



Tips for Exhibition Success

4 & 5 April 2009

Melbourne Convention & Exhibition Centre

Welcome to the Melbourne International Beauty Expo

This booklet is designed to be a helpful resource in planning and organising your participation at the Melbourne International Beauty Expo, with a focus on great outcomes from the exhibition.

Our role is to assist you in making your exhibition experience as uncomplicated, profitable and enjoyable as possible.

The booklet is divided into 3 key stages, with handy hints and out of the box ideas to maximise your exposure and your return on investment. It can also be used as a great training guide for your team.

So read on and take notes on becoming an even more successful exhibitor in 2009.

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Making the most of your exhibition

Year after year, the number of companies participating in trade shows, exhibitions and events continues to increase. Millions of companies worldwide are finding trade shows a viable and cost-effective sales tool to:

- Introduce new products and innovations
- Target a select group of visitors
- Perform informal market research
- Enhance a company's image to the trade
- Generate sales at a lower cost-per-contact than an average sales call
- Network with industry associated people

Trade shows are an extremely effective marketing activity for selling to a highly targeted audience with purchasing power. But, like any other marketing activity, it requires skilful planning and execution in order to produce the desired results. It is no longer enough to simply arrive, set up a stand, pass out literature and hope for the best.

The eight steps to trade show success

1. Set realistic objectives to achieve
2. Plan your strategy and budgets for participation
3. Determine resources necessary to achieve objectives
4. Establish methods for evaluating results
5. Train staff for their role at the exhibition & events
6. Integrate publicity and promotional plans
7. Utilise the International Beauty Expo team and their resources effectively
8. Prepare a 'post show' strategy to follow up and secure your leads

Each component works together to create synergy and success!

Setting Objectives

Objectives are necessary to give direction to your exhibit, establish budget requirements, stimulate sales performance, measure results and establish value. They must be:

- Measurable in quantity and quality
- Achievable in a defined period of time
- Consistent with your company's goals, policies and marketing plan

Consider What You Want to Achieve

- Generate leads
- Close sales
- Introduce or test a new product or product features
- Seek new distribution channels
- Gather competitive intelligence
- Enhance existing customer relationships
- Demonstrate a technically complex product
- Enhance corporate image
- Develop product awareness
- Penetrate a new market or industry
- Outshine the competition
- Perform market research
- Gain media coverage and exposure
- Establish staff expertise in the industry
- Increase market share

Set Specific Objectives

- Why are you participating?
- What products/services will you feature?
- Identify key features and benefits?
- What results do you want to get?
- What will you do to achieve the results
- What is the message you want to give about your company and products?

“Yours is one of many companies taking part in the exhibition. Thousands of visitors are expected to pass through the hall. What will make them visit your stand and not your competitor’s?”

The Value of Pre-Selling Your Exhibit

You’ve invested time and resources to develop an effective stand and train staff, so don’t leave visitor attendance at your stand to chance. By pre-selling your presence, promoting special incentives, and setting up at-show sales appointments in advance, you could guarantee success before the show even starts! The walk-in traffic will be a bonus!

Benefits of Pre-Show Promotion & Publicity

- Encourage visitors to put you on their list of companies to visit
- Provides a reason for sales contact and a timeframe for response
- Helps pre-sell prospects
- Differentiates your company and products you’ll be launching at the show as well as new features, applications, etc.
- Enhances existing client relationships and loyalty
- Can generate free editorial coverage
- Produces enthusiasm and anticipation for the event
- Creates awareness for your company

Examples of Pre-Show Promotion & Publicity:

- Personal Phone Invitations and Appointments
- Direct Mail
- Incentives and Contests – The rules and regulations for running competitions in NSW are available on www.fairtrading.nsw.gov.au
- Advertising – Consistent advertising builds awareness, generates stand traffic and pre-disposes your audience to your sales pitch.
- VAS – Value Added Services

We have a variety of promotional opportunities available to assist you in creating maximum exposure for your stand leading up to and during the exhibition. If you are considering additional marketing options, please contact us on 02 9422 2525 for further details.

8 tried and tested ideas for attracting visitors to your stand

The key to success is communicating what you have to offer to as many people as possible **BEFORE** the exhibition.

1. Send personal invitations

If you are launching a new product or service, personally invite your customers and prospects to your stand for refreshments and a presentation on the new product. For key prospects, encourage them to make an appointment at a specific date and time.

2. Hold demonstrations

Hold demonstrations or seminars on your new product or service at set times throughout the exhibition. Send out the schedule with your exhibition invitations, and encourage the recipients to book in advance.

3. Hold a reception

Hold a reception as trade exhibitions are an extremely time-efficient way of keeping in touch with existing customers. Why not hold a reception at your stand, as a way of thanking them for their continued custom?

4. Run a competition

Run a competition then hold the prize draw on your stand to win a magnum of champagne, a weekend break or one of your products. Not only will it attract the attention of passing visitors, but if you notify key customers and prospects in advance, it will give them an incentive to head for your stand when they arrive.

Please note: the rules and regulations for running competitions in NSW are available on www.fairtrading.nsw.gov.au

5. Provide incentives

Provide incentives to invite customers and prospects to claim a free gift when they visit your stand.

6. Discounts

Discounts offered on goods or services purchased **only** at the exhibition.

7. Celebrities and entertainment

Celebrities and entertainment attract a crowd and the best acts are the ones that re-enforce your message and relevant.

8. Email

Email a broadcast to your clients advising them of the exhibition and your stand number as well as inviting them along.

Important Note: It is not expected that you take up each and every opportunity we have presented - few companies have the time or budget for that. As long as you are aware of what opportunities are available and how to make the most of them, you can pick those that best enable you to meet your objectives.

Press Coverage

Make sure you have a press kit available at your stand. Include only information that's going to be helpful in writing an article. Try not to include too much information as a press kit is not a sales kit.

Press Conference

A press conference can be an effective forum for new product introductions or company announcements. The topic must be truly newsworthy to warrant a press conference. You can hold the media event at your stand or at the exhibition press office.

Selecting the Right Staff

The more visible your presence at the show, the more visitors you attract to your stand, BUT, your success depends largely on the collective talent, product knowledge and energy level of the sales and technical staff at your stand. Take the time to select the right exhibition team and then train them on what the company hopes to accomplish at the show.

“Trade show studies have shown that 80% of show attendees remember more about the sales person manning the stand than the stand itself!”

Our Top 5 Staff Selection Factors are:

- Personality
- Attitude towards exhibitions
- Previous performance and experience
- Product/Industry Knowledge
- Territory: National vs. Regional

Once you've selected your exhibition/ show team, you must plan how to schedule and motivate them for peak performance and to obtain excellent results.

“Staff training and briefing are essential to exhibition success. If you are to get the best from your stand staff they must know why they are at the exhibition, who they will meet and what they’re expected to do.”

Staff Briefing

In addition to general sales training, all stand staff should be fully briefed before the event on what they’ll be required to sell or communicate and to whom at the show.

The exhibition briefing should cover Exhibition Objectives:

1. Target audience
2. Personal responsibilities
3. Personal targets
4. Products/services on display
5. Equipment/products to be demonstrated
6. Inquiry handling procedures
7. Sales literature
8. Competitions/incentives/giveaways
9. Dress
10. List of other staff
11. Duty schedule
12. Stand location
13. Show Hours
14. Accommodation arrangements
15. Transport arrangements
16. Catering arrangements
17. Details of off-stand activities

Plan staff utilization and avoid burnout

- Prepare a stand duty roster to avoid fatigue. Allow staff to take short breaks. Shifts should be a maximum of two or three hours followed by an hour break.
- Consider after-show entertaining responsibilities – not ideal to schedule a team member for evening hospitality and first shift at the stand the next morning.
- Plan to split staff time into 50% stand prospecting and 50% working with current customers in attendance. Personnel should schedule advance appointments with customers around this duty schedule. Other break time can be used to check out the competition and generate future trade show ideas.
- Consider some specific assignments - demonstrations, maintenance and media.
- Have beverages on hand and encourage your staff to drink plenty of fluids to avoid dehydration.

Enhance staff motivation

- Instill a belief in the product, the company, the effectiveness of exhibitions, and staff sales ability. This will translate to pride, sincerity, enthusiasm and ultimately sales.
- Correlate company show objectives into specific goals for each stand staff. Consider your staff's personal goals - increasing sales, corporate visibility, financial rewards, etc. Design incentives to motivate staff to accomplish the stated sales goals or their personal goals.
- Provide staff with the environment, tools, promotional vehicles and training needed to motivate customers and achieve personal and show objectives.
- Give feed back during the day with positive feedback and compliments included with suggestions for improvement.
- Schedule staff meetings daily at the show to get their feedback on what's working and to share experiences.

Effective stand skills include how to:

- Approach strangers
- Qualify prospects
- Give just enough information to entice action
- Gain commitment
all in a time-efficient manner.

Critically evaluate leads

Agree in advance on what constitutes a qualified lead. This is typically a contact that could generate a significant purchase within 6 months of the exhibition. Set specific criteria for warm and hot leads for follow up.

Maximize time

Depending on your product and exhibition objectives, train staff to only spend a limited amount of time with each prospect. Quickly qualify prospects - a lot of time can be wasted talking to someone who has no budget or no plans to buy.

Limit the time spent even with your qualified prospects. Your primary purpose is to collect leads and information for later follow-up - save the selling for after the show.

“Effective selling is critical because your time is limited – an independent exhibit survey reports that the average visitor spends 16 minutes at each stand, and it may be as little as two minutes. With training, your staff can use this situation to their advantage.”

Recognizing the needs and motivations of visitors

Visitors are likely to fall into one of the following categories:

The Go-Getter

These visitors have a clear agenda of what they want to achieve, they are happy to be approached, keen to discuss their requirements in the knowledge that the information they obtain will help them to make an informed purchasing decision.

The Reluctant Interviewee

These visitors don't like being sold to. They are wary of giving away too much about themselves for fear that they are handing over control. These visitors require careful handling. They mustn't be pushed too hard for information, but gently encouraged to volunteer it.

The Introvert

Many people are introvert by nature and feel self conscious stepping on to an exhibition stand. Introverts will often hover on the edges of a stand; reluctant to commit to stepping in, but when engaged in conversation will be only too happy to discuss their needs. The staff member, however, will need to be careful not to scare off the visitor with their initial approach.

The Time-Waster

Time-wasters are more than willing to discuss just about anything - in long, drawn out detail. Unfortunately, they usually have no authority to buy and no money to spend. It is a good idea to pre-arrange with other staff members some methods of extracting yourselves, or each other, from the clutches of such visitors - politely!

The Free-Loader

These visitors are more interested in your food or drink cabinet and free giveaways than your displays and take up valuable space that may be required for serious business discussions. You should have a firm policy on how to handle such visitors.

The Old Friend

Exhibitions are great places for bumping into old friends and acquaintances. As a result, precious sales time that should be spent forging and developing new business is all too easily frittered away catching up on old times. Save socializing for the evenings.

Your key to successful sales at the expo

Attitude

- Be inviting - make sure visitors know they're welcome
- Be enthusiastic about your product and company

Professionalism

- Dress professionally with comfortable shoes
- Wear your badge on the right (because you shake with your right hand)
- Use breath fresheners
- Keep the stand clean
- Remember, you represent the company
- Be professional

Non-verbal Skills

- Have approachable body language - good posture, hand out of pockets and a smile
- Keep moving in the stand, don't sit in the stand
- Avoid clustering with other staff
- Don't pounce immediately - give visitors time to focus on particular item and yourself time to plan a suitable opening question
- Avoid looking bored or uninterested
- Avoid "standing guard" on the edge of your stand with your arms folded - passers-by will be reluctant to step into your stand if they feel they have to "get past" someone to do so
- Don't read, eat, drink, smoke or talk on the phone on the stand. Take breaks elsewhere

Knowledge

- Know your product - applications, specs, features, benefits, availability and price
- Know how it compares to the Competition
- Keep a reduced, pocket-sized product price list for easy reference
- Know the locations of restrooms, lounges and eating areas

Ability to Engage Visitors

- Use keen observation skills
- Welcome visitors in the aisle who make eye contact, look intensely at your product or exhibit, or watch your demonstration
- Be quick with engaging comments and avoid saying “can I help you?” Ask open ended questions that demand an informed response and which will enable you to pursue the conversation further
- Call prospects by name
- Invite attendees to watch a demonstration or meet with them after a demonstration

Ability to Qualify

- Develop a lead management system
- Qualify quickly and efficiently
- Ask informational questions and keep notes
- Probe with moderate aggressiveness

Good Customer Relations

- Match the speech rate, volume and body language of the prospect
- Adjust vocabulary for level of technical expertise
- Be a good listener
- Never say “I don’t know” instead say, “That’s a good question. Let me see if I can find out for you.”
- State things in a positive way
- Use literature, samples, contents, selling tools and audio visuals correctly
- Always go the extra mile to satisfy customers

Ability to Present Solutions

- Qualify first before doing the demo
- Keep the presentation benefits-orientated
- Review the product applications
- Overcome resistance; isolate and handle objections
- Monitor and limit the time spent on the interaction
- Talk to two or three visitors at once if necessary
- Don't get distracted

Ability to Close and Capture

- Lead prospect to an action step
- Use trial closes
- Get commitment for action or follow-up
- Obtain names of other decision-makers and referrals
- Take the time to write down as much information as possible after the interaction for follow-up efforts. Don't trust your memory.

After the Exhibition

“Industry Statistics report that eight out of 10 exhibitors NEVER follow up on a trade show lead. Don’t fall into this trap. Make a point of calling back each one of your qualified leads, or the entire effort could have been worthless.”

Four Steps to Effective Follow-up

If sales leads are to be followed up efficiently and converted successfully you will need to take the following four steps:

1. Prioritise leads according to urgency
2. Follow up leads immediately adopt a 48 hour principle
3. Pursue leads on an ongoing basis
4. Track leads to provide a measure of return on investment

Convert Leads to Sales after the Exhibition

Research shows that leads from exhibitions are more likely to be converted into sales than from any other media, but remarkably as many as *83% of all exhibitors never follow up* with prospects, according to the Centre for Exhibition Industry Research (CEIR). In addition, 45% of qualified leads are followed up on TOO LATE. This defeats the primary purpose of participating in the event and ruins potential results.

Don’t allow those leads to grow cold and stale. Your after-show efforts will cement sales and maximize your return-on-investment.

Follow-up all Leads Immediately

Follow up leads formally within a week after the exhibition, even if it’s just a fax or a simple thank you letter to keep the lines of communication open. This makes your company look more responsive and professional. You can be sure your competitors will be doing the same thing.

Within two weeks of your first round of letters, contact prospects personally. Say you are calling to make sure they received the letter, ask if they looked through the information; answer any questions; try to set up an appointment or close a sale. This is when the sales will be made and the investment in the exhibition justified. *According to the CEIR, 75% of visitors remember exhibits they've seen up to a month after the show.*

“Exhibition leads are HOT leads - providing they are properly qualified, they are some of the hottest leads you can get.”

Keep your Prospects Hot

While “warm” prospects may have no immediate need for your product or service, many of them will have indicated a specific time later in the year or the following year, when a purchasing budget will become available. It is important to keep these prospects hot, contacting them on a regular basis with details of new products that may be of interest or tickets to next years event - that way you can keep their interest until such time as they are ready to buy.

The Value of Post Show Promotions

While you cannot rely on prospects to call, you can increase the chances of their doing so by remaining visible within the marketplace after the event. Advertising in trade magazines will remind prospects of your products and services in the weeks and months after the show and help to ensure that when they are in a position to purchase, they purchase from YOU. This will include all prospects who visited your stand but failed to leave their details - no matter how efficient your stand staff are, there will always be some visitors who slip through the net.

Keep reminding your prospects with advertisements, direct mail, phone calls and appointments.

Track Sales to Evaluate Show Effectiveness

Build deadlines into your lead tracking system. Set a date for final review, and issue a report with results and analysis. You can do everything else perfectly but without this, your efforts will fall far short of your objectives and ROI.

The Final Analysis

When you have time to analyse results and allow for sales follow-up, you should prepare a final exhibition report or audit. This should document:

- What was achieved, against set objectives
- Detailed breakdown of costs

It should draw conclusions and make recommendations on:

- Viability of set objectives
- Choice of event
- Choice of exhibits
- Proficiency of planning and budgeting procedures
- Effectiveness of stand brief and resulting design/layout
- Proficiency of stand designer/contractor
- Effectiveness of show-linked promotions
- Performance of stand personnel, as a group and individually
- Efficiency and follow up of leads

It should contain samples of any promotions undertaken in connection with the event (direct mail, advertisement, etc.) and photographs of the stand. This will help you to raise standards for next year.

Congratulations!

If you have reached this page we thank you for taking the time to read our tips for exhibition success.

We trust they were helpful and relevant to assisting you to achieve the maximum return on your exhibition investment. We trust that both the content and format has been easy to navigate and valuable.

We encourage you to contact us if you require additional copies of the booklet or if you have feedback or questions on any aspect of your exhibition experience.

We wish you success at the exhibition and we look forward to working with you at the Melbourne International Beauty Expo.



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References

All quotes and statistics have been sourced from the:
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