

## PREPARING FOR THE EXHIBITION

### Online Information about Exhibition

- ◆ Get information about exhibiting online
- ◆ Website provides cost of exhibiting and space rental procedures
- ◆ Get complete information about facts and figures of the previous year's show
- ◆ Read new releases published online and submit your information
- ◆ Get information about visitors and exhibitors
- ◆ Get information about conferences/seminars running alongside exhibitions
- ◆ Read FAQs for general enquiry

### Set the Budget

- ◆ Space cost, design, construction
- ◆ Preparation and transport of exhibits
- ◆ Graphics for displays
- ◆ On-site entertaining
- ◆ Personnel, transport, hotels
- ◆ Promotional plans for the show

### Draw up a comprehensive written design brief

- ◆ Before commissioning a designer and contractor, include stand objectives, outline budget, overall dimensions, requirements for stand services such as water, weights and sizes of any product and machinery to be displayed, details of company schemes to be followed and special product feature(s).

### A Written Brief

- ◆ Gives all parties involved the chance to comment before any money is spent .
- ◆ Reduces the 'subjective' factors.
- ◆ Provides a benchmark against which the design can be evaluated.

### Don't:

- ◆ Change the brief without telling the designer/contractor.
- ◆ Judge their word against anything other than the brief-which all concerned parties should agree to in writing.

### Do:

- ◆ Devote time to briefing your designer and contractor- it generally saves a lot of telephone calls later!
- ◆ Make sure they agree to brief, happy with it and think it is feasible.

- ◆ Encourage them to make suggestions: apart from the value of the ideas, they will identify more with the end-design.

Appoint a reputable contractor and designer (Compass Inc Ltd!!)

- ◆ Many contractors operate their own in-house design service. Equally, they will generally be happy to work with an outside designer of your choice.

Set a high priority on good communications

- ◆ Ensure that all personnel involved with the exhibition –both internal and external –are clear on relevant developments as they occur and know their responsibilities.

Write short but informative reports after major meetings.

- ◆ Hold briefing sessions, particularly on stand staffing, rotas and who does what on the stand. Are all those overseas representatives aware of the latest product modifications? Do the works manager and foremen appreciate that those samples have to be in show condition four weeks before the exhibition, to allow for plinths to be made?

Appoint a stand manager from the word go

- ◆ If it is not you, make sure that a stand manager is appointed and the appointment is known early on. Ensure there is a deputy. It is essential that pre-show coordination and decisions about on-stand operations have one arbitrator whose authority is unchallenged – before, as well as during the show.

Pay attention to detail at all times

- ◆ A grand concept can be spoilt by something as mundane as overfull ashtrays or uncomfortably small type on your display panels. Constant vigilance will avoid these small but significant pitfalls. It is not pernickety. It is professional.

Measure effectiveness

- ◆ Make arrangements to measure the effectiveness of your exhibition presence and the success of your stand objectives.
- ◆ Keep accurate records of all enquiries and follow them through
- ◆ Establish, if possible whether you would have got the order if you had not been at the show.
- ◆ Keep analysis going. Sometimes contacts begun at an exhibition take time to flourish, but with careful nurturing they often do.
- ◆ Carry out a post-exhibition survey; either through a research house or via your own staff, with a simple postal or telephone questionnaire. It is worth

establishing how widely you were seen; if your sales message was noted, what customers liked or disliked, did or did not understand. Do it within a few days of the exhibition – you'll be surprised how useful it can be.

#### Treat exhibitions seriously

- ◆ Regard your show programme as an integral and important part of your sales and marketing plan. Consider exactly what you want to get out of the exhibition and what you need to put in to get it. Don't let your staff be put off the change of surroundings or the glamour of the show. You would not send three of your employees to lark about in a customer's reception hall - doing it on-stand is the same thing.

## THE DO'S AND DON'TS OF EXHIBITING

Stand staff should not:

- ◆ Smoke on duty, sit and read, or look bored.
- ◆ Congregate into company groups that a potential visitor feels embarrassed about breaking into.
- ◆ Hover or pounce on people, “Can I help you?” is the easiest way to get rid of visitors - it evokes the almost automatic response “No, thank you”. Either, cultivate the art of unobtrusive observation so you can tell by the way your visitor begins to look around for a stand staff member that they are ready to talk, or ascertain exactly what he or she is studying and in a relaxed manner offer them information about it: “ I see you you’re looking at our model XI. That’s the one with independent suspension but of course it’s just one in the range. The others over here if you’d like to see them.... “Let the situation development naturally – don’t force the pace.

Stand staff should

- ◆ Be presentable and alert at all times (not just on the first day).
- ◆ Treat every visitor like a VIP whether he/she looks like a customer or not.
- ◆ Take regular breaks. But if stand staff want to sit down and drink coffee, they should do it away from the stand.
- ◆ Keep two pairs of shoes on the stand. Manning an exhibition can be very wearing on the feet – and it’s amazing what a lift a change of footwear can give.

Our Objective is to help Exhibitors:

- ◆ Avoid the traps.
- ◆ Plan and prepare.
- ◆ Set realistic objectives.
- ◆ Be effective.
- ◆ Generate business.
- ◆ Get a return on their investment.
- ◆ Enjoy the event and return next year.

Misconceptions:

- ◆ Exhibitions are expensive and unproductive
- ◆ I have to be there because my competitor is
- ◆ I have to have the biggest possible stand.
- ◆ Unless you are at the front no-one visits your stand.
- ◆ I don’t need to be there, everyone knows us already.
- ◆ Planning? That’s the organiser’s job.
- ◆ We don’t need to do any extra marketing

## Exhibitions as part of the marketing mix

- ✦ Exhibitions should be only one part of an integrated marketing strategy.
- ✦ Define clear objectives for shows that can be measured, as with any other media.
- ✦ Plan media to coincide with the show.
- ✦ On all ads, mention your stand number.
- ✦ Capitalise on the PR value of shows to reinforce products and services.

## Common traps

- ✦ No advance planning
- ✦ No objectives set
- ✦ Too small or large stand.
- ✦ No pre-marketing.
- ✦ Products not working.
- ✦ Boring display or bored ineffective staff.
- ✦ No training of staff or rehearsals
- ✦ Absence of technical staff.

## Yet more traps

- ✦ No prospect qualification
- ✦ Poor lead taking
- ✦ No follow-up of leads.
- ✦ Poor stand management
- ✦ Last minute build-up.
- ✦ Poor stand layout.
- ✦ No staff rota system.
- ✦ No handouts or examples.
- ✦ No show budget.

## Plan in advance

- ✦ Set your objectives early.
- ✦ Decide on which products to promote.
- ✦ Identify and book the stand.
- ✦ Produce a budget and timetable.
- ✦ Design the stand to the products and budget.
- ✦ Appoint a stand manager for the show.
- ✦ Produce a marketing plan.
- ✦ Brief PR and ad agency to creative ideas.

## Examples of objectives

- ✦ Launch a new product.
- ✦ Generate number of new prospects.
- ✦ Reinforce company image or re-launch the company image.

- ◆ Sell Product.
- ◆ Locate new agents and distributors.
- ◆ Carry out market research.
- ◆ Maintain/increase market share.

#### Choosing the right stand

- ◆ Be functional.
- ◆ Produce a written brief.
- ◆ Design with the available space.
- ◆ Keep it simple.
- ◆ Choose a central product on theme.
- ◆ Stay with your budget.
- ◆ Control costs.

#### Exhibiting your products

- ◆ Are the products in good working condition?
- ◆ Do you have the necessary technical information?
- ◆ Do you have handouts or samples available?
- ◆ Are the exhibits and products clearly visible?
- ◆ Can visitors try the products or there is a demo?
- ◆ How can you gain an extra advantage?
- ◆ Is the lighting carefully planned?
- ◆ Is the signage clean and easily read?
- ◆ Are people attracted to the stand?

#### Running the stand

- ◆ Use your best people.
- ◆ They must be trained?
- ◆ Sales and technical is the best mix.
- ◆ Have a rota system.
- ◆ Keep the stand tidy.
- ◆ Have least two staff members on the stand.
- ◆ Wear company badges.
- ◆ Provide refreshments, but not too much.

#### Prospecting from the stand

- ◆ Wear suitable attire.
- ◆ Hold daily sales meetings.
- ◆ Opening conversation is important.
- ◆ Qualify the visitor.
- ◆ Take their details.
- ◆ Be professional.
- ◆ Know your product.
- ◆ Let them know you will follow-up the visit.

## Finding potential buyers

- ◆ Be pro-active, attract them to the stand.
- ◆ Identify prospects from the simply curious.
- ◆ How interested are they?
- ◆ Identify what needs they have and match with a solution.
- ◆ Don't ignore journalist.
- ◆ Look for PR opportunities.
- ◆ Look out for the spy.

## Advertising and PR

- ◆ Understand the media plan for the show.
- ◆ Link your campaigns to the organiser's.
- ◆ Advertise in advance, mentioning your stand number.
- ◆ Use direct mail and always mail tickets from the organizer.
- ◆ Plan a PR campaign to build interest in advance.
- ◆ Make sure place PR packs in the press office.
- ◆ Get your sales people to issue personal invitations
- ◆ Place show or events posters in your office reception.
- ◆ Plan onsite demo for valued clients.
- ◆ Advertise on the website for each show.

## Following up on leads and measuring the response

- ◆ If you can't measure leads, don't do it.
- ◆ Follow-up every leads immediately.
- ◆ Contact all the visitors as soon as possible.
- ◆ Address questions asked by visitors.
- ◆ Arrange further visits to clients.
- ◆ Have a sales meeting at the end of ach day.
- ◆ Do a post show debriefing with all staff.
- ◆ Evaluate your results against the objectives.

## Sponsorship opportunities

- ◆ Ask the organizer for a list of opportunities including registration, staff uniforms, "agents wanted boards", road hoarding sites, shuttle buses, balloon sites, "you are here signs" and video walls.