

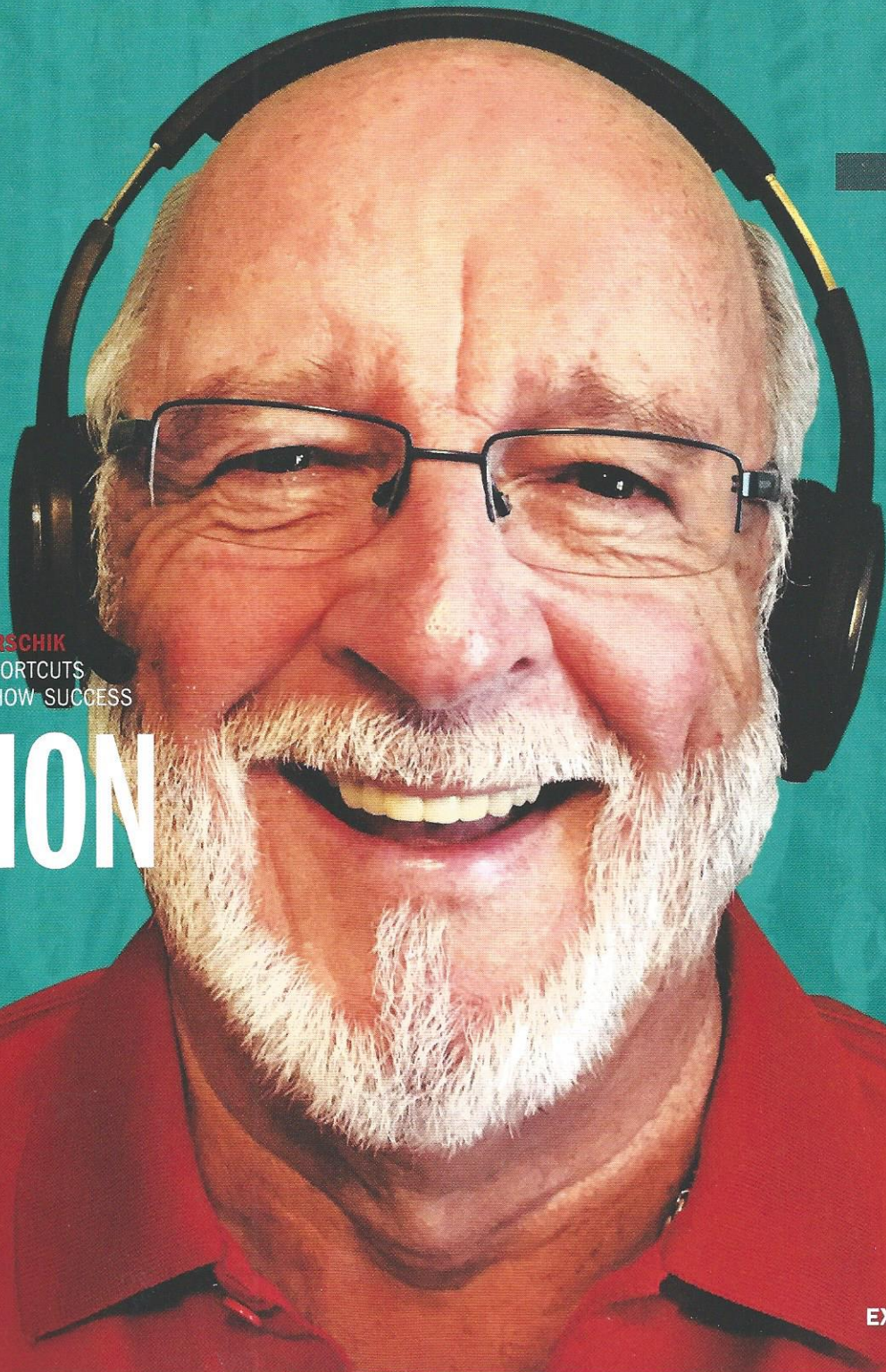
SHOP to SHOWFLOOR Section: Exhibiting With Our Northern Neighbors

# Exhibit City

NEWS

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**MAN**  
**ON A** RICHARD ERSCHIK  
TEACHES SHORTCUTS  
TO TRADE SHOW SUCCESS  
**MISSION**



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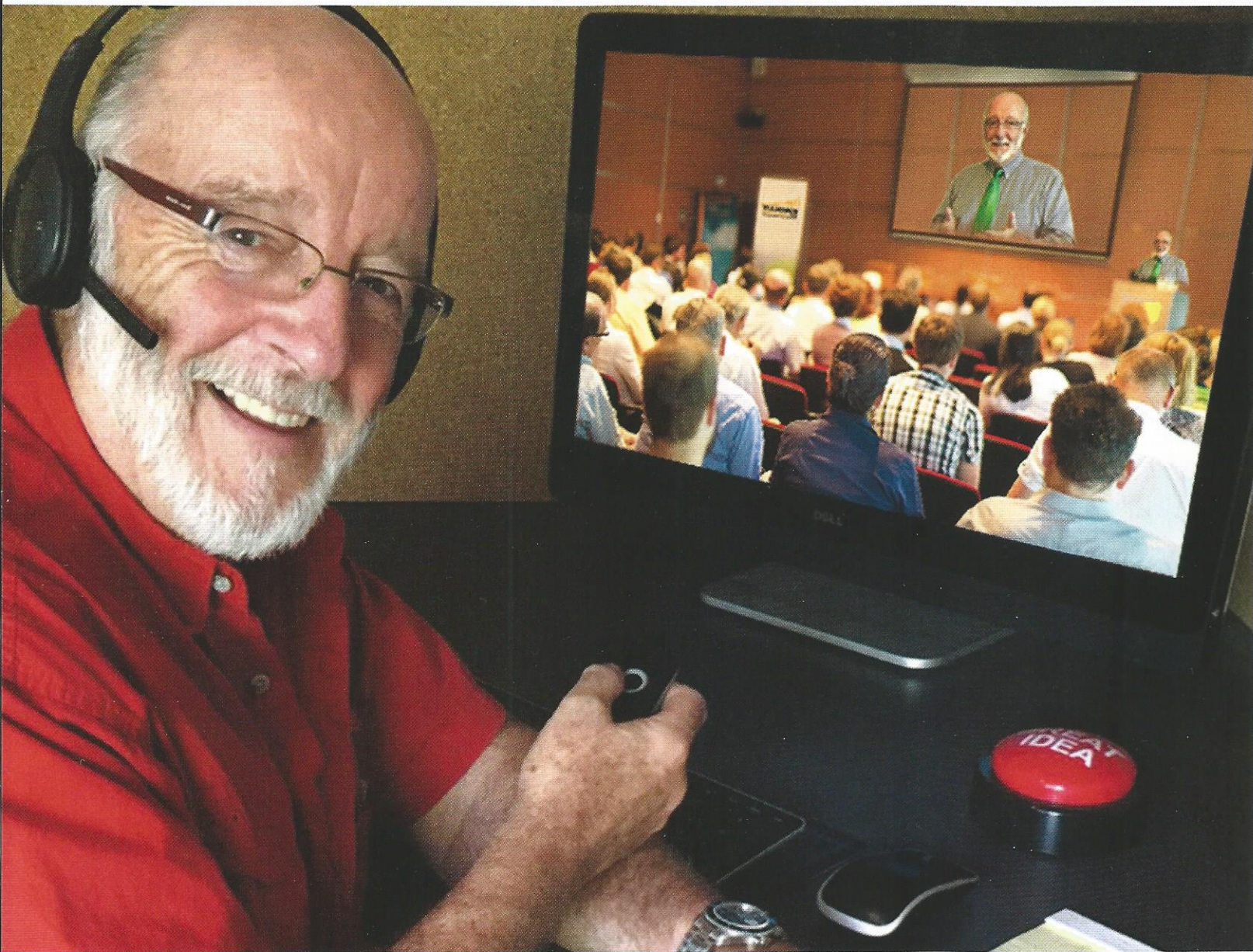
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# Richard Erschik – The Dean of Exhibitor Education

**ERUDITE EDUCATOR TEACHES TRADESHOW INDUSTRY  
HOW TO TURN “TRADESHOW LEADS TO SALES”**

**BY ARTHUR BLOBERGER**

⇒ **From coast to coast** and beyond, in-person and on-line, part teacher and part guru, the affable Richard Erschik truly has but one mission: to teach hungry exhibit managers his proven shortcuts to tradeshow exhibiting success.

“I hate to see them going through everything I went through simply because no one is teaching them,” says Erschik. “My objective is to prove that tradeshow don’t just cost ... they pay! I can statistically prove that tradeshow are the most cost effective form of marketing communications today, bar none. Unfortunately, they are also the most expensive and in the cross hairs of exhibiting company management looking

to cut the budget. Everybody is looking for Return On Investment from tradeshow exhibiting and my contention is that ROI is in the leads that are ultimately being ignored by the sales force after the show. So if I can help get the leads followed-up, then everybody wins—and that's exactly what I do."



### IT STARTED IN CHI-TOWN

Born on Chicago's North Side, Erschik went to Lane Technical High School in the early '60s. A tough school in which to even gain admission, he studied initially in the area of architectural drawing and design, then ultimately taking interest in mechanical drawing, design and engineering. Eventually, he became a machine designer in the metal working industry.

Things looked good for the young Erschik, but life throws us curves. Alas, he lost a parent early and soon thereafter found himself drafted into the Army, where it was off to the war in Vietnam. There, he saw combat as a platoon leader after which he served as a senior assembly specialist for an air defense Honest John rocket artillery unit with top-secret clearance for nuclear weapons! After two tough years, he was honorably discharged as a non-commissioned officer, sergeant E5. (Thank you for your service, Richard.)

Out of the military, he returned wide-eyed and got a job in the Western Suburbs of Chicago designing machinery for the foundry industry. It was there that someone told him that he belonged in sales because of his ability to make people comfortable and get them talking. Taking that advice, he ventured into the marketing communications world for a noted grinding wheel manufacturer. He didn't know it then, but his career path of helping others succeed had begun to take a swerve of super-heroic proportion.



### TO THE SALESMOBILE!

"In 1978, I got what I would call my very first sales and marketing job in the trophy and awards industry," recalls Erschik. "I was made General Manager of a company that supplied trophy

components and engraving equipment to the awards industry. That's when I was really first introduced to tradeshow and face-to-face marketing. I wasn't taught tradeshow by any means. I tripped and fell into them, stumbling head first and backwards. From that job, I went on to an upper level sales and marketing management job in the machine tool industry, and that's what really catapulted me into the tradeshow world."

Even without a cape and mask, Erschik quickly became their executive manager of sales and marketing. And under that powerful umbrella was a considerable tradeshow budget and exhibit management P&L, specifically in the second largest tradeshow in the country the International Machine Tool Show, best known as IMTS. He had big custom booths, lots of operating equipment on display, lengthy and expensive I&D, lots of special services - drainage, water, air, electricity, scrap removal, etc. Exhibit builders and suppliers loved his budget.

It was during that time that he was introduced to the pervasive problem of poor lead follow-up after all of the tradeshow expense, the issue that, unbeknownst to him, would become his professional passion. "When I realized the problem," notes Erschik, "I thought at the time that it was only in my company."

Coincidentally, he was also then serving as the chairperson of the Marketing Communications Committee for the entire National Machine Tool Builders Association. So he called a meeting of his peers and committee members to Washington DC where he introduced them to the new process of sales lead response and management he had been developing. "During that meeting," he explains, "lo and behold, I discovered that they too had the same poor lead follow-up problem - it wasn't just me. The very day that I realized it, I was bound and determined to start a service company that would process sales leads for companies. At that meeting, four of the people at the table told me they would give me their account if I started

a sales lead response and management service business."



### SO HE DID.

And the rest eventually became tradeshow exhibitor education history. That was in 1986. His service company was profitable from day one, and he never looked back. Erschik turned the lead response process that he developed into a national service organization that American Airlines named 'One of the Most Innovative Companies in the Country and a Best Practice in Tradeshow Marketing.' His company ultimately generated more than \$10 million dollars in sales as he provided his exclusive service to select companies including 3M, HP, IBM, GM, Whirlpool and Westinghouse, to name a few. A great success story, his company actually processed more than 1.5 million sales leads in 22 years, a lengthy period after which he decided to sell the still-burgeoning company - to one of its customers.

But he wasn't done. Out of the 'service' business, he transformed his quest to a more instructive endeavor. And today, he teaches exhibitors all of the secrets behind the exclusive techniques he developed by means of his "Tradeshow Leads To Sales" educational and training seminars and webinars.

**TOP SECRET**

### SECRETS? WHAT SECRETS?

"Well," reveals Erschik, "the first thought people have about following-up sales leads is that a salesperson should pick up the telephone and try to call the person. But it's impossible to do that today considering the barriers to completing telephone calls like automated switchboards and voicemail. It's impossible for salespeople to follow-up on sales leads today. It's just literally impossible. They all know it, and they are forced to lie about what they're really doing with the leads, which is usually nothing, because they can't make the initial contact to follow-up." So there's one cat that's been let out of the bag.

"Lead follow-up after a tradeshow

Continued on p. 24

shouldn't be a lone requirement of the sales force," Erschik continues. "Lead qualification should be done initially by the marketing department. There's a big difference here. Everybody thinks that you just put the leads into a CRM (Customer Relationship Management) software or a contact management program and send them to the sales force and they're supposed to follow-up on all of the leads. Software doesn't follow-up on leads. People do. All software does is get all the leads to the sales force faster, so they can do nothing with the good ones sooner. The marketing department should be doing something with the leads initially to eliminate the non-prospects, so the sales force ends up with only the prospects. That way, the exhibit manager can control the entire tradeshow process." That's another cat out of the bag, followed by yet another. "Companies should never use e-mail to initially respond to leads for reasons I teach them," Richard went on to say.

"Turns out immediate sales prospects only represent about 6-11 percent of the overall number of leads generated at a tradeshow anyway. Most of the others are near future and future prospects to contact later. The objective is to get the best leads to the salesforce first. So that frees up about 90 percent of the sales force's time for other things like existing customer contact." says Erschik, "Statistically today, less than 20 percent of leads generated at a tradeshow ever get followed-up and 76 percent of sales people view the value of a tradeshow lead as no better than a cold call. Those staggering statistics are hurting everyone."



**THUS THE BURNOUT FACTOR**

"Sales people can't reach anybody and the burn out factor is the reason why they develop a negative perception as to the value of the leads before they do anything with them." That's the serious problem to which Richard's seminars and webinars teach the solution.

"Inside of an exhibiting company," he continues, "the marketing department is generally responsible for tradeshow activity and the sales department is responsible for the results. That's how it's always been, and no one is teaching them anything different. And when marketing relinquishes control of the results to the sales force, measurement opportunity falls through the cracks. The marketing/exhibit manager should never relinquish control of the leads to the sales force until they know which ones are the good ones. And I teach them how to find the good ones."

Erschik's popular exhibitor education and training presentation is all-inclusive and entitled 'Get the MOST from PRE--DURING--POST tradeshow exhibiting.' "Most exhibitors expect the tradeshow organizer to do all of the attendance promotion and fill the aisles with interested prospects and that, too, is an impossibility," he states. "Exhibitors have better names and better prospects than the tradeshow organizer could ever muster up. So, in the PRE show segment of my webinar I teach them how to use the names they already have to get more visitors to their booth and consequently more leads and more overall attendees in the show." Everyone wins!

"Your webinar was a game changer for our company," said Betty Chen, a recent webinar attendee and sales manager of Waterson. "Thank you for the pre-show promotion and lead response templates. I'm even more excited now to exhibit."

The DURING show segment of Richard's webinar goes on to teach exhibitors a) The Do's and Don'ts of effective booth-staffing. b) How to engage visitors in conversation and separate real sales prospects from tire-kickers. c) Research based visitor complaints, so exhibitors don't repeat their cause.

The POST show segment of the webinar is where the real magic happens. Because since less than 20% of sales leads generated at tradeshow ever get

followed-up, this is where exhibitors are shown how to implement Richard's proven lead response and management process that assures 100 percent lead follow-up and how to prove a positive ROI from exhibiting.

Tradeshow organizers sponsor and host the webinar for their exhibitors and get two webinars for the price of one to accommodate their exhibitors' time availability. "You are very easy to work with. I love how you did your research and branded your webinar for our show" said Julie Walter, Exhibits Director, DHI.

Tradeshow suppliers invite Richard to speak at the sales meetings to learn his statistics and lead management methodology. "We highly recommend your presentation to other tradeshow suppliers that are looking for an introduction to the 'real-world' of the tradeshow manager and exhibiting," said Chuck Michel, VP Tradeshow Services, EliteXpo.

And many individual exhibit managers consider Richard their personal tutor. "I feel empowered with what I learn from you" Says Paul Golevicz, Product Manager, Kobelco.



**THE 2 MILLION MILE MAN**

Besides the on-line webinars he conducts from his home office, most recently for the exhibitors of tradeshow organizers and Associations like DHI, CEDIA, the Northwest Food Processors Association, the Texas Library Association, the American Water Works Association and Pittcon, to name a few, Erschik regularly travels the globe delivering his seminars in-person. Along the way, he has flown more than 2 million miles teaching exhibitors and coaching booth-staff sales teams in locales as far away as South Africa, Belgium, Mexico and Canada.

In one such domestic trip, he came to the Las Vegas offices of the renowned Exhibit City News to lay his wisdom at the feet of the publication's eager sales staff.

Testified Kathy Anaya, ECN's director of sales, "We had Richard in our office

to do his seminar for our sales team. We found it extremely informative. His unrepresented statistics are surprising and eye opening! As a result, we are now looking to restructure some processes within the company to help with better lead processing for our sales department. We would certainly recommend Richard to any show organizer, supplier, or individual exhibiting company that wants to better themselves in the tradeshow arena."

According to Erschik, "There is a lot of engagement by my seminar and webinar attendees. I ask them a series of questions and get them interactive. I give them active-learning templates and 30-days of FREE telephone support after the webinar in case they need additional help. I've been evaluated as 'the best exhibitor educator on the planet.' I even have one guy – and I quote this all over – who said he

'learned more from me in an hour than he did in four years of college and 12 years on the job!'

"This is how I differentiate myself," he describes. "Every other exhibitor educator and trainer teaches exhibitors what they should do to be effective at a tradeshow and why. I show them how and that's my differentiator. I do it with more than 3-decades of experience and actually having been a successful exhibitor. I do it with the experience of having walked in their shoes and felt their pain. I know their problems because I had them as an exhibit manager. And I teach them industry proven solutions they can implement themselves (DIY.)



#### MAN ON A MISSION

As to how much longer he'll be sharing his singular experience and knowledge, Erschik

relays this with a laugh: "Until I fall out of my chair. Really, I had the opportunity to walk away from all of this, but it's kind of in my blood. I just understand it so well, I'm so close to it, I'm so knowledgeable about the problem to which I personally created the solution that works, I just want to tell the tradeshow world about it. I have the industry-proven path to positive tradeshow ROI and I enjoy giving back. Progressive exhibit managers want to learn. And I want to teach. What's better than that?"

*Richard Erschik of [www.TradeshowLeadsToSales.com](http://www.TradeshowLeadsToSales.com) is among the highest rated exhibitor educators and trainers in the country. He has been a Roundtable moderator, FastTrak instructor, and featured speaker and presenter at the EXHIBITOR Show in Las Vegas for 18-years. Contact him by phone/text at 630-642-6500 or email him at [richard@tradeshowleadstosales.com](mailto:richard@tradeshowleadstosales.com). Like him on Facebook [TradeshowLeadsToSales.com](https://www.facebook.com/TradeshowLeadsToSales.com). Follow him on Twitter @TradeshowTutor.*

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