DIGITAL EVENT SPONSORSHIP

How To Generate 100+ Qualified Leads From A Digital Conference

A Playbook

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OVERVIEW

A booth at a digital conference is much different than a live event in many ways. However, there are some similarities, and these are a good starting point to help us develop a plan:

- The conference objective is to generate qualified leads
- The booth is designed to attract attention
- Staff are needed to speak to prospects explaining your products and/or services, qualify leads, and then obtain contact information.

We'll build on these similarities while taking advantage of the unique nature of a digital conference.

The goal is to generate 2 types of leads: Hot Leads & General Leads.

To accomplish this we've split the Playbook into 3 parts:

Part 1: Getting Hot Leads Booked Into Sales Calls During The Conference

- Whether you're selling a product, service, or software, you'll learn exactly how to attract the right kind of attention to your "booth";
- Then we'll show you how to book calls right from your booth.

Part 2: Getting General Leads & Automatically Qualifying Them

- How to ensure you get the vast majority of attendees contact information AND pre-qualify them as you do so (let's be honest, not everyone attending a conference will be your ideal customer!)

Part 3: Following Up & Closing Sales

- Tips and best practices on what to do with your leads following an event.

Part 1: Getting Hot Leads Booked Into Sales Calls During The Conference

Digital vs Physical Booth

The first part focuses on attracting the right attention - in a physical environment that is done with the design of the booth, including signage, banners, props, and so on. As prospects walk around the trade show floor, they see what you have to offer, and if it's of interest, they'll come by and speak to you. At an in-person conference folks may pass your booth a dozen times, and finally stop by. You have quite a bit of time to catch their attention on any one of their passes.

In a digital conference, folks will scroll a page of options to click on, and with that you only have a few seconds to grab their attention.

Once someone does click on your digital booth, they'll be placed into a Zoom conference room. There isn't much to catch their attention except a talking head.

You may already be in a conversation when someone new pops into your Zoom booth. That's a limitation - however we can turn it into a strength.

So it's a TWO-FOLD problem:
1. ATTRACT their attention to get them onto your Zoom line
2. And then HOLD their attention when they arrive onto your Zoom line

The solution is simple:

We’re Going To Attract & Hold Attendees Attention With A Short Demonstration (Demo Presentation)

Think about wandering around Costco or Sam's Club... you may have been there when they had a demo-day, such as a Sham-Wow or Vitamix Blender. It usually generates a large crowd, which in turn generates interest, which, you guessed it, results in a lot of sales of the product.

There is no better way to showcase what you do than showing your product or service in action.

WAIT, don't stop reading. You may be thinking that your product or service isn’t something that can be easily demonstrable.

Stay with me for a moment, and allow yourself to believe briefly that EVERYTHING and ANYTHING can be showcased to help a prospect understand what you do and how it can solve a problem they are having. We'll walk through specific examples shortly.

The benefits of a demonstration:
- It attracts attention
- It’s “short and sweet” and doesn’t require a lengthy commitment
- It's easy to commit to; the shy/quiet introverts can sneak into it
- It's a rehearsed and timed presentation
- A prospect can start watching at any time, and get value out of it
- It provides INSIGHT, CLARITY, and a PROPOSED SOLUTION to a SPECIFIC PROBLEM the prospective customer has
- It can qualify prospects
- You can provide a strong "next step" call to action

A demonstration satisfies the challenges of a Zoom "booth": attracting attention, not relying on 1-1 conversations (where prospects won't wait around for their turn), and holding their attention.

Once you have their attention the purpose of the demo itself is to get people to book a 1-1 call with you.

The goal of the demo is not to make a sale --- it's to generate HOT interest in what you have to offer. It's filling the top of your sales funnel.

Here are examples of demonstrations for various types of products & services.

Product/ Service	Show Off / Insight	What To Demonstrate
Playground equipment	Durability and aesthetics	Setup outside or in a showroom, have an adult jump and up down on the gear; perform a 6' military drop/kick test; showcase images of client installations; have a blow torch heat up the slide as though by the sun all day, and slide down it! Durability means lower lifetime cost and shows better to prospective parents over the years!
Playground equipment II	Educational value	Showcase several specific pieces, highlighting studies/examples of how they support a center's educational play-based outcomes and safety standards; provide insight into how centers can use that to help them fill enrollment and appease the most skeptical of parents.
Curriculum	Ease of use by teachers	Showcase how your curriculum is well packaged in bundles for teachers to easily distribute a lesson with very little prep time

		or work on their part. Showcase how simplicity saves time, energy, and confusion and allows the teacher to spend more time with the children making the lessons far more valuable. Owners/directors will get a bump in productivity, and reduction in turnover / increase in staff tenure which all translate into significant long term cost savings.
Curriculum II	ECE leads to greater outcomes in elementary school	Showcase studies on how your curriculum results in far better literacy and math grades for school-age students versus your competitors curriculums; showcase how centers can use this information in their own marketing to enroll parents interested in early education.
Software	Simplification of administration and increases parent payment rate	Demonstrate **one specific part of your software in detail using a "use case"** that many center owners will be familiar with and you know is a significant problem that they would "give their right arm to have fixed". Dig into JUST that one feature; concluding that if you could just fix that one issue it would more than pay for your software, AND if you could ALSO fix... and list the top 5 challenges you know you can solve for your clients.
Software II	Reports and insights in how schools are	Demonstrate 1 or 2 key reports that will provide strategic insight into an owner who wants to spend time "working on their

	operating while you're not physically there every day	business" vs in it, or who have multiple locations; explain **how those insights can drive data-based decision making** and how that saves owners tremendous amount of time and reduces risk.

From the examples above you can see there are two types of demonstrations:

Type 1: direct - your product/service is directly being profiled, and you're demonstrating a key problem that your customers have that you've solved.

Type 2: indirect - your product/service is being used as a case study while providing tips/insights/strategies that your customers can use.

You truly want to make this a demonstration, not just a talk, so your product/service is demonstrated vis-a-vis the challenges they are experiencing.

To put it simply --- YOUR DEMO HAS TO ADDRESS A SPECIFIC CHALLENGE YOUR PROSPECT HAS. The bigger the challenge, the more attention you'll get.

Demo Framework

- Only tackle **<u>1 main topic</u>**
- Make sure that one thing is something your clients have a major problem with / can see HUGE value in easily
- **<u>Keep it simple</u>** - you're not trying to close the sale, you're trying to develop interest and differentiate yourself from your competition

- It needs to be interesting, and if possible, **fun and lively**; people will remember and respond to the emotionality of your demo than the content
- Your Call to Action (CTA) needs to be clear and compelling and carry through the value proposition you established (if you spent 10 minutes discussing how durable your toys are, your CTA can recap that concept - "Book a call to get your own indestructible toys")
- Make your demo about the prospect NOT about what you're selling; every feature of your product or service that you demonstrate must solve a specific challenge/pain that the prospect is currently experiencing.

Timing Your Demo

Ideally, you want to make your demo presentation short, 10-15 minutes maximum. You then have the opportunity to perform several demos during the timeslots the marketplace is open to conference participants. And if someone arrives in the middle of your demo, they can watch the first part they missed when you start it again.

The timing is key, as your prospects may be curious but don't want to over-commit before they get to know you a bit; that way they can visit with multiple sponsors, and still have time for food, restroom breaks, and dealing with their kids during conference breaks.

So if you time your demo for 12 minutes, you can perform it 3 times in a 60-minute window providing a few minutes for Q&A after each one and to allow new folks to settle in.

Titling Your Demo

The title of your demo is the most important element in ATTRACTING attention to your Zoom booth in the first place.

Example titles:

The Most Durable Playground Equipment On The Planet: Come See Our Playground Equipment Survive a 200lb Toddler's Demolition Attempts

Finally Revealed: Is Upgrading Your Playground Equipment Worth It?

13 Reasons Why Early Childhood Educators LOVE Our Curriculum Packets And How That Skyrockets Productivity and Tenure

3 Secrets About ECE Curriculum To Whisper To Prospective Parents On A Tour That Can Double Your Conversion

5 Email Templates To Send Prospects - 3 Before They Tour and Two After - That Can Increase Enrollment By 28% Per Month

Lead Tracking Fundamentals: How A CRM Can Double Your Tour Conversion (Yes, REALLY!)

You can see the titles of your demos can range from straight-shooting (telling them exactly what it is), to pure intrigue building.

Note that every single title has a key element --- a very specific tangible benefit to the child care center owner/director:

- ROI of equipment
- Improved tenure of staff
- Increased enrollment
- Increased conversion rate

Be careful - do not promise something you can't deliver.

However, also keep in mind that if you have 1 case study of a client doubling their conversion rate using your system, then you've got the basis of a strong marketing statement - as long as you craft it carefully.

For instance if you only had 1 case study where a client indicated they had improved performance by X percent, then you can write headlines such as:

"Case Study Reveals How To Improve Staff Tenure by X%".

But you could NOT write headlines such as:

"We'll Show You How To Double Your Staff Tenure"

as this statement implies an outcome following your instructions, you can't make this statement unless it's true.

However you could change it to say something like this instead, and this is legitimate:

"We'll Show You How You Can Increase Staff Tenure By Up To X%"

This statement now implies you can get to a higher improvement rate, however it's not guaranteed, and it could technically be 0.

You can use words like "can increase", or "up to", and so on to hedge the statement without making it look weak.

Leave Time For Q&A

Leave some time for Q&A (2-3 minutes at least) between demos. You can have folks type them into Chat or unmute. If there are no questions, no worries, you'll have a bit of time before you start the next one.

If someone is asking lots of detailed questions, this is a good sign. Invite them into a 1-1 call with another sales rep while you move on to another demo.

REMEMBER - the purpose of your demo is not to sell directly - but to generate interest from HOT prospects. The demo's pain purpose is to capture HOT LEADS.

Be prepared with the most commonly asked questions. If someone asks a question you don't have the answer to, then book a follow-up.

For pricing related questions, suggest they book a call with you. If you'd like to make a specific offer, you can do that. See below in the "Use An Offer" section for more details.

Call to Action (CTA)

Your call to action should be a SIMPLE LINK that you are prepared to copy and paste in the chat window and display on your demo's last slide (if you're not using presentation deck, make sure you at least have one slide you can screenshare at the end with the booking link).

Ideally this link forwards to a CALENDLY or other booking appointment software where folks can schedule in a time and day to speak to a rep and get a customized quote, full demonstration, etc. that is personalized to them.

Do not send folks to your general website, or page with more information unless that's how you normally transact (e-commerce store, etc).

CALENDLY or Other Appointment Setting App

At the last Summit we booked 9 hours a day of sales calls for 7 weeks straight. And we booked them all using an appointment setting app.

We use Calendly.com for our appointment setting. The Pro version is low cost, and will text message and email out reminders you can customize. These are critical for reducing your no-show rate (especially SMS).

However, even with that, know that you'll get a 20-30% no-show rate. It's frustrating, but it's the nature of the game.

Be KIND to your conference hosts --- do not set appointment times during conference sessions. This is a good way not to get invited back.

Here is an example of how we bought a custom URL to forward to a Calendly page to make booking extremely easy: http://bookbruce.cc

A custom URL for your booking link is an excellent way to spend $10 to make life easier for your prospects. It’s a bit of grease to the sales process, and for the time/cost it’s a no-brainer needle mover.

Use An Offer To Get Immediate Action Takers

There is nothing worse than someone walking away from a booth with the "thanks for the information, I'll think about it".

The best way to get folks to book a follow-up sales call with you IMMEDIATELY AT THE SHOW is to entice them with an offer.

Offer ideas:

- Conference only pricing/discounts or payment plans
- Conference only bundle
- Conference only free upgrade or add-ons

Or do them all! That's what we did recently at our last digital conference:

- We bundled all 3 of our core services
- We offered an event-only discount

- We offered a payment plan
- We even called it "A Covid Crazy Offer" to indicate it's a once-in-a-lifetime offer

Make sure you offer something enticing so you get the lead when they are HOT prospects.

We honored the offer to anyone who attended for up to 2 months after the conference.

Part 2: Getting General Leads & Automatically Qualifying Them

You've got a compelling demo now if you've completed part 1 and have booked 1-1 sales calls from the hottest leads at the event.

But that’s not all the gold you’re going to get from this conference!

Part 2 focuses on an equally important tactic --- how to maximize the leads from the conference. They may not be immediate conversions, but they have the potential to feed your marketing engine for the next year.

Now here is the issue --- not everyone at the conference will be ready for your product/service immediately. Today they may not be in-market for what you offer, but they may be next month, or a year from now.

That's what Part 2 is about --- to scoop up leads and gather just enough information to separate the opportunities from the unlikelies.

The Leads Are In The Prize

The easiest way to get a prospect to part with their contact information is to bribe them, ethically. The easiest ethical bribe is the chance to win a significant prize.

Your Prize = Your Product/Service

Your prize needs to be <u>your</u> product or service. If you sell big screen TVs, then that's what you give away. But if you sell subscription software, then maybe they get it for 12 months free.

You do NOT want to give away an iPad or TV if you sell software. Why? Because folks will enter the draw to win the iPad.

In contrast, if folks enter your draw to win your PRODUCT/SERVICE then that is the first pre-qualifier --- you know they have a viable interest in what you do!

The Bigger The Prize The Bigger The Fish You Catch

To really get this to work, you want your best prospects to enter it - your “big fish” prospects. You want to move the needle for your highest grossing buyer --- whoever that is that buys the "Cadillac/top-shelf" version of your product/service. You want to put a prize together that is worthy of the attention of these top-shelf buyers.

For example, for the Summit in 2019, we gave away a website with a value of $19,995 --- that insanely generous prize likely captured us nearly 80% of the attendees.

Were they all qualified? No. We asked some key questions (see below) that helped us identify the subset of the list that we spent all our post-event sales efforts on.

Just to ensure we drive the point home that the more generous the prize, the higher chance folks will be attracted to it --- the website we gave away had a hard cost to us of $13k to $15k (depending on size of the client that won it). We've spent the last 10 months following through on that marketing list, and it's yielded multiple 6-figures in revenue. The return on investment on the cost to us of the website relative to what we made is well over 2000% and still counting!

Capture Key Information To Qualify Your List

The key to maximizing the value of the ballot entries is to ask questions that prequalify each prospect.

You do this with a 2-step input form.

Step 1 contains the basic contact information:

- Full Name
- Role (circle all that apply): Owner | Director | Teacher | Other
- Mobile/Cell Number
- Email Address
- Checkbox to receive our communications

Once a prospect submits this information, you have key information for a marketing list; however you can't easily prequalify someone with just this info.

Step 2: on the second screen, gather the following:

- # of Locations
- Total Enrollment Capacity Of All Locations
- Website
- ....and any qualifier you may need (address? or part of their address, city zip, state, etc)

Only ask the MINIMUM questions you need to help you begin to qualify prospects. You do not need to get ALL their info. The more questions you ask, the less likely you'll get it completed.

Keep in mind - if they do NOT fill out Step 2, you still at least have their basic details. So not all is lost!

How To Get Folks To Fill Out Your Entire Ballot Completely

The first thing to do is the easiest thing to do --- make all the fields mandatory/required on each Step (but not between steps - so you've already locked in the data from Step 1 even if they don't fill out Step 2).

Making the fields mandatory/required to be filled ensures folks don't skip them. Sure, they can fill out garbage info, but you can also disqualify them from the prize if they do. One nice thing about a BIG prize… folks will WANT to know if they won it!

Next you want to ensure the maximum number of people fill out the complete ballot without feeling annoyed or getting frustrated. To accomplish this, provide clear instructions and an indicator of where in the process they are.

This is what it would look like:

Step 1 of 2: Who To Contact If You Win

Please fill out ALL fields as they are needed to have a valid ballot for the grand prize!

[_full name_]
[_mobile/cell phone number_]

[_checkbox_] By checking this box I understand that I will be placed on our contact list to hear from us again about other great talks, webinars, information sessions, product/service information and updates, industry news, and other relevant subjects - ***including confirming if you've won the grand prize!***

[FINAL STEP]

Then on the second screen:

Step 2 of 2: Details To Ensure You Qualify

Please fill out ALL fields.

[_# Locations_]
[_Total Capacity (all locations)_]
[_Current Total Enrollment (all locations)_]

[SUBMIT BALLOT]

This form setup will maximize how many folks will fill out both steps of the form and ensure you have solid leads to market to after the event.

Part 3: Following Up & Closing Sales

I'm not sure who said this, but it's 100% true: *"The fortune is in the follow-up."*

You'll want to do a few things with your list.

First, segment out your real prospects. These are the folks you'll spend the majority of your post-event sales and marketing efforts on.

Because you've asked some preliminary qualifying questions, you'll have an idea of who's a good fit. So isolate those leads and treat them differently.

But that does not mean the rest go in the trash. You never know what hidden gems there may be within them.

For ALL LEADS

Add everyone to your general email marketing list. Hopefully you're using software that allows the prospect an easy way to unsubscribe if they want to.

For YOUR PREQUALIFIED LEADS

These come from your segmented list above using the qualifiers in Step 2 of the form. You can add these to your general email marketing list. However you want to do more to squeeze the value out of them.

Here are some ideas:

- ## **Email them inviting them to a 1-1 conversation**
  Invite your prospect into a 1-1 meeting. Keep the email very short, provide no information about yourself. You do want a compelling call to action (CTA) however. See below for initial contact CTAs.

- **Phone them, but do not leave messages**
  Yes, call and don't leave a message. The problem with a phone message is that it implies the onus is on the recipient of the message to contact you back --- that the ball is in their court.

  Not leaving a message allows you to call many times without and awkwardness.

  Also, intrigue is at the heart of marketing, and so it is with sales. At the beginning of a relationship, the one who can generate the most curiosity wins. By not leaving a message, you're holding onto the control of the conversation - as they don't know why you're calling.

- **Text them**
  Texting has been slowly getting more popular as a marketing platform, and it'll continue to grow.

  Let's be honest, we read ALL our texts, but only maybe 1 of every 10 marketing emails.

- **Find their business' Facebook page**
  This is a manual process, but if you can locate their business on Facebook, Like it with your business Page and then invite them to Like your Page. Remember, business Pages can Like other Pages, they can also message each other on Messenger.

- **Send them a Messenger note**
  Send them a brief note on Messenger. Whoever manages that messenger account is unlikely to be the owner or director in larger centers, however you never know.

  Try to offer something of value, a link to an article that might benefit the owner/director or parents. If it's a piece of social content the Page can in turn share with their parents, then you've just earned a tiny bit of favor.

- **Find their LinkedIn profile**
  Add them to LinkedIn. If you're not using LinkedIn you'll likely be missing out the on top b2b social media marketing platform over the next 10 years.

  If you can find your prospect on LinkedIn, you may hit a small goldmine of information that can be handy/relevant in your sales approach with the prospect.

What To Say In Your Follow-Up

First, remind them, via email, how they know you: *"We were both at the Child Care Success Summit...".*

Next, most businesses want to invite the prospect to learn about their product/service, however instead of making it about you, wrap that invitation into a value proposition for your prospect.

> For example:
> *"We'll walk-through our catalog and our latest playground gear."* is all about you.

> *"Let's get together and design your dream playground that will blow your parent's away"* is about them.

We all know it's a sales call, though how you position the invitation can move the needle in how many folks book the call.

Consider two sales reps approach you, one says "Do you want to see our latest product?", while the other says "Do you want to see how our product will solve this challenge you have?" --- which one do you want to speak to based on the approach.

Use a Video If You Want To Blow Your Prospects Away

A number of years ago I ran an experiment on Upwork - a website platform you can hire freelancers. Businesses profile their projects, and freelancers bid on them.

The marketing experiment was simple --- how much of a difference would a personalized short video introduction make in winning Upwork projects?

The short answer is a staggering difference. Without video, we won 12% of our projects, and submissions with a video won just over 40%.

The videos were dead simple --- it was just speaking to the camera for 20-30 seconds, summarizing the project and introducing myself.

Here is a quick video script you can modify --- you can use a platform like Vimeo.com to host your quick intro videos.

You can even set a thumbnail for your video of you holding up a piece of paper with the prospects name on it.

Samples Video Script For Personalized Intro:
"Hello NAME, we're super excited and jazzed after the Child Care Success Summit last week, we are just following up on our promise to you that we would extend the special offer we had at the event. Here's my calendar if you'd like to discuss: <link>. I do have to expire the offer by the end of the month, hopefully we can connect before then!"

Modify Your Message For Each Platform

Ideally you format/modify your messages based on the native tone of the given medium. There are obvious differences such as that text messages have highly restricted character counts, while you could write a short novel via email.

The video message above can easily be abbreviated for SMS (text messaging):

Sample SMS intro:
"Hey NAME, I'm super excited after the Summit last week! How great was it? Oh yeah, I'm following up on our promise to you that we would extend the special offer we had at the event. FYI"

and then a second quick text:

"Oops, almost forgot here's my calendar link <link>"

Text messages are generally more casual and use a different grammar and sentence structure.

For a LinkedIn connection request you could turn that video message into:

Sample LinkedIn intro:
"Hey NAME, we're super excited and jazzed after the Child Care Success Summit last week! How did you like it? Thanks for connecting!"

Follow-Up Forever

Until someone opts out of your marketing, keep the pressure on.

I remember a colleague who used to bite his nails all the time - a terribly bad habit. He clicked on an ad once and opted into getting some tips on how to curtail the habit - he ended up not buying the solution they offered to forever be rid of the nail biting.

For the next 14 months he received an email every 3 days like clockwork... it was always a short message with a variation of *"Are you still biting your nails?" / "Did you just bite your nails in the last 5 minutes?" / "Still embarrassed of your nail biting?"*

That's it... simple 1-2 line emails, with a link. Finally he took the bait, bought the $37 product, and actually stopped biting his nails... He started chewing on pen tops...

Your prospects may not buy today, but it doesn't mean they won't ever buy. Treat your marketing list well, and the leads you generate at a conference will pay well into the future.

SUMMARY

Deploy these marketing tactics at the event:

1. To get HOT LEADS at the event:
   Perform a 10-15 min demonstration of your product/service solving a specific problem your prospects have; book a 1-1 opportunity with anyone who wants to continue the sales conversation.

2. To get a large stack of GENERAL LEADS at the event:
   Give away a high-value prize that would pique the interest of your best buyer; use a 2-step form, the first step gathers basic contact information and the 2nd step requests a few details that will help you prequalify prospects.

3. Follow-up relentlessly
   Connect to their social platforms, send them emails, txts, and other information that can help them in their business. Make your product/service the answer / extension to the infomarketing you send.

That's it! Do these 3 things and you will absolutely crush your sponsorship of the virtual event!