

prospects

GUIDE TO EXHIBITING

This guide will take you on the exciting journey from planning your stand for an event through to successful participation and follow up.

We know that some exhibitors are very experienced and for others the thought of an event with thousands of visitors can be quite daunting. Either way we hope this information will offer ideas and inspiration to maximise your effectiveness at an event and give you great return on your investment.



1

DECIDE ON YOUR OBJECTIVES

Think about what you want to achieve from the different target audiences that will attend the event and set measurable targets e.g. talk to 100 people per day interested in engineering as a career, collect 10 CVs from people with the right skills and experience, encourage 50 parents to attend the next college open day or give out 2,000 postcards per day to create awareness of your brand and increase footfall to your website by 5%.

2

READ THE EXHIBITOR MANUAL

This document is created by us, the Organisers, to communicate essential information to exhibitors. It will tell you everything from times to set up your stand, how to order stand 'extras', any rules and regulations that apply and travel information to the venue. Sometimes it can look a bit detailed but usually setting aside 10 minutes is plenty of time to extract the information relevant to you.

3

YOUR STAND

You should already be aware of your stand size and number so we recommend marking out the area in your office so you are aware what the stand space looks like. You can then start to think about what you need on it. Don't forget the stand will represent your organisation. Things to consider will include furniture, electrics, lighting, colour theme, graphics, storage, internet connections and audio visual equipment. The official suppliers of these services will be in the exhibitor manual including the deadlines to ensure you do not incur surcharges.

4

YOUR TEAM

The staff on your stand will have a big impact on your success at the event. Select people who are happy talking to visitors face to face and are naturals when it comes to asking open questions.

Ensure you tell your team what your objectives are and their role on the stand e.g. talk about their personal experience of being an apprentice explain the recruitment process, collect data for people to invite to your college open days, etc.

Exhibitions and events can be hard work so think about whether you change staff each day and a rota is produced so staff can take breaks. Have a chat with the Organiser to find out peak times so you can make sure you have the right amount of staff for your stand. Too many can seem a little overwhelming but not enough may mean the loss of valuable opportunities. The personality of your stand team, what they wear and how they behave will contribute to the overall impression you make on visitors and how they perceive your organisation.

5

INCLUDE THE EVENT IN YOUR MARKETING ACTIVITY

There are plenty of things you can do to promote your presence and help attract the right people to your stand.

- Put a website button or text on your website
- Include editorial in your newsletters or internal communications
- Put the event logo and your stand number on your email signature leading up to the event
- Promote your attendance at other events in the lead up, distributing posters and leaflets that can usually be requested from the Organiser
- Ask your PR person to send out details to their media contacts
- Include interesting details about your stand in your social media campaign via Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram or Twitter



1

ADDED VALUE

Whilst you are investing time and money in the event it is good practise to think about how you can add value.

- Are there questions you could ask visitors that would help you with research you are undertaking?
- Perhaps you want to target teachers and would like the list of schools attending to send them a pre-event invite to visit your stand?
- Drive traffic to your website and perhaps run a competition where they have to visit your website to enter
- Ask the Organiser if there are any sponsorship or speaking opportunities
- Use this event to market future events e.g. college open evenings

2

WHAT TO OFFER THE VISITOR

Think about what you are going to give visitors to take away from the event so they have more information to read when they get home or to keep for future reference. Brochures, postcards and freebies are all popular items but can be expensive to produce. Set aside time to think about how you will distribute the information and whether you will hand out to all visitors on your stand or just a selected audience that takes part in an activity or a one to one discussion.

3

GET INTERACTIVE

Whoever the audience visitors like to be entertained. Standing out from the crowd helps you attract visitors to your stand and means you are memorable long after the event has taken place.

Demonstrations, working models, timed challenges, product sampling, competitions or quizzes are all great ways for you to present your organisation and engage visitors. They act as a real ice breaker, can have much more meaning than text in a brochure or on a website and can be a great mechanism for collecting data.

The more exciting and interactive you are the more likely the Organisers are to use you in official photos, VIP visits and post event case studies, marketing and PR.

4

STAND THEME

Your exhibition stand should be treated as a window display. Think about how your stand can tell a story just by looking at it. The company name, activities, colours, graphics, clothing your team wears and items on display should all be considered and thought about well before you arrive on site. Ideally you will have appointed a Project Manager to undertake all your pre-event tasks so make sure they share all this information, well in advance with the Organisers who will often give you some great pre-event marketing and PR (and it's FREE).



1 **AVOID THE STRESS**

You are likely to have booked your stand well in advance but the day of the event comes around sooner than you think! Make sure where possible you set up the day before. This will be a lot less stressful than the morning of the event where there is the likelihood you will get stuck in traffic or get lost trying to find the venue. If something is not quite right or you have forgotten to order something, pop along to the Organisers Office where someone will always be happy to try and help. Make sure you take your project folder with all the information relating to what you have ordered from the various contractors and suppliers.

2 **BE FLEXIBLE**

Even with the best planning in the world, sometimes things need to be changed or adapted and you should feel comfortable to assess what is working well or what can be done to make things better if something you planned on paper does not work so well in practise.

3 **LOOK AT YOUR STAND THROUGH THE VISITORS EYES**

You shouldn't judge a book by the cover — but people do. Visitors will judge you by how your stand looks and how you and your team interact. Try and get one of your colleagues to come along as a 'mystery shopper' or ask one of the Organisers for their honest opinion of your stand and any changes or recommendations they would make. Sometimes when you are so

close to something the obvious escapes your notice. Regularly look at your stand from the front during the event ensuring things like empty boxes and rubbish are always cleared away, stand personnel are smiling and appear approachable and the stand looks inviting and presentable at all times. Ensure what you do and the opportunities you have are clearly portrayed.

4 **MAKE THE MOST OF BEING THERE**

Once you are there and set up it should be all about the event, you will only get one chance to attract the right visitors and have their undivided attention. Switch off your mobile phone and fully focus on the event and how you and your team can achieve your objectives. During any down time make notes on what worked well and not so well and recommendations for what you could do differently next time. If you have social media channels make sure you feed regular information and news though this e.g. just met our 100th visitor to our stand today. Bring your camera and take photos that can be used post event, on social media or an internal email to show staff what your team has achieved.

5 **HAVE FUN**

Exhibitions and events are hard work but they are also great fun. Take the chance to tour the event and see what other exhibitors are doing, have a go at their activities, network with like-minded colleagues and share best practise. Make it fun and involve your team so they feel part of the whole project by setting a team challenge for the event.



AFTER EFFECTS

1

FOLLOW UP

If you don't follow-up your leads why on earth would you bother to spend all that money to go to the exhibition in the first place?

If you decide to capture data or run a competition or prize draw be sure to follow up and action this quickly once the event has taken place. A survey by Association of Event Organisers (AEO) revealed that 75% of exhibitors admitted to not following up their leads effectively which would be a great loss of valuable information.

2

EVALUATE

Produce a brief report on your exhibition experience. Evaluate your spend, whether you achieved your objectives, was your stand size and location right, staff feedback and recommendations for what you would change or improve. This is valuable in making future decisions about whether to attend again in the future. Make sure you also give the Organisers your feedback via the exhibitor questionnaire or just by calling and having a chat; they really welcome your feedback.

3

SHARE SUCCESS

The benefits of exhibiting do not stop once the event is over. The Organisers love to hear great success stories and receive case studies of people that you visited. It is great free marketing and PR for you and your organisation.

4

RE-BOOK

Organisers usually launch future events at the event. If you had a great location that worked for you, make sure you seize the opportunity to rebook your stand or alternatively if a competitor had a location you would like, talk to the Organisers early about relocating and how you can book your preferred stand location. Booking early also ensures you gain early exposure and marketing and PR benefits.



THE ORGANISERS

They are often an under-used resource by exhibitors but are always happy to share ideas or discuss your requirements.

Call Prospects Events on 01823 362800.

www.prospects.co.uk

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FACETIME

FaceTime is an industry initiative to supercharge the ROI (return on investment) of businesses using exhibitions as a marketing and sales platform.

They provide guides, training and expert help for businesses seeking exhibiting excellence. Experience the power of live events!

Contact 01442 285 809 or email hello@facetime.org.uk

www.facetime.org.uk



AEO

The Association of Event Organisers Ltd (AEO) is the trade body representing companies that conceive, create, develop, manage, market, sponsor, supply or service trade exhibitions and consumer events.

www.aeo.org.uk

