

# Making your exhibition a success

The expowest concept: “**Trade shows for people who want to do business**”.

We set up expowest to **satisfy specific visitor and exhibitor needs** that are not always addressed by national trade shows and exhibitions. With over 30 successful years supplying these needs, our expertise and knowledge is unparalleled.

National events are typically unfocused, with more exhibitor stands than visitors can (or want to) see.

If visitors are unhappy, the exhibitors are doubly so. The return on investment is uncertain, whether you are an SME with a small stand, or a major corporate that feels compelled to build a big stand to match the competition.

## A fresh approach

expowest offers a fresh approach. The **expowest concept** is to make trade shows time & cost-effective for all participants:

- Designed for the goals-oriented visitor
- Takes the show to the heart of the market
- Easy professional face-to-face contact
- Easy peer networking
- Easy and rapid knowledge transfer
- Catalyst for easy change and progress in the visitor’s business
- Green: all stand modules are reusable

From the **visitor’s point of view**, we make it easier to find new solutions and source new suppliers – but with the confidence that only face-to-face contact brings.

From the **exhibitor’s point of view**, we take the show to the buyers, making it easier to build relationships with existing customers and to penetrate new markets – all at a **transparent and low price** while placing minimum demands on staff time. The stand is pre-built and ready for business, and an expowest show usually lasts three days, enabling visitor’s flexibility to attend.

Our objective is not to get anyone through the doors but rather to deliver the optimum ratio of quality visitors (essentially, buyers and decision makers) to exhibitors.

## I’ve invested in a stand. What should I do next?

First, remember we will take care of the practical issues. So you can focus on business. We recommend that you start by developing a marketing action plan. Decide exactly what you want to achieve from your participation (e.g. sales, leads, and interactions) – set yourself objectives that are ambitious but achievable.

## How do I promote my presence at a show?

First, take a look at all the tools that we offer you such as free invitations, email, logo banners, show newsletter etc. Visitor promotion is part of the deal so don't miss out. Align your promotional strategy to your marketing plan (i.e. what you want to achieve from your participation). Divide your promotional strategy into three phases: pre-show, at-show and post-show. Remember that people are exposed to a lot of competitive messages so it's best to develop a strong communications theme around your participation (e.g. this might be a product launch or a special offer) and pursue it consistently.

When organising an exhibition, you need to look at numerous aspects to ensure that it all runs smoothly. The information that the target audience, may want to know should be presented clearly. At the same time, certain practices have to be avoided. Below you will find a list of some key Do's and Don'ts to remember when planning your exhibition, to make it a huge success.

**Do:** Research a show carefully before you decide to exhibit. Check out the show's history - Does it attract a large number of your target audience? Is it easy for the attendee to find and reach by car or public transport?

**Don't:** Be afraid to ask questions! Show organisers have all the information you would benefit from, for example, all exhibitor requirements, attendee demographics etc.

**Do:** Start your planning early. Regular exhibitors start planning their appearances 6-12 months in advance.

**Don't:** Pass the chance to visit other industry events before you exhibit for the first time. Make a note of what exhibits were effective and those that turned you off.

**Do:** Make a list of goals and objectives for the show. This list should be specific and achievable. For example, X amount of leads/sales or spreading the word about a new product or service..

**Don't:** Get sidetracked by what everyone else is doing - or by what they tell you to do.

**Do:** Be open and creative to new ways of presenting your products or services. You need to be unique and engaging for your display to be memorable for the hundreds of show attendees.

**Don't:** Be afraid to be enthusiastic about your services. If you are genuinely jazzed up about what you do, attendees will sense that. Enthusiasm is contagious - and more importantly, it sells!

**Do:** Learn the 80/20 rule - The best exhibitors are those who listen more than talk. Focus on what the attendee wants!

**Don't:** Barrage visitors with facts, figures and sales spiel.

**Do:** Remember first impressions are everything! Be professional, well-dressed and polite at all times.

**Don't:** Eat, drink or chat on your mobile phone on the show floor. Leave your stand unattended for a refreshment or a break.

**Do:** Be realistic. Exhibitions are long events. Make sure you recruit the right amount of staff to keep your stand and motivation fresh.

**Don't:** Forget to train your staff. Explain the objectives, types of questions to be asked, what the marketing message is etc.

**Do:** Ask qualifying questions. You want to know who you are talking to, who they work for, and in what capacity. This will help you determine if the attendee is a prospective customer or not.

**Don't:** Be afraid to encourage people to move along if they are not interested in your services.

**Do:** Take notes. Take time before the show to create a lead form, in which you will record important information for post show follow-up. Ask for our lead form.

**Don't:** Depend on your memory - a few words scribbled on the back of the business card will not be enough after the show is over and you have met with lots of people.

**Do:** Reach out to the media. Have a press pack available in the media/press room. Also, be open to interviews, especially if you have something new or special to shout about. Maximise the press

**Don't:** Forget to read the exhibitor's manual. Sent to you by email and on the website, you will find important information relating to the show, for example, deadlines for ordering services. Most manuals can be downloaded from the show's website.

**Do:** Use giveaway items that enhance your expert identity. You want items that your attendees use regularly and reinforce their impression of you as an expert.

**Do:** Follow Up! This is the most important part of your exhibition. Follow up all leads with a letter and pursue more promising leads. Plan your follow up

**Don't:** Hesitate to include hands-on, interactive demonstrations on your stand whenever possible. If you inject fun into your exhibit, you will have more attendees.

## **We've never exhibited before – and we're a bit nervous. What should we do on the day?**

There is a first time for everything, so don't worry! It could be that there is a kick-off meeting before your show, in which case, be sure to attend. Meet and greet - but without being aggressive. Make sure you can get contact details for follow ups. A drop box for business cards is a good idea, but it is even better if you keep notes of who you met and what their particular are.

Once you've selected your stand manning team, you must allow time for a full briefing well before the exhibition. It should be compulsory - after all, this exhibition will inevitably be a substantial investment, and is a very public place to risk looking unprofessional. It is foolish to assume that anyone naturally "knows" how to work an exhibition stand and why the company has taken the decision to attend a show. These points must be communicated to all those attending to ensure that objectives are met, manning rotas are made, and working hours are agreed upon.

There are a number of ways of running a session, but you may want to think about:

- Explaining the company's objectives and remember to make them SMART - Specific, Measurable, Agreed, Realistic and Time Bound
- Consider telling them what the total cost of being there is, and how that breaks down per person, per hour - it can help focus the mind wonderfully!
- Use role-play to practice approaching and dealing with the different kinds of visitor
- Emphasise the importance of using open ended questions (see below).
- Outline all the plans you have for other related sales and marketing activities
- Communicate the team/individual targets for the event

Techniques for opening conversions:

To engage potential customers in conversation, it is essential that you use open ended questions. Please see some examples below:

- What type of product are you looking for?
- Which products do you currently use?
- When are you hoping to change your product?

**Below are a few examples showing you how NOT to present yourself at an exhibition!**

**These pictures are NOT taken at one of our exhibitions!**

*Make your message clear, a picture is worth a thousand words.*

- graphics need to be bold
- make your message clear



*Choose the right staff*



- choose enthusiastic and friendly staff that will feel comfortable in the environment
- exhibitions are tiring – take regular breaks
- fully brief and train staff, e.g. objectives of the show .

*Work the stand*



- Do not sit and work on a laptop
- Do not use your mobile phone on or near the stand
- Do not eat on the stand

***Being there helps!!!!!!***



### **We had a good show. How do we keep up the momentum?**

First and foremost, follow up on your leads promptly after the show. It is a good idea to follow up again with the people you missed three or six months later. Track the leads and the sales that came about as a result of your participation – measure the ROI. Celebrate successes, but think what you could change to do even better next time!

### **How can I get my message to non-attendees?**

A trade show attracts interest before and after, as well as during the event. Many people pre-register for a show but, for one reason or another, don't show up. Ask us about how to reach the "no-shows". Also, a trade show is a good occasion to make announcements to the press – so prepare a press release and other PR material, especially if you have some news to share such as a product launch.

### **I want to promote my presence & raise visibility but don't have time – help!**

Sounds like you should invest in the BOOSTER PACK! It gives you visibility in the pre - and post-show emails, logo inclusion on the show website and visibility on the show floor plan.

### **Can I have the same stand next year?**

We generally change the floor plan each year as this encourages greater visitor circulation (just as supermarkets often change the location of some product categories in the store). To secure an equivalent (or even better!) position, we recommend that you reserve a stand for next year's show onsite. You will then have a month to confirm the booking.

## **What objectives should we set ourselves at the show?**

It depends on your company and your products. Of course, the ideal is to make sales onsite, but that isn't always realistic, especially if you are selling big-ticket items with a long sales cycle. But here are some objectives you could think about:

1. Make entirely new sales on site
2. Increase business with existing customers
3. Find new buyers/generate leads within your existing market
4. Enter new vertical (industry) markets
5. Enter new geographical markets
6. Launch new products
7. Meet or recruit sales agents or distributors

## **What should we say in the show catalogue?**

Be explicit about your products, services or show special offers. This is valuable free advertising that will bring the visitor to your stand.

## **How do I stand out from the crowd?**

If it is a busy show, remember

1. Meet and greet on your stand professionally and be friendly.
2. Create interest in special activities on your stand.
3. Customise your stand with your own materials, alternatively, use the additional stand fittings that we offer, please request or see the exhibitors manual for full details.

## **Who should I invite to a show?**

Invite all your customers and prospects! If you don't, your competitors probably will, and that will be a missed opportunity for you. expowest will provide as many invitations as you need. If you don't have time to send them, provide your list to Expowest and we will send them on your behalf (we guarantee to protect your data).

## **Should I send printed or electronic invitations?**

We strongly recommend that you send both, on the basis that some people take more notice of printed invitations, while others are more likely to respond to an electronic one.

## **What is the best way to inform people that we are exhibiting?**

The only honest answer to that question is "it depends". So the best advice is to take no chances. Use all the available channels: ask us to put information about your presence on the show website, use your direct mail lists, place a show banner on your website, mention your participation in advertising (if you have already planned advertising, there's no added cost apart from a small artwork change). And one of the best ways is still word of mouth. Get your sales reps and other customer-facing staff to mention your participation.

## **I've got a good story to tell. Can a trade show provide a good platform?**

So long as your story is not just a product plug, why not present at one of our seminars? Case studies dealing with common challenges are especially welcome.