Creating spaces
Empowering brands

HANDBOOK
FOR EXHIBITION PLANNING

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BEGIN YOUR PLANNING AND EXECUTION WITH THE PRECISE MOVE

Exhibition, like every other event, entail strategic planning and effective execution for putting up a successful show. Planning for an exhibition can be a stressful process and involves many things right from selecting which show to participate in to meeting every deadline. This essential handbook for exhibition planning helps you get through every minute detailing for a show.
Show Selection

KNOW WHICH EXHIBITION IS RIGHT FOR YOU!

Choosing the right exhibition for you to market your brand is directly proportional to the success and higher ROI of your business. The right show will have the target market you are looking at and have a wider scope of brand reach. As an exhibitor, show selection is a crucial determining factor of how well you can market your brand. Do not rule out the local exhibitions as they too can have a strong impact on your target customers. It is good to keep your options open and find the right exhibition that suits your preferences, objectives and budget.

Tip: Get a list of top exhibitions organized by industry or location.

Myth: Targeting only bigger exhibitions can get you better potential customers.
Have geographical considerations

You may find a list of exhibitions that can interest you and your needs. But this simply does not mean that you jump into any of the shows that come your way. Have strategic planning and consider the geographies, which have impact on how your show becomes a success. Evaluate and pick the shows in the regions your company is involved or interested in. You can also target new shows, which can clutch customers from wider sectors.

Know your audience

It is important to understand what inspires and motivates your customer demographic that has a pivotal role in all your marketing activities. A considerable number of companies have a preconceived notion that the targeted audience will attend only those exhibitions that belongs to specific industries. However, this is simply not true. Calculating the number of potential revenues from the prospective clients expected from the exhibition will offer an elaborate sketch of the anticipated profits.

Effective targeting of the shows

Being an exhibitor calls for better planning and targeting the right shows. Evaluate the smaller exhibitions and focus on more specific targeting by assessing the market, expected customers at the show, industry and goals. Run a quick analysis as to which shows are the perfect pick for your industry and business and target those shows specifically and get better results at the end of the exhibition.
Space Selection

Tip: There is nothing called as a 'bad space' in an exhibition hall.

BE SPOT-ON WITH THE LOCATION OF YOUR EXHIBITION STAND

‘Location’ is what everyone at the exhibition hall must be yelling for. Space selection is not pure science but not knowing the exact location might hamper the end results. You must know exactly what to do and what not to while picking the spot for your exhibition stand. Here is a short yet well-thought of research that will get you through the wide arena of stand space selection. These are the bang on key points that you need to know before you choose the space for your exhibition stand.

“keep distance from your competitors”
Entrance – avoid it or get near big exhibition stands

The entrance of the exhibition hall is one such place that remains congested due to the visitor traffic inflow. This is that golden spot that is usually taken by giant exhibition stands and visitors tend to get attracted to these stands. If you are exhibiting with a small or medium exhibition stand and you do not want to be overshadowed by your competitors then avoid the entrance. You can also get lucky if you get a space near the massive stands and get extra attention due to your neighbour’s colossal structure.

Wide Aisles – Make some room for your exhibition stand

Your exhibition stand space being that on the wide main aisles can only fetch you good returns with respect to the exhibition visitors. As the main aisles attract maximum visitor’s footfalls, there is likely to be more competition for that particular exhibition space. Maximize the benefits of a main aisle exhibition space by having a visually-engaging and an appealing exhibition stall.

Competitor’s doorway – Keep a distance from it

You may not have a choice but keeping a distance from your competitor’s exhibition stand will give you a unique identity. Selecting an exhibition space, which is far-off from your competitor, ensures that your visitors can demarcate you and other similar brands.
Choosing your booth staff is a tricky yet necessary task, often considered unimportant. The booth staff plays a vital role in building the image of your brand in an exhibition. Your exhibition stand might remain a mere booth, irrespective of how brilliant your booth design is, if the employed booth staff is not efficient and interactive enough.

Tip:
So, let us find out the secret behind choosing the right booth staff.

Choose the right booth staff for your exhibition stand in order to keep your visitors engaged.
The booth staff is the nerve of your exhibition stand

Every exhibitor plans to convert the attendees into leads. So, the right booth staff will help attract maximum visitor’s footfalls. Interactions and engagements play a crucial role in creating prospective clients. If the objective of your exhibition is to generate leads through conversation, then get the best of your staffs to the exhibition floor.

Effective communication

Make sure that you communicate the aim, objective and other details of your exhibition to the booth staff. The staff of your exhibition stand should not be confused with various messages and objectives given by different company managers. Effectively communicate the required information with the booth staff, so that they can efficiently pass on the same information to the visitors.

Train the staff well

Training your booth staff before an exhibition is important. Not every time will you hire a new booth staff but may continue with the same team for a calendar of exhibitions. Hold a training session for your booth staff that talks about how to interact and engage with the leads, what questions to ask them and train them with the product demos and product knowledge.

“It helps to have a rehearsal at the booth before the show starts.”
Buy or Rent?

Tip: There are many factors that play a crucial role in deciding whether to buy or rent an exhibition stand. Predict your exhibition plan and choose accordingly.

When you rent, you have more access to the most current technology.

HERE IS THE PERFECT SOLUTION FOR YOUR DILEMMA

Are you confused between when to buy and when to rent an exhibition stand? If yes, then go through these essential points on when to choose between the options of buying and renting.
When to Buy?

Exhibiting more than once

After you have planned that you want to participate in more exhibitions, know that it is time to buy an exhibition stand. A year round of exhibitions requires you to opt for buying a stand rather than renting it.

Warehousing Options

If you have a warehouse of your own, then buying an exhibition stand is absolutely worth it. Store your print graphics, exhibits and other accessories at your storage place, without any extra costs.
Greater versatility in design

If appealing designs and attracting contours are what you are looking for, then buying an exhibition stand is the ideal option. Buying an exhibition stand with preferred design and colour is a more favoured choice over renting a stand.

Exhibiting in multiple locations

You have various exhibitions to participate in and at multiple locations then buying an exhibition stand is the right choice. The option of spending on an exhibition stand is worth if you have a number of shows to opt for.
When to Rent?

Exhibition occasionally
If you do not frequently participate in exhibitions and do not desire to buy an exhibition stand, then renting is the perfect option for you.

International exhibitions
As an international exhibitor, you have a list of requirements ranging from selecting an exhibition stand designer, look for installation and dismantling team, storage and transport. In this case, you can have a trouble-free international exhibition if you rent an exhibition stand. The entire exhibition process can be taken care of by the rental firm, providing you a worthwhile show experience.

Budget for a theme
The budget of your exhibition marketing do not stretch to buying an exhibition stand, choosing to hire or rent an exhibition stand is the right pick. Hiring an exhibition stand ensures that you get the desired stand without compromising on the design and quality. Renting an exhibition stand offers the perfect cost-effective solution.
The recent trends of globalisation and nationalisation have made transportation and logistics management a vital component in the exhibition industry too. Logistics ensure to enhance the existing process of production and distribution through management technique. A good coordination between each component, from manufacturing to delivery of your exhibits, would help bring maximum benefits.

The essential element in a logistics chain is transportation system that helps join the separated events or activities.

Transportation occupies 1/3rd of the amount in the logistics costs.

Transport systems hugely influence the logistic system’s performance.

In times of online communication Transport & Logistics is a haven. Relaxed networking with stand holders who make the time, discover live new transport trends and experience innovative products … That makes the difference.

Catrien Scheers - Fast Lines Belgium
Have you thought about the repercussions if your exhibition shipment was lost, delayed or damaged? So, in order to avoid accidental losses due to these cases, cover your shipment as per the requirements and purchase “door-to-door” risk insurance. Even if you are entirely insured for every penny of the shipment’s value, losing the same will cause you stress and exhibition without exhibition materials.

Pick the right transporter

The logistics of coordinating the shipping, arrival and delivery of final consignment before the show deadlines, handling paperwork and managing material-handling process is a tricky and vital job. Choosing the right carrier for the transportation of your exhibition materials is a critical decision. The transportation carrier agents should be available 24x7 and ask them to supply few long-time exhibitor customers as references.

Foresee the expenses

10% of a company’s overall exhibition budget is encapsulated by transportation. At the same time, transportation can also have impact on other expenses, such as material-handling and installation costs, which will influence the budgeting. Anticipating the entire transportation costs will help you sail through the process smoothly. You might incur higher rates with regard to special handling, loading and unloading of the materials.

Confirm the coverage

Have you thought about the repercussions if your exhibition shipment was lost, delayed or damaged? So, in order to avoid accidental losses due to these cases, cover your shipment as per the requirements and purchase “door-to-door” risk insurance. Even if you are entirely insured for every penny of the shipment’s value, losing the same will cause you stress and exhibition without exhibition materials.
USE FLAT PACK AND COMPACT BOXES

- Fits in a small truck
- Lowers handling charges (loading/unloading)
- Lesser volume weight for Air Shipment

INTERNATIONAL FREIGHT

- Choose low volume weight for reduced freight charges
- Sea shipment is preferred wherever the time gap is more
- Better to book door-to-door delivery
- Get done with paperwork to avoid extra duty charges and last-minute hassles
KNOW WHICH VENDOR IS BEST SUITED FOR YOUR SHOW

Reliable vendor connections are a win-win circumstances wherein both sides make a special effort to get each other’s objectives and needs, deal with those desires, keep up successful correspondences, and make connections based on trustworthiness and reliance. From choosing a new vendor to maintaining that tie, these effective tips will help you get the right vendor for your exhibition.

Tip: Opt for the right vendor and have a hassle-free show.

Have a pre-planned approach towards selecting your vendors and sticking to them.
Differentiate between service providers and agencies

Keep a clean differentiation between different types of vendors such as service providers and agencies. Service providers are the companies that research, develop and manufacture the finished products. Whereas agencies act as the middlemen between an exhibitor and service provider, thereby involving a multiple chain of contacts unlike the service providers.

Evaluate vendors and pick those who suits your preferences

Begin looking for vendors through online searches and conversing with trusted partners. Look for the vendor's website and company information to know regarding the organization's administration. This will give a fair idea on how well they work or how well are they managed.

Consider your contact

Building a cordial relation with your single point of contact in your vendor’s organization is as important as finding the right vendor. Knowing who to contact, in case your account rep is unavailable, is crucial as well. How well you build your relationship with the vendor and manage it, will play an essential role in eliminating the unforeseen changes before and during a show.
ANALYSE AND STRATEGISE FOR A SURE-SHOT SUCCESS

Marketing is a key player in bringing your brand to the forefront and generate higher ROI. As an exhibitor, it is a necessary step to have well-planned marketing strategies, which includes pre-show, post-show and social media marketing.

Tip: You can also record the successful and unexpected actions for future reference so that they are not repeated!

Sooner you contact your leads, the better are the chances that they remember your brand.
Newsletters

One of the most efficient ways of email marketing and getting your brand to the target audience is through newsletters. The simplest way is to get your customer’s email addresses and send them newsletters on a customary basis. This will help your customers know about your brand, company and other services.

Follow up with your leads

The main aim of every exhibition is to generate leads and higher ROI. Following up with your leads after the show, is one of the best ways to keep your brand image constant in the customer’s mind. So, do not let go any of your prospective leads as you never know who turns out to be a potential customer.
Social media helps to market your exhibition and maximize the visitor’s footfalls in your exhibition stand.

**TWITTER**

Tweet reasons on why to visit your exhibition stall
Twitter can be an efficient platform to promote your brand before and after the show. Don’t forget to promote your brand through different activities like game shows, offers, giveaways and freebies and post it on Twitter. You can also pre-plan your tweets and schedule them through various forums to keep a track of the tweets and visitor responses.
Facebook

Facebook is often misunderstood as a personal social networking site and not as a professional platform. However, you can use Facebook to create a wide network base and clutch more visitors at your exhibition stall. Share about your exhibition stall design or who has designed the stall and post photographs of your exhibition stall. You can also video record the visitor’s responses and reviews and post the same on Facebook.

LinkedIn

LinkedIn offers a genuine and spot-on medium for you to connect with the people from your industry. You can also reach the exact target audience through LinkedIn and make them know that you exist and have an upcoming show. Share your exhibition posts and photographs and trail how many visits you receive.
EXHIBITION PLANNING CHECK-LIST FOR EXHIBITORS

The checklist provides an indication of when you will be required to provide certain details for your exhibition. Timing may vary for large scale exhibitions or small scale exhibitions or if there is a shorter lead time between the booking and your exhibition date.

To avoid any nasty surprises, make a list of all the foreseeable activities /costs relating to the exhibition. The list should include the following:
One Year prior or Once Contracted

- Evaluate floor plans and select space
- Review exhibitor contract carefully. Understand terms, show rules, payment schedule, and space assignment
- Send in space application and first payment
- Develop a detailed exhibition budget and forecast your return on investment.
- List the exhibition/show on your website

6 months prior or as soon as possible

- Create show plan and set goals and exhibition objectives.
- Select any vendors needed (exhibition design and build agency, transportation company, catering).
- Plan pre-show advertising
- Finalize your product display
- Determine your exhibition stand design and build design, layout and graphics needs. You can hire a company to handle design and production or take a more hands-on approach

3 months prior

- Plan who will be attending – key staff/sales person to put the date in the diary
- Research promotional opportunities at the show e.g. new product showcases/awards
- Opportunities to sponsor a section of the show. e.g. Chef’s Kitchen
- Finalize exhibition design
- Read and review exhibitor manual. Note target move–in and set up dates
- Submit design for technical approval to show organizer
2 months prior

Submit electrical order to show contractor.
Order phone lines, internet connection.
Order card reader.
Order wastebaskets, booth cleaning service.
Order water cooler, catering if needed.
Order any special handling, like overhead hanging signs, from show management.
Get permission for unusually large or tall signage.
Place flower/plant order.
Order AV equipment.
Order name badges from Show Management.
Contract with carrier for shipping materials from company.
Order booth giveaways, bags, gifts.
Order booth uniforms.
Create demos, PowerPoint customer presentations.
Exhibition Planning Checklist for Exhibitors
Send pre-show mailer to attendee list/target database.
Review show floor plan and note target dates and restrictions.
Prepare all service orders. Take advantage of any prepay discounts.
Finalize any new graphics and start designing.
Prepare Audio/Video material
1 month prior

Confirm installation/dismantle schedule.

Preview display and graphics.

Meet with booth staffers to present exhibition plan and objectives.

Set-up schedule for pre-arranged customers meetings at show.

Prepare show binder. Include: copies of all orders and checks for services paid in advance, phone numbers and addresses of all vendors, booth setup instructions, shipping documents, return shipping labels.

Put together follow-up packets to send immediately following the show to your leads.

Continue pre-show marketing activities.

Review production of booth display, promotional items, and marketing materials – and confirm shipping dates.

Sufficient stock for sampling.

Prepare all the audio/video content and send to the supplier for pre-testing.

10 business days prior

Complete staff training.

Confirm arrival dates for your booth display, promotional items and display materials.

Send another mailer to your prospect buyers.

During Built up

Supervision of exhibition stand, build up and delivery of all services/products.

Collect all the exhibitor entry passes, parking tickets.

Review your service orders and set up a meet with booth staffers for pre-show briefing and training.
**During the Show**

- Promote your participation on social media, Facebook, Google+, twitter, LinkedIn with pictures.
- Reserve booth space for next year’s exhibition.
- Meet with booth staffers to check progress.
- Check out your competition. Find out what is working and what is not.
- Review plans for exhibition booth dismantle and return shipment.

**Post Event**

- Supervise dismantle and arrange return freight.
- Analyze leads, send follow up packets, and make contact as appropriate.
- Evaluate success of exhibition participation compared with objectives from your exhibition plan.
- Review your budget compared to your actual expenses for the show.
- Determine your return on investment.
- Make recommendation whether to participate in the same exhibition next year. Include suggested changes,
- Write post-show news on your website with pictures.
- Start planning your next show!!!
CONCLUSION

Although most of us neglect the effectiveness of an exhibition planning, it still remains a crucial part of the exhibition ecosystem. With every minute and precise detailing of exhibition planning process, we hope that this handbook has helped you get the tips and tricks on your fingertips. We wish that you have a successful show every time you exhibition and do not forget to keep an effective exhibition plan.