

Retail Vision Vendor Prospect Webinar
Live Event Date: February 15, 2007
Text Questions and Responses

QUESTION:

What is the best method to schedule an appointment with you (retailers)?

RESPONSE: <Christian Carroll>

Start with an email. Give me the short pitch and set a meeting for later. RetailVision has been a great place for me to start setting appts after the show.

QUESTION:

Is there a preferred organization that educates vendors in trends in the retail space?

RESPONSE:

<Christian Carroll>

Online there are companies like Tentoe and Channel Intelligence who host content.

QUESTION:

Are there any specific tactics your retailer guests can suggest to manufacturers in the slower summer months opposed to the holiday buying season?

RESPONSE: <Christian Carroll>

I am assuming you mean promotions? Be creative. Try mail in rebates, or a pre-Back to School campaign. Lots of things can be done.

QUESTION: <Mark Wright>

I make a product that crosses categories radically. We make luggage with a speaker and amplification built in. It works as luggage, but it also provides sound for any device with a headphone jack. What buyer would I show this to?

RESPONSE: <Christian Carroll>

You have to ask, what is the primary purpose of the product and pitch it there first. All things equal, your speakers will add value. You then pitch them to get it co-promoted to a music enthusiast or iPod/MP3 owner.

RESPONSE: <Theo Horsdal>

In our case this product would be handled by our Electronics department, which purchases the MP3 category of products.

QUESTION: <Virginia Palmer-Skok>

Can we get an email version of this presentation?

RESPONSE: <Casey Hughes>

Yes, we'll send to you following today's live event... also a link to the archive.

QUESTION: < Aaron Duran>

Our challenge at Sling Media is how to best merchandise at retail with all of the technologies and categories the Slingbox depends on - broadband, networking, mobile devices, content, etc.

QUESTION: < Virginia Palmer-Skok>

How do you market a service that is not a hands-on product to trial?

RESPONSE: <Theo>

Not sure I understand what type of product you're referring to. Products, whether they be service or physical, have to make sense for me as a retailer to try. We obviously gauge risk as part of the selection criteria for new products, therefore the best answer I can give you is if it is no risk to me as a retailer then of course we would try it.

QUESTION: <Ray Berardinelli>

How do your retailer guests suggest mfgs help their salespeople get educated on a product, so

they can sell it, once it is selected by the buyers?

RESPONSE: <Christian Carroll>

Not a problem on the web.

QUESTION: <Bob>

Are rebates and net to zeros still a key component to get software products on the shelf and/or promoted online?

RESPONSES: <Christian Carroll>

I don't believe so. It depends on the product. Each online retailer has a different perspective, but a consumer will pay what is needed if it is a product they need.

<Christian Carroll> Rebates do help move volume of software.

<Theo Horsdal> We are exactly opposite, we do not focus on low price but rather value.

<Theo Horsdal> Net to zero is not a strategy we employ, however our market in Western Canada may be different than it is in the US.

<Bob> Glad to hear that as the rebate madness has stifled many good products from not making it in the retail space!

<Theo Horsdal> In any case promotions are important don't get me wrong, just targeted.

Providing a value discount works without sacrificing the price point you can achieve.

QUESTION: <Andy Anderson>

Piggy-backing off Ray's question, how do you combat the mindset of salespeople selling products based on lowest price rather than best feature-set?

RESPONSE: <Theo>

That's a tough question to answer as it relates to the "DNA" of a retailer. For example, we strive to serve our customers in a way that promotes repeat business as a result of a superior shopping experience. Rather than short term gains using aggressive promotions we prefer to sell the right products and solutions to the customer. This in turn develops a relationship with our customers which is based on trust rather than being the lowest price.

QUESTION: <ASUS>

Do most of the retailers prefer to have third party agents representing manufacturers instead of direct manufacturer reps?

RESPONSE: <Theo Horsdal>

I, like everyone else, am very starved for time. One of the benefits of 3rd party agents for me is consolidation of multiple lines and vendors. This is very situational depending on the product of course.

<Christian Carroll> I am agnostic as long as I have access. I think 3rd Part Manuf Reps are great IF they are given the ability to plan promotions, and deal with day-to-day issues. I also like a rep who has multiple lines where I can have ONE meeting to handle 3-4 lines. I see benefits to both. It is also nice to have someone close to me if I have questions.

QUESTION: <Lisa Brown>

Are independent performance or comparison test reports valuable to buyers in the decision-making process?

RESPONSE: <Theo Horsdal>

Lisa, I wouldn't initially discuss that point during an initial meeting typically.

QUESTION: ASUS: What are the best things a manufacturer rep can offer to a buyer?

RESPONSE: <Theo>

As I mentioned verbally I, as a buyer, have expectations that the manufacturer rep should be able to answer all questions and make decisions on behalf of the manufacturer. In other words if he/she has to defer my questions to a later time to get approval, then there isn't any value for me to deal with that rep. I may as well be dealing with the manufacturer directly.

QUESTION: Virginia Palmer-Skok: how important is product certification - UL and other NRTLs (nationally recognized test labs)?

RESPONSE: <Theo Horsdal>

For us critical, Virginia.

<Christian Carroll> Very important.

QUESTION: Virginia Palmer-Skok: How can you speak with buyers about product certification if you are not the known leader UL - even if you can offer like and or better certification info?

RESPONSE: <Christian Carroll>

Are we talking about UL or IEEE?

<Virginia Palmer-Skok> We are speaking of product safety certification like UL and US TUV Rheinland of North America.

<Christian Carroll> I would need to ask our legal dept. I just want to avoid lawsuits.

QUESTION: < Virginia Palmer-Skok>

How can I get answers on this? Could I have your email after this to get your response - would truly appreciate it?

RESPONSE: <Christian Carroll> ccarrol@amazon.com

COMMENTS: <Theo Horsdal>

One point I forgot to mention is on target buyers. My request is when you present your product line to buyers, if we identify we're not the correct contact, you have a "kit" designed for us to provide to the correct buyers.

<Christian Carroll> Good point Theo!

<Theo Horsdal> Important also for the boardrooms, as Christian mentioned, a product sample and kit to provide to them. If you ask for a contact it's far less likely they'll relate that to the event if you simply send a follow up email for example.