

Forrester Study:

FACE-TO-FACE EVENTS CRITICAL TO BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

Reaching C-level decision makers is perhaps the most challenging hurdle a salesperson can face. But according to recent research nothing gets their attention like face-to-face events.

Executive-only, face-to-face events provide the best opportunity for salespeople to develop important business relationships, build credibility and deliver substantial ROI for their company.

Consider the Research:

➤ **Decision makers consider peer advice to be the most effective way to choose business partners.** When making business decisions, peer advice and word of mouth were the most important vehicles to inform and validate their choices, according to Forrester's study. And where do DMs advance their peer network? At executive-only, face-to-face events.

➤ **96% of B-to-B marketers overwhelmingly believe that face-to-face events help their salespeople engage buyers more effectively.** Investments in digital, print and tradeshows may build awareness for your company, but they won't establish the rapport that forms the basis of business relationships. Meaningful relationship-building comes from getting to know prospects personally in a private setting of their peers, collaborating in education, or sharing a meal.

➤ **58% of B-to-B decision makers will increase or significantly increase spending on industry-specific conferences in 2009 according to the report.** Industry-specific, face-to-face gatherings promote trust, interpersonal relationships and networking.

These relationships expedite the sales process and lead to future business opportunities. And this is where you'll ultimately see your greatest ROI.

➤ **C-level executives view face-to-face meetings as the most effective way of choosing business partners.** In RoperASW's study of 625 business executives in five countries, they found that face-to-face meetings are the preferred form of communication for 75% of business transactions.

What to Look For

It's clear that the face-to-face event is an essential component in a company's marketing media mix. But what should you look for when choosing a face-to-face event?

First, look at how you are integrated into the overall program. Are you left on your own to stand by your product information? Or are you



integrated into the event as peers, and invited to participate in executive-level educational programs, the social programs, and recreation (if included)?

Look for opportunities to get involved in the education program and position your company as an innovator and thought leader. A note of caution: this is not an opportunity to pitch your company's products or services. Instead, use it to build credibility for yourself and your company by showing your understanding of the issues and engaging in thoughtful dialogue.

Companies such as Lincoln Healthcare Events provide intimate business settings where

industry suppliers can meet with healthcare providers as peers. And because Lincoln Healthcare caters specifically to C-level executives, they offer the most effective peer networking forums in the industry.

Summary

Face-to-face events give you better insight into the companies, customers and markets you work in, and enable you to form meaningful relationships with prospects. The first-hand knowledge you acquire at face-to-face events will give you a leg up on your competition, provide access, and accelerate the sales process. And it could very well help you close the deal. ■



About Lincoln Healthcare Events

To reach C-level decision-makers, consider Lincoln Healthcare Events as part of your media mix for 2009 and 2010. We are independent producers of invitation-only, executive leadership conferences in healthcare. Our face-to-face events have earned a reputation for providing an unusually valuable experience for providers and sponsoring partners, consistently achieving high marks on education, the quality of peer interaction, and our attention to customer service.

We currently offer six sector-specific conferences and one cross-sector conference for senior-level executives involved in: Long Term Care, Home Care and Hospice, Hospitals and Health Systems, Ambulatory Surgery Centers, and Diagnostic Imaging Centers. Our cross sector conference is called HCap and is for C-level healthcare services providers and financial services executives.

To learn more about how we can help you achieve your sales and marketing objectives, please contact Bill Briggs directly at **(203) 644-1717** or visit **www.lincolnhc.com**.