

# How to Think About Rich

*(And Why What He Has Built Matters to Exhibitors)*

## How I Think

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I have spent more than fifty years in the trade show industry. Both as an exhibitor and industry service provider. And I discovered something early on that still surprises people today.

**Most exhibitors don't have a trade show problem.** They have a lead follow-up problem.

Companies spend \$50,000, \$500,000, even millions of dollars exhibiting at trade shows. They invest months planning and promoting their exhibit, attracting visitors, training staff, and generating leads. Then the show ends.

**And that's where the real problem begins.**

For twenty-two years, my company lived inside the post-show process. We made over 1.6 million outbound telephone follow-up calls on behalf of exhibitors and processed more than one million trade show leads. We saw exactly what happened after the booths were dismantled, the crates were packed, and everyone went home.

***Most exhibitors focused on 'activity.' Very few focused on 'results.'***

The industry talks endlessly about booth traffic, badge scans, booth staff performance, lead retrieval systems, apps, dashboards, CRM's and technology. But the one thing that ultimately determines ROI is what happens (or doesn't happen) **after** the show.

Did anyone follow up? Who? Did anyone qualify the opportunity? Who? Did anyone move the relationship forward? Who? Did the lead become a sale? Why?

Those questions became my life's work. I saw the gap. I built the process. I proved it worked. Then I spent decades teaching others how to do the same.

That instinct has never left me.

## What I Built — and What It Proved

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My company was built on a single, stubborn premise: that the back half of a trade show — the follow-up — matters more than the front half. We weren't in the booth business. We weren't in the badge-scan business. We were in the results business.

Here is what twenty-two years of doing this at scale taught me.

**1M+**

Trade Show Leads Processed

**1.6M+**

Outbound Follow-Up Calls  
Made

**150+**

Exhibiting Clients Served

Those aren't theoretical numbers. That's twenty-two years of watching what happens when follow-up is done right — and what happens when it isn't.

One client invested \$450,000 in one trade show. The process we taught them resulted in \$4.5 million in post-show sales. Same show. Same booth. Different results — because their follow-up changed.

Another client collected 464 leads from a single show. A disciplined follow-up process produced \$625,000 in revenue from a \$55,000 total investment.

***Same shows. Same booth. Different results — because they changed their follow-up process.***

The math on trade shows is rarely the problem. The execution after the show is almost always the problem. And most exhibitors have no process, no accountability, and no system to change that.

That is exactly what I built. And exactly what I now teach.

## What I See — and Who I Work With

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The exhibitors I work with are not rookies. They are experienced professionals — marketing directors, sales VPs, trade show managers, and company owners — who have been doing this for years. Some of them are very good at it.

But there is a specific pattern I see in nearly every organization I walk into.

The exhibit looks great. The giveaways are stacked. The staff is trained on the product. The lead retrieval system is rented. The show opens. Leads come in. The show closes.

### **And then nothing happens.**

Not because the team is incompetent. Not because the leads were bad. But because there was never a plan for what came next. No process. No ownership. No follow-through. The leads sit in a spreadsheet, or worse — in a stack of business cards on someone's desk — until the next show comes around and everyone forgets them.

I have seen this at companies spending \$50,000 on a show. I have seen it at companies spending \$5 million. The budget doesn't change the problem. The culture does.

***80% of trade show leads are never followed up on. Not because companies don't care. Because they don't have a system.***

The exhibitors I work with know the show costs more than it should. They know the leads are sitting there. They know something is broken. They just haven't had anyone show them how to fix it — in plain English, without the jargon, without the hype, and without the six-figure consulting engagement.

That is the gap I was built to fill.

## The Teaching Background — Where This Comes From

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People who have deep experience usually can't teach. And people who can teach usually don't have deep experience. I have spent a career being the exception to that rule.

I have been a roundtable moderator and featured speaker and presenter at the Exhibitor Show in Las Vegas for **18 consecutive years**. I was named in *Trade Show Executive Magazine's* Who's Who in Exhibitor Education. *Exhibit City News* magazine wrote a cover article about my path. Not because I had the fanciest slides. But because I could take something complicated and make it land for a room full of people who had never thought about it the way I was about to show them.

Over my career I made more than 350 international in-person presentations. I have trained more than 45,000 trade show and marketing professionals across multiple countries and industries.

The skill transfers. It does not matter whether the subject is lead handling strategy, booth staff training, ROI measurement, or pre-show planning — the instinct is the same. See the gap. Fill the gap. Make it simple. Make it stick.

**350+**

International Presentations

**45,000+**

Professionals Trained

**18**

Consecutive Years at Exhibitor Show

I am also the author of 17 books. My most recent trade show title, **Trade Shows Don't Cost... They Pay!** is the book I wish someone had handed me in my first year as an exhibitor. Because if they had, I would have stopped treating the show floor as the finish line — and started treating it as the starting line.

## The Book — Trade Shows Don't Cost... They Pay!

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This is not a glossy coffee-table book about booth design. It is not a pep talk about “getting more from your shows.” It is a plain-English, practical road map and guide to the one part of trade show exhibiting that most companies get completely wrong: what happens after the show.

The book covers the details of the full post-show process I teach — how to get more booth visitors, how to generate leads, how to respond to leads, how to qualify leads, how to prioritize follow-up, how to measure ROI, how to hold your team accountable, and how to turn a badge scan into a revenue conversation. It is direct, it is honest, and it is built on twenty-two years of doing this for real companies with real money on the line.

It also tells the story of what I saw during those years. The vacations. The parties. The million leads. The apathy. The follow-up calls. The clients who transformed their programs — and the ones who didn't because they kept doing what they had always done and expected different results.

*The show floor is not the finish line. It is the starting line. Most exhibitors don't know that yet.*

## How Work Gets Delivered

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In addition to my book, I work with exhibiting companies and trade show professionals in several ways.

**Live (and Recorded) Webinar Training.** The ExhibitorTrainingWebinar.com platform delivers information on focused, practical training on trade show ROI, lead management, follow-up strategy, and staff performance. Sessions are designed for marketing teams, sales leaders, and anyone who owns the trade show program.

**The Recommended Supplier Program.** Trade show vendors and suppliers who want to reach motivated, training-focused exhibitors can be featured directly to my audience through the Recommended Supplier Program on the website — an affordable, targeted alternative to expensive directory listings or trade publication ads.

**Speaking and Keynotes.** Available for trade show industry events, podcasts, association conferences, and corporate exhibitor training programs. In person for some events in the U.S. Fully virtual for everything else.

All of it is delivered the same way. Plain English. Experience based. No jargon. Real numbers. Real examples. The same approach that worked for years of standing in front of rooms full of skeptical trade show professionals — and earning their trust by the time I walked out.

## Why Right Now Matters

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The trade show industry came back from COVID differently than it went in. People changed. Costs went up. Budgets are tighter. Justification requirements are higher. Marketing teams are being asked to prove ROI in ways they never had to before.

And yet the same post-show problem that existed before COVID still exists today. Leads still pile up. Follow-up still doesn't happen. The math still doesn't close. And when budget review season comes, the trade show line item is the first thing that gets questioned by the CFO — or cut.

The companies that survive that conversation are the ones that can show results. Not activity. Results. And the ones who can't — who can only talk about impressions, booth traffic, demos, and badge scans — are the ones losing ground.

The gap between a defensible trade show program and an indefensible one is not strategy. It is not budget. It is a process. It is execution. Specifically: what happens after the show.

**That is a solvable problem.** I have been solving it for twenty-two years. I know exactly what it takes. And I built an entire platform to teach it.

## The Next Step

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If you exhibit at trade shows and are seemingly sending leads to the sales force faster, where nothing is being done with them sooner -- and you are not completely satisfied with the return you are getting for your trade show spend, the answer is almost always in the post-show process. Not the booth. Not the staff. Not the lead retrieval app. But the process That Has Been Broken for Decades.

Fix the process.

Start with the live or recorded webinar. Read the book. Reach out directly. I will not waste your time. I have spent fifty years in this industry, and I know the questions you're sitting on — because I have heard them in every room I have ever walked into.

Plain English. No fluff. Let me show you how to implement a post-show process that works.

### Richard Erschik

Phone / Text: 630-642-6500

Email: [richard@exhibitortrainingwebinar.com](mailto:richard@exhibitortrainingwebinar.com)

Website: [ExhibitorTrainingWebinar.com](http://ExhibitorTrainingWebinar.com)

LinkedIn: [linkedin.com/in/richarderschik](https://www.linkedin.com/in/richarderschik)

*Former Exhibitor and CEO. Plain English. No Fluff.*