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Exhibition - Advance Planning

Exhibitions need advance planning so - The perfect exhibition event is researched and planned in advance, you will be surprised how much time is eaten away by you / your company / your selected graphic designer and your printers - so here are a few tips to consider before making the dramatic exhibition event step:

Who is your target?

- Who do you want to reach at the show?
- What do you want to happen?
- Who is your target market?
- Which shows do they attend?

Match your objectives:

Selecting the right show means matching your exhibiting objectives with the right target audience, the right timing to meet buyers' purchasing patterns and the ability to show your products and services.

Ask previous exhibitors:

Gather as much information about the show as you can i.e. statistics/demographics and review lists of previous exhibitions. Verify the information, speak to past exhibitors and if possible, attendees - How much advertising/publicity about the show do you see?

Visit the show:

This is crucial as this simple visit will fuel you with lots of ideas also check on supporting events or seminars around the show as these are crowd pullers - get your own message to reflect the popular seminar and try and gain a location close to the seminar arena i.e. attract them on the way in and on the way out.

Exhibition location:

- 50% of exhibition attendees come from within 200 mile radius so think about your target audience very seriously.
- What other events are on at the same time and more importantly will they have a dramatic impact on the audience?

Marketing opportunities:

Offer your services as a speaker in educational type seminars

Selecting your space:

- Your budget will decide where you will go but as a rule avoid low ceiling/obstructing columns/dead-ends/ loading and freight doors/ poorly lit areas.
- Try to aim for entrances/seminar areas/ rest-rooms and feeding areas / escalators
- Think about the competition i.e. market leaders - Do you want to be close to them?



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Setting measurable goals:

Know what you want from the show and set measurable goals and more importantly realistic goals. Write them down and discuss them with your colleagues. Decide what you want and then set up a system to measure your results

How can you strengthen your marketing strategy?

- Increase products or services in existing markets?
- Introduce new products or services into existing markets?
- Introduce current products or services into the new markets?

A realistic budget:

Plan for the following to gain a realistic budget:

- The exhibition space
- The display
- Show services (electric / shipping/ set-up and dismantle costs)
- Advertising costs - Pre-show - at show - post-show
- Expenses - Personal / accommodation / daily expenses / staff / time

Staffing your stand:

- Having the correct staff on your stand is one of the most crucial aspects of a perfect exhibition.
- The people you choose represent your business and they have the responsibility to make or break a future relationship.
- Invest time in training so that the staff know how best to represent your company, services and products.
- Training will make their job easier and allow you to concentrate on you own role + improve the end results

Transportation:

- Planning this well in advance and you can save money and lots of stress.
- Select a carrier that is used to dealing with exhibitions
- **Tip:** We recommend www.1stparceldirect.co.uk
- Always communicate both verbally and in writing **1st Parcel Direct** request an email to ensure agreed dates are honoured for both the collection from your premises and the exhibition event
- Remember to meet and greet the driver at the event as - failure to do this will possible result in a total failed event - get this right and plan ahead - get contact numbers!

Lighting and power:

- Exhibition events normally supply basic equipment - however you need to establish if they have electric points and more to the point are these free?
- **Tip:** Take additional extension leads
- **Tip:** Take more than you need as the electric outlet might be some distance
- **Tip:** Take warning tape to cover for Health and Safety rules
- Front and back drop lighting is essential
- Moving lighting display is a must
- Photo light boxes are a must
- Laptop - Computer locations - can you gain broadband? - Bring a programme just in case!



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Promotional Literature:

- Have all your pre-show mailing printed at the same time
- Take enough literature to distribute to highly qualified leads
- Offer to send prospects literature as this will show you how serious they are about your products and services as they will be giving you their contact details
- **Tip:** If using a carrier to supply your literature on the actual day of the event then always take at least 15% - just in case they fail to arrive

Create a show box

Exhibitions are very expensive places to buy those forgotten items so make up a box and include:

- Stapler
- Tape
- Velcro
- Scissors
- Swiss Army Knife
- Small tool kit
- Fuses and bulbs
- Pens
- Paper
- Extension power leads
- Also remember to re-stock after the show

Show box essentials:

These are crucial if you are on your own but very handy if you are talking

- Water bottles
- Coffee & Tea
- Wine & Champagne - Not for you but the buying client
- Biscuits
- Mobile phones
- Cover for toilet, obvious but essential - if your on your own then plan with a neighbouring exhibitor - remember him or her will need the same cover

Buying your display:

When buying your display find out how you can ship it, is it lightweight, is it durable, and is it small - crucial answers if posting items - Don't scrimp on shipping costs - its false economy

- Supply of hardware - Take into account supply times
- Faster service - Ask for a faster service if last minute purchases are crucial
- Use www.ukexhibition.co.uk as they will tell you exact supply dates
- **Tip:** Plan in advance to avoid last minute problems!

Travel and Accommodation:

- Book early and ask hotels for special corporate rates.
- Check parking spaces - pre-purchase can reduce charges
- **Tip:** Hotel booked - is hotel walking distance - yes - then parking charges are free
- **Tip:** Use airport shuttles instead of taxis
- **Tip:** Car share



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Setting up your display:

- Use your own personnel to set up the display - Train the staff before the event
- Set up before leaving - take pictures - give all staff copies of the pictures
- **Top Tip:** Staple the pictures to the show box
- Make sure that they have all been trained in the dismantling!

Having breaks:

- This is very important if you have several staff
- This is very important for a fresh air break - smoking break
- This is very important to check out the opposition
- This is very important for staff moral
- This is very important to help all staff to re-focus
- **Summary:** Plan for breaks in advance not on the day!

Follow up leads:

- Before you go to the show, work out how to respond.
- This should be within 3-5 days after the event
- **Tip:** If possible email the leads back to the office and have staff ready to send the required information as this never fails to impress potential clients as when they arrive back at their own workplace, the following day your data arrives - Very impressive!

Re-evaluate

- You should re-evaluate the results within 2/3 weeks of the event
- Would you do it again?
- Did you gain the required results?
- Would you make any changes?
- More importantly did the experience benefit you?
- Did your own clients supply you feedback?
- Did you ask your own clients for feedback? (they will be very honest)
- Did you gain feedback from your own staff?
- **Staff:** Gain their feedback and you gain their long term business partnership