



A Guide to Effective Exhibiting.

Introduction

Exhibitions and trade shows are an excellent way to showcase your brand and the products and services you offer. However, once upon a time, companies exhibited because they always had done - or because their competitors were attending - without any real consideration of the end benefits.

Today, diminishing budgets, the need to demonstrate ROI, and meet wider business objectives

means that status-quo planning is no longer an option. Instead, exhibition professionals must measure the success of each and every event, each and every year.

At Apex, we understand the immense effort that goes into preparing for exhibitions; and, in this handy guide, you'll find a range of tips and advice to help make sure your exhibition presence is a success.





Strategy.
Strategy.
Strategy.

Plan for success

To understand what your exhibition presence needs, you first have to know what you want to say, and who you are talking to. The more you know, the more targeted you can be with your messaging and the more successful your stand is likely to be.

So, before you even start to think about what your exhibition stand should look like, apply some strategy to find the right messages to influence your

audience. This will help you to deliver those all-important communications in a way that informs, impresses, and motivates.

And this planning doesn't stop once the show is over. Instead, it's important to learn from your successes and failures, and bring these lessons into your future exhibition strategy.



Define your market

Recognising and understanding your target market correctly is essential to the long-term success of your business. So, it makes sense to use this knowledge when designing your exhibition stands.

What do you need to establish?

- 1. What do you want customers to know about you?** Consider not only what you sell, but also the end benefits and your Unique Selling Point (USP).
- 2. What's the bigger picture?** Exhibitions don't happen in isolation. To be successful, you must have an awareness of the wider social, economic, and political factors that could impact your market.
- 3. Who are your existing customers and why do they buy from you?** This is the easiest way to figure out who else you should be targeting.
- 4. What does your ideal customer look like?** This will allow you to create highly targeted exhibition stands that deliver that much sought after ROI.

It might seem challenging, but a properly defined audience is crucial to getting the right message, in front of the right person, in the right way. The right exhibition partner will help you to establish all this and more.





Budgets & ROI.

Zero-based exhibiting

In 2016, a number of businesses adopted zero-based budgeting. This means that more and more marketing teams are now having to justify spending, rather than being provided with a budget based on last year's spend.

While this strict cost control measure helps companies to increase efficiencies, zero-based

budgeting is not about cutting marketing spend, but making it work more efficiently.

With zero-based exhibiting set to become increasingly important over the next 12 months, businesses must now do everything they can to demonstrate bang for buck.



How to demonstrate ROI

Tracking the success of an exhibition isn't always easy, particularly as sales sparked at trade shows may not take place on the day.

Use these top tips to maximise the success of your exhibition stands, and deliver that all important return.

- 1. Establish what success means to you.** Whether you want to stand out from the competition and boost your brand awareness, generate footfall to your exhibition space, or make those all-important sales, you can't measure success without first knowing what it looks like.
- 2. Do the maths.** To calculate your ROI, figure how much the exhibition is costing you to attend, and attach a monetary value to each new customer/lead. Doing this will help you see the tangible value of your exhibitions, and help you decide whether to reinvest in the show next year.
- 3. Don't make snap judgements.** Not all the sales generated at an exhibition will be made on the day. Typically, you might need to wait at least six months before determining whether an exhibition was a successful investment.
- 4. Be prepared.** Exhibiting isn't just about what happens on the day. Wherever possible, pre-arrange as many meetings as you can with existing customers and targeted prospects who will be attending the show.



- 5. Invest in technology.** To keep ahead of the competition, [invest in technology](#). Tech doesn't just give you the analytics and data you need to track ROI, but will also help you to maximise the number of leads generated at an exhibition, enhance the level of engagement with visitors at your stand, and communicate with these visitors post-event.
- 6. Be strategic.** Only once you know what you're working towards, and who you are talking to, can you meet the expectations of exhibition visitors. So, figure out what it is you want to say, and ensure your exhibition stand helps you to instigate relevant conversations with your target audience - fuelling your sales pipeline. [Find out more about how your exhibition stand can help you to do this.](#)
- 7. Be ambitious.** When only aim for zero-based exhibiting? Why not margin-based, where the potential earning from stands outstrip the costs?

[The right exhibition stand partner](#) should be able to deliver exhibition stands that look fantastic and are created specifically around your objectives. Helping you to win customers and providing a real return on your investment, whatever your budget.





Design &
Creativity.

Creativity is not enough

Absolutely, your exhibition stand should stop people in their tracks and grab their attention. No matter how good your products and services are, your attendance is unlikely to generate those all-important sales if you don't actually talk to anyone. That's why you should maximise your exhibition space using colour, signage, and lights to draw visitors to you like moths to a flame.

But more than this, your exhibition stand must also be a catalyst for sales conversations to help get the orders flowing. As such, your stand not only has to look good, it also needs to

support your business objectives and work with your people during the event. To do this, you need to align your stand with these conversations and provide a consistent visitor journey.

Where suitable, you could consider using interactive technology to help bring your stand to life, give customers another reason to engage, and experience the benefits of your product/services for themselves.

If your stand fails in one, or both of these ways, no matter how much money you spend, your stand won't bring in the business you need.



It's not personal

While your likes and dislikes matter, without adopting a more strategic approach to exhibition stand design, these preferences could actually hinder your success.

Making decisions based on nothing more than personal taste is a bad idea. And, with exhibitions representing a significant level of investment – not just in terms of the financial cost but also time spent – it's a mistake you can't afford to make.

Of course, your stand must appeal to you on some level, and with the right designers it can be

both beautiful and practical. But if the research and strategy tell you one thing, and your personal preferences another, it pays to be logical.

Having a stand that sells your business is not necessarily the same as having one you like the look of, and whatever your exhibition objectives your presence simply must help you to achieve them.

The path to a successful exhibition stand begins - not with looking internally - but instead by focusing on your customers, and what they want from you.





Which
exhibition
stand?

Custom Build

Bespoke stand design that sets you apart from your competitors.

If you want to make a big impact and put the competition in the shade, you'll need a stand that not only has that elusive wow factor, but one that also represents your brand. And which is designed specifically

around your products and services.

Bespoke exhibition stands grab attention; like top fashion designs, they are unique and no one is going to turn up looking as good as you.



Modular & Flexible

Great looking exhibition stands that keep on working for you

Robust and versatile, today's modular stands allow designers to create bespoke structures without any hassle.

Even better, these can be reused and reconfigured at a range of events and exhibitions, and be scaled up or down depending on

the available space.

Lowering the cost of exhibiting, modular stands no longer need to be boring and instead, can be updated quickly and easily with interchangeable graphics; making them a firm favourite with businesses that need to keep a close eye on their bottom line.



Self Build & Portable

A wide range of smaller stand designs that you can take away and use whenever and wherever you need.

Portable stands were once only available in the now familiar curved 'pop-up' style; and you can still use these.

However, savvy businesses are

increasingly turning to component systems.

Combining hi-tech extruded frames with graphic panels or tensioned fabrics, the resulting design looks modern and eye catching; and can be re-configured time and time again.





Technology.

The future of shows?

When it comes to exhibitions, quirky tech is always an attention grabber. But what new and emerging technology should you be using to engage and involve attendees at your next exhibition?

- 1. Augmented Reality (AR) and Virtual Reality (VR).** AR and VR are being used to create multi-sensory, immersive experiences that have the potential to change the world of exhibitions forever. While immersive technology has been around for some years, historically it's only the big brands that have had the budget to deploy it. However, as with most tech, the better it gets, the more accessible it becomes, and we predict that we'll all start to see VR creeping into mainstream exhibitions over the next 12 months.
- 2. Facial recognition software, biometrics, and sentiment analysis.** Now more science fact than fiction, these new technologies are being used by some of the world's biggest players to measure visitor mood, engagement, and demographics. But we think it highly unlikely that such advanced technology will be adopted by the mainstream just yet.
- 3. Robotics.** With the world of AI and robotics moving forward at a tremendous pace, is the advent of the robot stand salesman just round the corner?



- 4. Gamification.** Gamification is being increasingly used to help exhibitors, organisers and attendees meet their objectives. By using intelligent technology and interactive devices, participants are encouraged to achieve event related goals – be that networking with particular people, checking into a certain number of sessions, and/or engaging with exhibitors. With the latest technology also offering a competitive edge, with leader boards and incentives, gamification is taking the collaborative event experience to a whole new level.
- 5. Location-based tech.** Proximity-based technology is already being used to engage with customers at exhibitions. For example, apps that use GPS data and beacons to send tailored offers and promotions to customers on their smartphones, based on where they are.
- 6. Data and advanced event marketing automation.** Helping you to maximise attendance, engagement, and leads data integration and marketing automation can also help you to communicate with attendees post-exhibition.



Social media

There's lots of pontificating about how great social media is when it comes to exhibitions. But the truth is, social media is drastically underused, and, in many cases incorrectly managed.

However, with businesses increasingly expected to do more with less, and technology delivering more and more business benefits, social media should be a key weapon in every

exhibitors' armoury.

However, a word of caution before you dive right in. When it comes to social media, setting up a Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook account and posting random updates simply won't cut it in today's competitive world. Proactive social media is about more than seeing what sticks.



How to use social media at your events

1. Start by listing your exhibition goals and consider how social media is going to help you to achieve these.
2. Relationships don't happen overnight. To deliver results, you need to use and manage social media correctly. And that means investing time and effort into building an engaged social media following throughout the year.
3. Forget all about amassing huge numbers of empty followers and focus on quality rather than quantity. And make sure you choose the right platforms. You don't need to be on every social media channel.
4. Promote your exhibition presence. Use images and videos (and tag these accordingly). Create bespoke content and encourage people to share it. Use the exhibition hashtag to make it easy for people engage with you as an exhibitor and set up appointments.
5. Encourage visitors to your stand to share their experiences on social media during the show (with the established hashtag). But don't leave all the work to your attendees, make sure that your team is also providing live updates throughout the day,
6. To maximise results keep engaging with attendees after the exhibition is over, encourage them to share feedback, images and experiences.





Your exhibition
partner.

About Apex

Apex creates and delivers award winning modular and custom built exhibition stands that look fantastic and are created specifically around your objectives.

With over 25 years' experience in events and exhibitions, our philosophy is based on exceptional service, expertise and innovative solutions.

We know the journey towards a successful exhibition is seldom straightforward, often stressful, and usually challenging. Our team of account managers, creative designers, organisers and project managers are there to support you and your team from the initial design and

development phase to organisation, build, final on-site delivery, and beyond.

We also help you to win customers and give you a return on your investment, whatever your budget.

We are full members of ESSA, your guarantee of quality, reliability and professional standards.

Contact us today on +44 (0)1625 429370 or email mail@apex.co.uk to find out more or for an exploratory conversation.

ESSA
— 10 Year Anniversary —

MEMBER
2017



Connect with us!

We take time every week to post industry news, new innovations, updates, and pictures for those involved in the industry. Click on any (or all!) of the links below to connect with us.

