



"HOW TO EXHIBIT"
Workshop
Delegate Notes

Nomadic Display
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'How to Exhibit' Workshop Agenda

1. Stand design
2. Show Services
3. Objectives & Marketing
4. PR & Marketing at the Show
5. Travel & Accommodation
6. Staff Training
7. Exhibition Tool Kit
8. Lead Handling & Follow up
9. Make it pay

Step One - Stand Design

Set your objectives

Your show objectives are likely to dictate the look and layout of your stand so this is the first place to start.

When you know what you want to achieve you will be able to produce a design brief. Start off by thinking about the items you need to include to cater for your needs i.e. demonstration areas, audiovisual equipment, storage areas, tables and chairs and refreshments.

Bear in mind that if the only reason you have included tables and chairs is for your own stand staff to rest then don't - an average of five and half meters will be wasted and rest periods can be taken away from the stand.

Communicate the right message

Remember the three second rule: a visitor should be able to see who you are, what your company does and what your company can do for them in the three seconds it takes to walk past your stand.

Make sure your name and key strap lines or messages are above head height and not below 3 feet - anything below 3 feet will not be read. Use as little text as possible - don't be tempted to recreate your brochure on your stand.

Create powerful graphics

98% of our senses are geared to visual imagery, it is the most important sense we have. You need to use eye-catching powerful graphics and keep the message simple. Use bright, striking or vibrant colours. Coordinate your whole colour scheme to convey the right message.

Use light

Good use of light is vital and it can make or break your stand. Start off by using normal halogen lights to light up every area of your stand. Then look at the feature areas: you can back light graphics, light up showcases and even light up your floor.

Make it memorable

Make your stand memorable - make it stand out from the crowd. Your aim is to ensure your stand stays in the mind of the visitor long after the show. Consider creating a theme for your stand to provide a different look and feel (and to get you noticed). This could tie in with your pre-show mailers, stand dress code and giveaways as well.

Step Two - Show Services

Show Services are all the aspects of putting together a stand - aside from the stand itself...So this includes:

- Flooring
- Water, waste and hospitality
- Stand Furniture
- Floral and plant hire
- Voice and data communication

Plus

- Storage of a stand between shows
- Transport to and from the show
- Set-up and breakdown
- Insurance to cover the stand whilst in storage and in-transit.

Allocate Responsibility

Is it you or someone in the company who looks after show services? If you have booked a shell scheme space and you only require a power socket and you can set up your stand this element is going to be straight forward. However, if your plans are more ambitious then you will have to spend more time in this area and consider if you need outside help.

The recommendation is to get one company to look after all your Show Services - the comparison to use is, it is a bit like moving house: you may choose to save removal costs by doing the whole thing yourself, however if you want to save yourself immense anguish, sweat and tears you get a removal company to do the move for you.

Use the Show Manual as a Bible

Use the Show Manual as your bible and make sure you are aware of the all the deadlines for ordering services

Book well in advance

Book early to take advantage of early bird discounts. Most Show Manuals can be found on the show website and you are usually given a password to gain access.

Know the venue

Prior knowledge of the show venue will help you plan effectively. Either look at the venue website for information or you may even consider doing a 'site trip' prior to the exhibition by visiting another event that is taking place there. Watch out for height restrictions, parking regulations for your set up and breakdown and onsite costs.

Do Pre Show Set-up

For complete peace of mind do a pre-show set up to preview your stand. This will enable you to make last minute adjustments and you will probably cut down on your installation time.

Step three - Objectives and Marketing

Establish clear objectives

Your show objectives will tie in with your companies overall marketing objectives. Objectives must be measurable and achievable and are likely to be one or all of the following:

- To secure orders
- To gain leads
- To make new contacts
- To launch a new product or service
- To raise your companies profile

You will remember from the Nomadic Display research that gaining leads and raising your companies profile and PR came out top.

Make sure everyone in your company or in the least the relevant staff knows what you are trying to achieve by doing the show. Early buy in will help maximise the input from others.

Set your budget

Setting your budget early will help you monitor expenditure. As a basic guide your budget is likely to be split as follows:

	Likely % of budget	Example of £20k budget
Stand space	20 to 30%	£5000
Display stand	40 to 60%	£10,000
Show services	5 to 15%	£2000
Marketing and promotions	5 to 10%	£2000
Other	5 to 10%	£1000

Advertise your attendance

There is no better place to meet clients and prospects than at a show. If your stand looks good it helps to reinforce your credibility with them. Don't avoid inviting key clients because your competitors are at the show - if the show is relevant to them and you haven't told them you are there what will that say to them?

Work with the Organiser

Take advantage of any deals being offered by the organiser, such as; free seminar places, tickets that give people VIP status and show tickets with your logo on supplied FOC. All Organisers are keen to increase their visitors numbers and will work with you, especially if you have a good database that you're willing to market the show to.

In addition to sending out mail and email shots consider:

- Putting information on your website
- Placing details on your music on hold
- Putting the show logo and your stand number on company correspondence such as letterheads and invoices

Be on their 'Must See List'

It is worth while highlighting the fact that any marketing before the show is aimed at enticing your clients and prospects to the show and puts you on their 'must see' list. This can be done in several ways: by sending a simple invitation or more sophisticated mailer. Or even by word of mouth via your sales team or customer service staff.

Try it and measure your success. If you include an incentive for people to come to your stand - where the visitor gets something in return for turning up, this will increase your success rate.

Step 4 - PR and Marketing at the Show

Maximise your PR

You want be one step ahead of your competitors so:

- If possible, cultivate a relationship beforehand with the PR Company that is associated with the organiser which could improve your chances of being their first choice for media coverage.
- It's vital that your press pack gets picked so imagine being the journalist who is faced with a sea of corporate folders and aim to make yours stand out from the others. Could make the cover of your press pack brightly coloured, shiny, textured or you could even use fun fur, then yours is the one that is more likely to catch the eye and get picked up.
- Do keep the content simple, but it is crucial to create a great story, have fabulous photography and produce excellent well-written copy. The better these individual elements are the more likely you are to be published.
- You should keep your press releases succinct too and have a synopsis of the content in the first line so that the reader doesn't have to plough through lots of text

Get Noticed

- Exhibitions are a live experience and you are in fierce competition with others for attention. It's all about being noticed and making that lasting impression.
- Whilst an impressive stand is the starting point it is often a combination of creative ideas that draw in and captivate the visitors.

Devise a hook

Devise a Hook: which simply means give the visitors a compelling reason to come to and stop at your stand. Think of it as a WIIFM which stands for a 'What's in it for me', because you can guarantee that in life people are persuaded to think or act in a certain way only when they can see how they will benefit from doing so - in other words, when they have the answer to their question 'What's In It For Me'.

For instance a hook could be one or more of these:

- Giveaways
- Competitions
- Prize Draws
- Stand Attractions (Demonstrations/Shows)
- Refreshments on stand

Remember, the more unusual and imaginative the hook, the better it is.

- If you have giveaways they should generate excitement and interest.
- And whether they are low cost like a pen or a mouse mat, or a higher cost item like a camera or a desk accessory you do need to:
 - Source that item carefully,
 - Choose the right supplier and
 - Focus on quality as well as price.
- Wherever possible use your logo because you want to be remembered long after the show.
- Make sure that you add your contact details too; your web address, email and telephone numbers need to be seen at a glance so that the visitor will have them at hand and you have made it easy for them to make future contact with you.

Competitions and prize draws where you need names and addresses are also good tools for capturing data and they can often be tied into pre-show mailers. Be aware that you will attract more people if the prize is fantastic or there are multiple opportunities to win but you may find that the quality drops when the number of leads increases.

When you're choosing **attractions** to encourage visitors to come to and stop at your stand consider promoting to the five senses: taste, touch, sight, sound and smell because they have a way of drawing people in.

Your magnetic pull could be anything, perhaps the magic of acrobats, the excitement of dancers or musicians, a fascinating light show, fresh pasties baking, or a chocolate fountain where visitors can dip their marshmallows

- However, a word of caution because loud noise or music can alienate others around you and probably drive your own staff mad as well!
- And of course mess can be the price you pay for food on your stand.

Use Branding Wisely

Branding is another way to help drive visitors to your stand but we urge you to use it wisely. When it comes to sponsorship opportunities be very careful to ensure that you get a real return on your investment. Choose the sponsorship that represents value for money at the particular show and will work for your company. For instance you can consider having your Company branding:

- In seminar or theatre areas
- Perhaps on the 'you are here' directional boards or in the show registration area
- Or alternatively you may want to talk to the Show Organiser about any ideas you have for a more bespoke solution

Choose Stand Literature Carefully

After visiting a show, how many of you have gone back to your office carrying a show bag, packed with expensive glossy brochures, put the bag in a corner and not looked at the brochures again until eventually you have thrown them away!

- Choose your stand literature carefully and don't actually give expensive brochures away at the show. Because your brochure will make a greater impact if it is sent out as part of your immediate follow-up and lands on the prospect's desk the day after the show.
- However, you could miss opportunities if you have absolutely nothing to give out so it is worthwhile considering printing special flyers or 'short form' brochures specifically for the show.

Step 5 - Travel and Accommodation

Getting your staff to the show can be a logistical nightmare if you don't plan well in advance. Remember that you may have to book accommodation up to a year ahead for the more popular shows.

Check the show website

Check the show website where you will find offers, discounts, recommendations and web links for travel and accommodation

Book in advance

Book in advance, preferably at the same time as you book your space. That way you not only avoid disappointment but you can take advantage of any 'early bird' discounts that are on offer

Create a Travel and Stay information pack

Create a 'Travel and stay' information pack and distribute it to you staff. By providing them with journey times, location maps, timetables, parking information, a clear subsistence policy and a simple expense claim system you eliminate guesswork and remove any worries they may have about getting to the show so they can just concentrate on manning the stand effectively.

Plan to network

Plan to take advantage of time outside the show to network as much as possible. For instance, when you stay at the dedicated hotel for the show where other exhibitors and visitors are staying, you create additional networking opportunities.

Include costs in budget

And lastly make sure you include every single item of Travel and Accommodation expenditure in your budget. Costs soon mount up and it is so easy to forget the less obvious things like parking, transport costs to and from stations and airports or travel insurance.

Step 6 - Staff Training

Research shows that 80% of your success at shows is down to your stand staff. However, stand staff actively approach on average only 1 in 28 visitors and only 40% of visitors actually have their details taken.

You can expect an average number of leads to be 1% - 10% of the number of visitors at any show but it is more usually at the lower end of that range. You have to train your staff if you want to achieve maximum success

Prepare a Stand Manning Schedule

The first thing to do is to think about who is going to man your stand because it is crucial to select the right people. The three main things they have to be able to:

- Speak intelligently about your products and services
- Use the appropriate techniques to get the most out of every visitor contact
- Have the right personal qualities

You need them to be:

- Enthusiastic
- Positive
- Professional
- Eager
- Energetic
- Determined
- Resilient

In addition they should actually want to be at the show because motivated people are more likely to succeed.

- Prepare a stand-manning schedule in advance ensuring that you have enough staff to cover the stand and that they have plenty of breaks because regular breaks really do help to keep people fresh and enthusiastic.
- To help you here a rule of thumb is to allow one person per 5 square metres; possibly double this at busy times and half at quiet times.
- Stagger the shifts around busy times and ensure that there are managers available to back up core staff if activity on the stand suddenly increases.

Put someone in charge

Appoint a Stand Manager who should be in attendance for the duration of the show because it is really important for one key person to be put 'in charge' of the stand and to be accountable.

Pay Attention to Personal presentation

You will want to make sure that your stand team look right and present themselves appropriately

In terms of dress code ensure they are dressed to project the right image for your company. This could be conservative business dress which usually projects a professional, confident image. You may decide to reinforce your corporate image with a company tie or scarf or you could even supply branded t-shirts. .

Basic rules

On the stand there are some basic rules you should never break:

- Don't create clutter
- Don't huddle
- Don't use your laptop
- Don't read newspapers or magazines
- Don't eat or drink or smoke
- Don't use your mobile phone
- Don't leave your stand unattended

Train staff to be proactive

The average number of visitors approached at shows is **1 in 28**, but the approach statistics can be as low as **1 in 150**.

You may be interested to know that at a recent show where there were **79** exhibitors:

- On **37** stands the staff were sitting
- **9** were unmanned
- Which means that a staggering **58%** of exhibitors were not ready for action.

There are four stages to a successful encounter:

- 1. Approach**
- 2. Engage**
- 3. Secure**
- 4. Follow up**

Visitors fall broadly into three categories:

1. The Really Interested

They are the ones who approach and stop at your stand. They have come to find you in response to a direct invitation or they are interested in your product or service

2. The Curious

They pause and look as they walk past because the stand itself or something else has caught their eye.

3. The Don't Want to Knows

They walk past without breaking their pace or looking at you. They sometimes look away or quicken their step

Approach

To be effective you have to be able to approach all three categories of visitor and that means making a physical approach not staying rooted to your spot on the stand.

- At a show, there is no time for introductory small talk because you have to get to as many visitors as you can.
- A simple good morning, good afternoon or hello invariably gets a courteous response
- Then you want to swiftly ask an **open** question, because an open question is much more likely to get an answer rather than just a yes or no. The question is your conversation starter. Something like:
'How often do you use training venues?'
'What do you think of our new product range?'

- If at any time you identify that you are not talking to the right person, don't miss an opportunity ask them for the contact details of the person in their company you will need to talk to. Most people like to help and many will willingly give you the information.
- Of course the Don't Want to Knows are not as easy to approach as the Really Interested and The Curious, but if they are not approached unfortunately they represent a huge lost opportunity.
- Stand staff must not be afraid to approach them and must not make assumptions. Just because people hurry past and look as if they are giving you the cold shoulder does not mean that they are not potential customers because after all, they are at the show aren't they.
- In this instance, to help you to secure that first few seconds you can frame your conversation starters around those attention hooks and incorporate a WIIFM.

'How would you like to own the ultimate in stress busters?'

'How do you feel about a weekend in Paris with all expenses paid?'

'When did you last see a high wire artist perform?'

Compile your own list of approaches and conversation starters. Over time you can refine it by adding those that you have successfully used and also any that have worked on you, especially the more unusual ones. If you can inject a little light heartedness or appropriate humour that can also help. **Remember, nothing works all of the time but everything works some of the time.**

Engage

Stage 2 is to **engage** the contact in conversation once the hook has worked. You need to determine their needs by effective questioning and probing for information. Of course, the level of detail you go into will depend upon your objectives and what you need for follow up.

In some cases, you may want to demonstrate a product, or enlist expert or technical support to explain intricacies. At this stage, you know, there is nothing more infectious than someone who really believes in their product or service and talks passionately about it.

Secure

Having approached the visitor established rapport, engaged them in conversation, identified their needs and collected some information it is essential firstly to **secure** which involves:

- **Capture** all the necessary details And also to **secure** agreement to a follow up action, which should be confirmed and understood by **both** parties with commitment to a time frame for the relevant next step whether it is:
 - Visit (you to them)
 - Visit (them to you)
 - Telephone contact
 - Email contact
 - Send literature/quote/sample/testimonials etc.

You could damage your credibility here if you don't do what you have agreed so be sure to under promise and over deliver. Then as a final courtesy always thank every visitor for taking the time to talk to you. Of course, to the visitor the three stages are invisible and the whole encounter appears seamless

The majority of the fourth stage, **follow up** is done after the show.

Set targets and incentives

You need your stand staff to be clear about their targets, which will depend upon your show objectives.

- If it is to take orders then the targets may be geared around the number of orders per person per day.
- If it is to generate leads you may set the targets like this:

Number of leads per person per hour x number of hours in the day x
number of staff on the stand x number of days at the show;

$$4 \text{ leads} \times 7 \text{ hours} \times 3 \text{ people} = 84 \text{ leads per day}$$

$$3\text{-day show is } 3 \times 84 = 252 \text{ total leads}$$

- Encourage your staff to exceed these targets by offering them incentives in different categories. For instance you could reward for
 - The Highest number of leads per shift
 - The highest number of leads per team
 - The overall show best for an individual or a team and so on.

Step 7 - Exhibitor Tool Kit

If you want to avoid the panic caused by arriving at the show and discovering you have forgotten something vital you should create an Exhibitor Toolkit. Have a checklist of items you must take under these headings.

Create an Exhibitor Handbook

This should contain

- Key contact numbers
- Key suppliers' names and addresses and telephone numbers
- Your show plan
- The Stand manning schedule
- Office contact numbers
- Stand team contact numbers

Assemble an Office Supplies Kit

Including absolutely everything that you might need at the show. It is sometimes impossible to find or borrow the simplest item if you have forgotten it like:

- Staplers
- Scissors
- Selotape

Gather Show items

Don't forget your give-aways, badges, flyers, short form brochures and press packs

Pack General items

Like travel details, tickets, credit cards and hotel confirmation details. Put together a Personal Aid kit too including shoe polisher, comb, sewing kit and breath fresheners!

Don't Forget Sales related items

Finally, make sure you have all the sales related items; the lead forms and order forms and, in case you get the opportunity to confirm follow up calls or visits, don't forget to have the sales peoples' diaries available.

Step Eight - Lead handling and Follow up

Place maximum effort into follow-up this area

Do you put as much effort into your follow up work after a show as you put into organising it?

Nomadic Display has conducted some research on lead follow up and how proactive exhibitors really are after the show.

Mystery shoppers visited over 10 shows and spoke to at least 20 exhibitors at each show. 63% of the exhibitors who took their details did not follow up the lead after the show.

General research available tells us that as much as 70% of leads are never followed up, yet 90% of the business gained from exhibitions comes from the follow up work. You have got to ask yourself why they would even bother to exhibit in the first place?

Devise a system to capture and follow up leads

Create a good system to capture information from visitors at the show. Ideally, devise a lead form that details the information you need to know. And keep it short and simple because visitors don't want to go through a lengthy questionnaire.

Make sure your staff are aware of the importance of filling in the form accurately and in full.

Establish your whole lead handling system prior to the show and nominate one person to be responsible for this area. Decide on your follow up plan and have everything in place ready to go immediately after the show.

Start the follow up process immediately

It soon becomes clear to the buyers in the days and weeks after the show who really wants their business.

- Hot leads go cold very quickly and exhibition leads are some of the hottest you can get - you have met the prospect and advanced the relationship a long way.
- You can even start the follow up process during the show. You don't have to wait until it's all over - some of your competitors won't! Ideally, the visitor should receive some contact from you within 2 days of the end of the show and at the outside a week.
- If you prioritise leads they it will easier to focus on the important ones first i.e.
 - A - Appointment or ready to buy
 - B - May have longer term requirements
 - C - Gathering information

Offer an incentive to buy

Follow up using different methods to see what gives you the best results: email, letter, sales call, and brochure.

Offer an incentive to buy - a special offer exclusive to show visitors. Set a closing date and this gives you another chance to follow up to remind them.

Ensure long-term follow up

First class follow up is vital to maximise results. You have to continue the follow up in the long term to ensure success. Many visitors to the show won't have an immediate requirement, so you need to keep in touch with them for probably up to a year after the show! Research shows it takes an average of 7 'hits' to get an order.

Nomadic Displays follow up research showed that of the 37% of exhibitors who did actually follow up the lead only 25% of them followed up more than twice.

If you do twice as much follow up you will get twice the result and three times the follow up then three times the result and so on.

Step Nine - Make it pay!

The way you measure the success of an exhibition in simple terms, is how much business in pound notes actually came from the event. So the last of the nine steps is what it is all about. Exhibitions offer the best sales and marketing opportunity you could possibly imagine, but only if you make them pay. Where else could you meet and talk to 50, 100, 200 or more new contacts in such a short period of time?

Track your budget

Keep track of your budget and after the show is over calculate a figure that includes absolutely everything you spent.

Count leads

Count the leads that were gained at the show and you can establish your cost per lead by dividing the total cost by the total number of leads i.e. £20K /350 Leads = £57.14 per lead.

Count orders

Keep track of the revenue gained as a result of the show and you can calculate your return on investment or 'ROI'.

Calculate ROI

Divide your total revenue by the total budget i.e. divide £100k revenue by £20k cost = 5. Or simply put the company has achieved five times return on investment.

Create a base for measurement

Knowing how well you have done gives you a benchmark to work from and improve upon.