

Four Strategies to a Successful ISC West for a Sales Professional

Most security companies view ISC West as a marketing and training opportunity. They invest months in developing product launches, tactics to generate new leads, and training classes for their integration partners. A few weeks before the show, the sales people are brought into the mix and might be asked for their input. Most of the time, they show up and work endless hours in the booth and entertaining clients. Exhibitors often lose sight of the significance that ISC West brings to the sales team.

So, I've written this piece for you, the sales professional. Below are four strategies that will help you take full advantage of your time in Las Vegas. Instead of leaving with just a headache and sleep deprivation, you'll also leave with deeper relationships with current customers, progress made on several new prospects, and dozens of new leads that will convert into business.

1. Establish your follow-up plan now.

With a Wednesday to Friday exhibition, the Monday following the show will start a new week and most of the people you met at the show will be on to the next task. If you do not proactively pursue the next step with them, nothing will happen... nothing. Below are three steps that will lead to a successful follow-up plan.

- Block off time and schedule your action items. Schedule a day or two for follow-up work in the office. This does not mean working on the plane or in the hotel or the Starbucks in between appointments – this means in your office with the door shut and your focus completely on the action items established at the show.
- Take ownership of your leads and follow-up. Regardless of how sophisticated your company manages the follow-up of the show leads, it is your responsibility and opportunity to personally execute upon each of your leads.
- Gain permission for follow-up while in the booth. While meeting with a prospect in the booth, ask for the most convenient method to follow-up with them. A statement like "Since you'll have a ton of fires to put out after returning to the office next week and you'll probably be bombarded with companies calling you, how do you recommend I follow-up with you?"

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2. Get out of the booth.

While many salespeople will escape the booth alone for lunch or eat dinner with coworkers, the most effective sales professionals spend every dining experience with a prospect, client or partner. There is no better method of gaining trust with another person than by enjoying a meal together; and there is no city more inclined to entertaining than Las Vegas. With the exhibit and seminars being held at Sands Expo, which is connected to the Venetian and Palazzo, the convenience is unparalleled.

Technically, there are six opportunities to spend “relationship-time” with a client or prospect throughout the day: breakfast, coffee break, lunch, post-show drink, dinner, after-dinner drink.

Below are a few ideas specific to ISC West:

- The Grand Lux Café in the Venetian is a perfect breakfast venue. However, the line starts forming about 7:30 and the wait can be very long. Get there super early, secure a table and hold court for a few hours. For a more convenient but further location from the floor, there is also one in the Palazzo.
- The Venetian also offers opportunities for lunch meetings. There is the food court, but I suggest the finer choices in the square upstairs – most are reasonably priced.
- Since the taxi lines are unpredictable and Uber isn’t as fast as it is in other cities, order a car service to drive your party to dinner; or suggest that everyone arrive 30 minutes early for a cocktail – giving a buffer in case the lines are too long.

Regardless of how you entertain, do not take this part of your job lightly. Getting to know your clients, prospects, and partners on a personal level will change your career.

3. Use Friday for guerilla marketing.

For most trade shows, Day 3 is a slow day. When Day 3 is a Friday and the show is being held in Pacific Time, it is especially slow. Make Friday your busiest, with the understanding that you must get creative. It’s likely that many of your prospects and clients will schedule appointments with you on Wednesday or Thursday, so start scheduling appointments now for Friday. You’ll benefit from creating a list of exhibitors that you need to visit on Friday. Targeted partners can be extremely helpful in building your business; but travel, large regions, and busy schedules make it very difficult to meet. There is not a better time to personally get to know an alliance partner than Friday at ISC West.

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4. Act like you've been there before.

I can't think of a bigger cliché than someone getting out of hand at a trade show in Las Vegas. It's so common that it's not funny. If you're going to create a real name for yourself, wait for a show in San Antonio, Philadelphia, or Orlando to get in trouble – make it a challenge.

Seriously, don't be the salesperson that smells like Las Vegas Blvd at 10:00 the next morning. Regardless of your endurance, your reputation and effectiveness will be directly related to your behavior during these three days. No matter how much your customers enjoy their time with you, they'll think twice about doing business with you if you go over the top and make an idiot out of yourself.

In conclusion, ISC West always delivers sales opportunities for a sales professional through the lazy summer months and the rest of the calendar year. The timing, consistent location, and city provide a "perfect storm" that can jumpstart your business for the rest of the year. Whether this is your 1st or 21st ISC West, follow these strategies and you'll be guaranteed a successful show and many fruitful months to follow.

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