

Another Viewpoint – Should I stay or Should I go; Event Evaluation

“Deciding which events to support becomes much easier when you evaluate them through a consistent, sales-aligned lens. The strongest event portfolios are built by matching **business goals**, **audience fit**, and **expected ROI**—not by guessing or following industry hype.

Strategic Filters That Determine Whether an Event Is Worth Supporting

Business alignment: Events must map directly to one or more revenue priorities:

- New pipeline creation
- Deal acceleration
- Customer expansion
- Partner development
- Brand visibility in a key market

If an event doesn't support a current business priority, it's usually noise.

Audience quality: The most important question: **Are the right buyers actually there?** Look for:

- ICP match (industry, company size, role, budget authority)
- Decision-makers vs. students/consultants/vendors
- Historical attendee lists or speaker profiles
- Whether your competitors or customers attend

High audience quality beats high attendance numbers every time.

Event format fit: Different formats serve different sales motions:

- Trade shows → high-volume lead generation
- Conferences → thought leadership and deeper conversations
- Roundtables → executive access
- Workshops/labs → technical validation
- Customer events → expansion and retention
- Partner events → co-selling and channel growth

Choose events that match the type of engagement your sales team needs.

Cost vs. Impact: Evaluate the full cost, not just the booth:

- Booth space
- Build and design
- Travel and lodging
- Sponsorships
- Lead capture
- Staff time

Then compare it to realistic outcomes:

- Expected number of qualified conversations
- Meetings booked

- Pipeline created
- Deals influenced

A smaller, targeted event can outperform a massive expo if the audience is right.

Competitive and market relevance: Events matter more when:

- Your competitors show up
- Your buyers expect you to be present
- The event influences industry perception
- It's tied to a major product launch or announcement

Presence at the right event can signal leadership; absence can signal weakness.

Historical performance: If you've attended before, look at:

- Lead quality
- Follow-up conversion
- Pipeline created
- Deals closed
- Staff feedback

If an event hasn't produced results in two cycles, it's usually time to cut it.

Event Types and What They Deliver for Sales

Trade shows

Best for: High-volume pipeline **Expected outcomes:**

- Large number of qualified conversations
- High demo volume
- Competitive intelligence
- Meetings booked for post-show follow-up

Industry conferences

Best for: Thought leadership and credibility **Expected outcomes:**

- Higher-quality conversations
- Influence early-stage buyers
- Stronger brand positioning

Executive roundtables

Best for: Late-stage deal acceleration **Expected outcomes:**

- Direct access to budget owners
- Faster movement through the funnel
- Strategic account insights

Workshops or hands-on labs

Best for: Technical validation **Expected outcomes:**

- Stronger product fit confirmation
- Higher conversion from evaluation to purchase
- Reduced friction in the sales cycle

Customer summits

Best for: Expansion and retention **Expected outcomes:**

- Upsell and cross-sell opportunities
- Customer advocacy
- Product feedback

Partner events

Best for: Channel growth **Expected outcomes:**

- New partner-sourced pipeline
- Joint account planning
- Market expansion

Regional roadshows

Best for: Local engagement and mid-market reach **Expected outcomes:**

- Higher meeting attendance
- More intimate conversations
- Stronger regional presence

A Simple Decision Framework: Support the event if it meets at least three of these:

- Your ICP attends in meaningful numbers
- Sales can have real conversations, not just collect badges
- The cost aligns with expected pipeline
- The format matches your sales motion
- Competitors or key customers will be there
- You have a clear, differentiated story to tell

If it meets one or none, it's usually not worth the investment."