THE EVENT

□ **BE EASILY RECOGNIZABLE** – We've had some incredible sponsors and partners who had custom shirts made just for their team at CMWorld. At previous events, some teams wore neon colors to stand out or they proudly sported their brand colors. But most importantly, make sure attendees walking by your booth know immediately what your company does and what value you bring to the market.



□ **BE CREATIVE** – Find creative ways to interact, without using a wheel of fortune or other game that you've seen at every industry event. At Content Marketing World 2019, Skyword had a ring toss game at their booth, with the prize being an adorable stuffed corgi. After sitting through two days of sessions with so much information to digest, a little game to get the body moving - with a sweet stuffed animal as a prize seems like a win-win. Our friends at Emma held book signings in their booth with Ann Handley and

Scott Stratten. The line of people waiting to get to Emma's booth lasted well over an hour. And who could forget Aprimo's VR roller coaster?

DURING THE EVENT

- ☐ **TAKE GOOD NOTES** – Think about the next step – the post-event outreach you'll be doing – and find ways to customize your messages to your booth visitors. Take business cards, take photos, jot down notes. Use whatever tools you need to remember each person's name, face, and pain point. You'll thank us later.
- ☐ **PLAY NICE** – No solution is absolutely perfect. If you meet an attendee and you really can't serve their immediate needs – for example, you're focused on enterprise and they're small business, or you don't integrate with their marketing automation tool or their CRM – let them know that. And suggest that they head around the corner to a competitor's booth. You never know how another solution might reciprocate and send a lead your way.
- ☐ **UPGRADE YOUR PASS** – If you're used to sitting in the expo hall all day, consider upgrading to a main conference pass. This way, you can learn something for your own job, but you can also hear what's resonating with your customers, and what their biggest needs are. This is invaluable information to take back to your R&D teams.





POST-EVENT

POST-EVENT

□ **PLAN YOUR OUTREACH** – You’re back in the office and your hands are full of hot leads you gathered from the event. This list, this prized possession, is what you’ve been waiting for! But, think of it from the attendee’s point of view. They JUST got back to the office too, they’re catching up after a week away while also trying to wrap their heads around 3-4 days of sessions. Is the Monday after you’re back the best time to be emailing them? Probably not.

□ **ANSWER THE “WHY”** – It all starts with an email; but how amazing would it be if you segmented your emails based on what each attendee needed, their fiscal year, their job function/level, or their company size, and could then transform your canned messages into meaningful messages that are personalized to each particular attendee? Sure, that’s a lot more work, but it will likely be much more fruitful. And, rather than asking for a phone conversation or meeting right away, consider enticing them with a valuable piece of content to show you understand their needs, challenges, and the industry on the whole. Think about how you’d like to be approached by a new vendor, and try to replicate that by finding ways to gain their trust and create a meaningful customer experience through your initial outreach.



POST-EVENT

☐ **MAKE YOUR REACH-OUT UNIQUE** – Rather than talk about yourself, consider starting with a survey. What do they need? Why did they come to the event?

☐ **DO YOUR HOMEWORK** – Before you (or a sales representative) email them to ask if they'd like to be customer, make sure their company is a good fit for your product or solution, and isn't already a customer. Show you understand their business before reaching out. It's the first step in gaining trust and developing rapport.



☐ **RESPECT PHONE NUMBERS** – As part of many event registrations, phone numbers are given to exhibitors. That said, our cell phones have practically become an extension of our bodies, so customers might feel very protective of them. Be courteous and start your outreach by contacting them on their office phone or email.

POST-EVENT



☐ **LEARN WHEN TO STOP** – Have you emailed three times and heard nothing? Perhaps move them to an unengaged list. If you return to that same event the following year, consider sending a “we hope to pick up where we left off last year” email to remind and reengage them.

☐ **MAKE YOUR UNSUBSCRIBE OPTION CLEAR** – You're following all of the current privacy regulations, correct? Get informed about how to protect your

brand by being transparent and forthcoming in all your email communications – including emails sent by your sales representatives. And be respectful of unsubscribes. That said, you should also look for ways to make your unsubscribe confirmation pages so enticing, they'll change their mind about letting go.

WE LOOK FORWARD TO PARTNERING WITH YOU TODAY TO MAKE IT YOUR BEST YEAR YET.

Looking for marketing ideas for Content Marketing World or ContentTECH Summit?
Reach out to the CMI team at [**CMI_Info@informa.com**](mailto:CMI_Info@informa.com).

Interested in CMI sponsorship opportunities?

Contact **Peter Loibl** – [**peter.loibl@informa.com**](mailto:peter.loibl@informa.com), **Karen Schopp** – [**karen.schopp@informa.com**](mailto:karen.schopp@informa.com)
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About Content Marketing Institute

Content Marketing Institute (CMI) exists to do one thing: advance the practice of content marketing through online education and in-person and digital events. We create and curate content experiences that teach marketers and creators from enterprise brands, small businesses, and agencies how to attract and retain customers through compelling, multichannel storytelling. Global brands turn to CMI for strategic consultation, training, and research. Organizations from around the world send teams to Content Marketing World, the largest content marketing-focused event, ContentTECH Summit, and CMI virtual events. Our community of 215,000+ content marketers shares camaraderie and conversation. CMI is organized by Informa Connect. To learn more, visit [**www.contentmarketinginstitute.com**](http://www.contentmarketinginstitute.com).

About Informa Connect

Informa Connect is a specialist in content-driven events and digital communities that allow professionals to meet, connect, learn and share knowledge. We operate major branded events in Marketing, Global Finance, Life Sciences and Pharma, Construction & Real Estate, and in a number of other specialist markets and connect communities online year-round.