

Make Every Exhibition You Attend A Success

Exhibitions can be a fantastic way to gain new leads and increase interest in your business. They allow you to show case your business and your products to people who we hope are very interested in what you have to say or offer.

For the majority of businesses attending exhibitions, it is an opportunity to have a high street shop for the day and engage in passing custom which they wouldn't be privy to in normal every day running of their business.

In most cases it is because of this lack of front line experience and a misconception of what they are trying to achieve that most businesses come away from a show thinking everything has gone really well.

The reality is they have given away 500 leaflets that will get glanced over at best, come away with a few contacts they wont chase up, and end up with a huge bill they will struggle to pay.

That being said

If done correctly exhibitions can deliver a predictable number of highly profitable new customers time and time again.

Whether you new to exhibiting or a seasoned pro this short guide will help you avoid some common mistakes, give you some helpful tips and most important give you a step by step guide to dealing with your potential visitors, giving you a distinctive edge over your competitors.

Choosing your venue

Think about the type of people who will be visiting, are they your ideal customers?

Ask the venue how they will be promoting the show – will this advertising reach your ideal target market..

Look for clues as to who will attend by looking at the other exhibitors – are they your customers or your competitors?

How is the exhibition being advertised? The venue organiser will give you this information and this will give you a good idea who will attend.

This is vital and often overlooked but is essential to your exhibiting success

Choosing your stall

Ask the organiser for a floor plan. This will show you an aerial view of the entire exhibition, you will be able to see where the entrances and exits are, the dead areas and in some cases where other exhibitors are stood (maybe they are your competitors).

Which area will work best for you?

Ask the organiser questions

Don't take for granted that everything you expect to be there will be.

What are the dimensions of the stall?

Is there an electrical supply?

Is there height restrictions?

Find out who is a point of contact (get their phone number, mobile is even better)

Where do you unload, where do you park, are refreshments provided.

If possible visit the venue. It will give you a massive advantage.

Book early

Most if not all exhibitions work on a first come first served basis. If you leave it to the last minute you will have less choice and may be left with up with a poor stand.

Designing Your Stand

Your display is your hook and should be designed accordingly. Its aim should be to catch a visitor's attention and entice them to your stand.

Too many companies try to cram too much information onto these displays thinking that they need to get there entire sales pitch onto them. This is not the job of your display.

Display the main benefits your company can offer but keep these short and to the point. Your stand should try and create curiosity or scratch an itch. If your stand stops your visitor it's doing a great job.

Different Types of Exhibitions

Shell Scheme System

Most large exhibitions halls provide a shell scheme system. This is a series of boards, (usually 1mtr wide x 2mtr high) which are linked together to form a wall around your designated area or booth.

Shell schemes usually (but not always) have tops on them which can be used to house fascia boards and attach lighting.

One of the best ways to decorate your shell scheme is to use graphic panels. These panels are purpose made to fit each of your shell scheme panels and are made of heavy duty, light weight material which can easily be attached to these panels using Velcro strips.

The great advantage with using graphic panels is they don't take up any of your floor space and instantly give your booth a very professional and branded look.

These panels can be rolled up for transportation and as shell scheme systems are generally universal in size, these panels can be wiped clean using a damp cloth and used time again.

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Open Plan exhibitions

Other smaller exhibitions simply provide a table and an area with which to display your products. These type of exhibitions can be far less restrictive and much can be gained by arriving at these shows early and taking advantage of this laid back approach.

With this type of show there are quite a variety of display solutions available with which to design your stand and some are better suited than others depending on the space available.

Again, with this type of show it will give you a great advantage to visit the venue before hand as positioning of exhibitors can be less rigid and sometimes a little negotiation with the organiser can move you to a position better sited to your type of display.

If there is quite a bit of space available (3mtr Sq or more) then a Pop up display stand is an ideal solution.

There are a wide variety of Pop up Displays available on the market today generally they all follow the same principle but some are considerably better than others.

Pop up stands are a series of graphic panels that are attached to a collapsible wire frame to form a seamless graphic wall to the back of your stand. This gives your stand a shell Scheme feel and instantly and a massive visual impact.

They also have an option to attach lights which further enhance your display and attract visitors.

The entire system is transported and stored in a small wheelie bin sized container and can be easily set up by one person.

If space is at a real premium and even a pop up System is too big then either one or a series of Roller Banner stands are a great solution.

These stands can be set up by one person in less than 2 minutes and will provide you with a eye catching display.

Whilst these Stands tend to vary slightly in price and size, generally they are around 600mm x 2000mm.

This guide has only touched briefly on the types of display solutions available and there are a wide variety of other solutions available to help you with your exhibition other than the options covered in this guide.

So now you have chosen your venue, and designed your exhibition stand all that leaves is to meet your visitors and squeeze as much from your day as you possibly can.

Have a Front Man/Woman

Use a front man / woman to meet and greet your visitors. Have them lead the conversation with your visitor not with a non-descript question but a leading intriguing question or statement. The question or statement should always be designed to raise curiosity and desire in the visitor to know more about your product or service.

Do this right and you will have your visitors undivided attention.

Don't expect every one to stop at your stand and start asking questions you must be proactive and your results will triple. Having a good front person is key they should be outgoing and friendly and able to identify and filter your visitors.

Process your visitors - have a sales funnel

Have a clear goal of what you want to achieve from the exhibition and plan this out in advance. By doing this you will avoid wasting time with visitors that don't match your ideal customer.

Once your front man has brought in your prospect you need to process him or her. Lead the visitor into your space then follow a predetermined set of questions that filters out visitors that don't match your ideal with the ones that do.

Hot prospective customers can be passed over to your expert better suited for further in depth consultation and relationship building.

It is not impossible but it is quite rare to sell with any degree of success at an exhibition. Generally people are visiting the show to gain information about new and innovative product and services.

Therefore it is better to use an exhibition to showcase your business showing services and products then gather information about your new prospect with the view to continuing the relationship after the exhibition has ended.

Remember you are not the only person exhibiting. By the time your prospect has left the show he will have two bags full of leaflets and gifts and a head full of sales messages.

It is the business that continues the conversation long after the show has ended that will prevail and win the business.

Processing your visitor Summary

Each visitor should go through a process

Lead with an Intriguing question or statement

This question should raise curiosity with the visitor and entice them to want more

Question visitor

Establish visitors business needs, problems, fears. Exchange value offer them something in exchange for their contact information.

Collect contact information

Recognise need

Show samples, give information explain in brief your solutions, pass to expert if necessary

Leave to browse

Tell them you are there if they need you

Move to next visitor

Fine tune

It will become obvious as the day progresses what is working and what isn't
Share notes and keep improving your message

Do this right and you will look both efficient and professional, your visitors will thank you for respecting their time and you will have details which you can process and follow up at a later stage.

I hope this short guide will help you get the most out of your next exhibition but should you require further help or information please do not hesitate to **contact us on 0845 6434 955**

If you require help and advice designing your display go to www.OnlineDisplayStore.co.uk