

How to Increase Visitors and Make the Most of your Exhibition Trade Show Stand

If you're going to attend an exhibition, you've either never done it before and are wondering if it's going to be worth all the effort, or you have spent a few hours standing in an exhibition hall waiting for the quality buyers to turn up. Either way, you need to ensure a return on the time and investment in your stand design and staffing resources, and that means choosing your exhibitions carefully and maximizing the visitors to your stand. It may seem obvious, but the first thing is to ensure you are exhibiting at the right show. Is it local or national? Is it industry specific or general? Has it got a reputation built up over many years or is it a new show? Don't believe the hype from the exhibition organisers – they are only trying to sell you floor space. Do your research and satisfy yourself that the show not only attracts a lot of visitors, but more importantly attracts the kind of people who have the buying power and authority to place orders with you. Then you must make sure those quality visitors come to your stand. They will fall into two categories: • Existing and past customers of your organisation • Potential new customers who buy products or services from your sector All other visitors are irrelevant – don't spend any time with them, especially if they don't have any buying authority. To get these important people to your stand you absolutely have to put into practice a well thought out plan: 1) Have an eye catching and welcoming stand design. Doesn't have to be huge, but it does have to look good, display your messages clearly, and be open and attractive to visitors. Get your stand designed by professionals and listen to their recommendations – they know what works and your investment will be paid back in increased visitor numbers. 2) Employ a hook. This could be a special offer only available at the show, a competition, a chance to see something on your stand (celebrity guest, F1 racing car, ice sculpture being made, magician doing unbelievable illusions, a caricaturist doing free sketches of visitors) or a chance to play virtual golf. 3) Contact the organisers and offer to provide free carrier bags to all the exhibition visitors. Get them printed (not a high cost) and pre load them with your material. 4) Do lots of pre show publicity. Advertise your hook as above to current and past clients with a well thought out creative mailshot, telling them exactly how to get to the show and where to find your stand. Offer a free minibus from the station or airport if they are big spenders or clients you want to impress. Do the same for potential customers by acquiring a marketing database and sending the same details to people you want to talk to at the show about future business. 5) Find a reason to talk to the best prospects post exhibition. While visitors are on your stand, have your diary handy to schedule a meeting with them there and then. If you have a free giveaway on your stand, don't hand it out there and then – say you'll deliver it after the exhibition is over. If you have competition winners (who may just be chosen as your best future prospects), take their prize to them personally with a bottle of champagne. 6) Always think differently. Remember your competitors will also be trying to contact the same customers, so you have to stand out. Don't try to be too off the wall - sending an invitation in a fluorescent pink envelope rarely works, but sending a personally signed note to your potential customer with a voucher for an interesting free gift (if they come and see you on your stand) might. A professional [Exhibition Stand Design](#) company can provide many ideas like these for you. Designing a stand is more than just layout and graphics – a top creative package can ensure that as many visitors as possible come to you rather than your competitors.

About the Author

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