

Trade Show ROI Improves with Digital Lead Capture, Spreadly Report Finds

Spreadly's 2026 Trade Show Pulse Report shows digital lead capture, live qualification, and fast follow-up drive better trade show ROI.

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/EINPresswire.com/ -- Spreadly's [Trade Show Pulse Report](#) 2026 identifies the main factors that improve trade show ROI and explains why many trade show leads never turn into pipeline. The report's conclusion is direct: companies

get better trade show results when they use [digital lead capture](#), qualify leads at the booth, and follow up within 48 hours.



For B2B teams asking how to improve trade show ROI, how to capture leads at trade shows, or how to convert booth conversations into sales pipeline, the report points to process execution rather than budget size. Trade shows are primarily used for lead generation: 65% of surveyed companies say their main trade show goal is new leads and pipeline. However, only 27% say they can measure the trade show's contribution afterward.

The report shows that digital lead capture is the strongest operational difference between high-performing and low-performing trade show teams. Among teams with ROI above 4x, 62% capture leads digitally at the booth. Among teams with ROI below 2x, 0% do. This makes digital lead capture one of the clearest answers to the question: what actually increases trade show ROI?

The report also explains why trade show leads are often lost. First, many teams do not qualify contacts during the booth conversation. 51% either do not qualify leads at all or rely only on unstructured notes. Without live qualification, sales teams often lack the context needed to prioritize the lead, assess buying intent, or determine the right next step. Second, follow-up is too slow. 57% of teams take more than 48 hours to send the first response, while only 5% follow up the same day.

These findings matter because they answer several common search questions in a concrete way:

How can companies capture leads more effectively at trade shows?

By using digital lead capture at the booth instead of relying on business cards or manual note-taking.

What improves trade show ROI the most?

The report identifies three core levers: digital lead capture, live qualification at the booth, and follow-up within 48 hours.

Why do trade show leads fail to convert?

Because many leads are not structured, not qualified in real time, and not followed up quickly enough.

Is CRM alone enough to improve trade show performance?

No. The report finds that having a CRM is not the key differentiator by itself. What matters is a connected process from lead capture at the booth to automated CRM handoff and follow-up.

Spreadly's report also compares the impact of different improvement measures and ranks digital lead capture as the most effective lever relative to implementation effort. In practice, this means capturing contact data digitally at the moment of interaction, rather than collecting paper business cards and entering data later. This reduces data loss, speeds up handoff into sales systems, and improves the consistency of lead management.

For companies evaluating trade show lead capture software, lead retrieval tools for events, or ways to improve trade show lead management, the report offers a simple conclusion: more software alone does not fix the problem. The winning difference is a clear workflow that starts at the booth. Companies that capture leads digitally, qualify them immediately, and trigger fast follow-up create better conditions for pipeline generation and measurable ROI.

Spreadly provides a solution for digital lead capture built for trade shows, events, and in-person sales teams. It helps companies capture leads on site, qualify them instantly, and move them into CRM and follow-up workflows without manual friction.

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