

HOW TO BE A SUCCESSFUL CONSUMER SHOW EXHIBITOR.



Welcome

Congratulations on choosing a consumer show to promote your business.

(By the way, if you're not familiar with the term, a consumer show refers to a show that's aimed at individual consumers rather than other businesses, corporate or government audiences – if they are your market, please see our Guide to Trade Shows.)

Regular exhibitors know that the number and value of leads make consumer shows one of the most effective ways to achieve sales targets.

Like most things in business, better planning leads to better results. So spending some time up front – including reading this! – will help you take full advantage of the many opportunities that will arise. So, where do you start? The timetable over leaf is a good place to begin.

Read on and you'll discover how to:

- **Set** clear, measurable objectives;
- **Plan** an effective stand that will sell;
- **Maximise** return on investment in the show with tips, techniques and proven methods;
- **Generate** visitor traffic to your stand; and
- **Brief** and get the best from your people on the day.

What's a consumer show?

A consumer show refers to a show that's aimed at individual consumers rather than other businesses, corporate or government audiences – if they are your market, please see our Guide to Trade Shows.

Diversified consumer shows:



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Your timetable



Click here and we'll take you to that section

Timings	Action	Reference
Immediately	Appoint a show manager	Page 4
	Set a budget	Page 4
	Set measurable objectives	Page 4
	Design your stand to sell	Page 7
	Read the exhibitor manual to check operational requirements	Page 9
3 months out	Plan how to promote your stand	Page 9
	Start promoting your presence at the show	Page 9
A week before	Brief your people for the show	Page 15
During the show	Hold daily briefings, review objectives and progress, get feedback – change processes where necessary	Page 15
1 week after	Finish following up your leads	Page 16



Before the show

Starting now!

Appoint a show manager

Depending on the size of your company and scale of your exhibit, this could be you, or another staff member. Your show manager must:

- Understand your show objectives;
- Be thorough; and
- Work well with people.

Set a budget

How much you decide to spend depends on what you aim to achieve and its value to your business. When you're assessing what the show might be worth, don't forget to allow for future sales and brand awareness, if applicable.

Many exhibitors find the value of their show participation is reflected in sales for months or longer afterwards.

See the **Budget Checklist** for more.

Set measurable objectives and create your USP (Unique Selling Proposition)

Knowing what you want to achieve, and how you're going to measure it, will help you to focus your message and design your stand to communicate it to your audience.

This is not a solo sport!

When you're setting objectives and planning your stand, involve your sales team, marketing people and everyone else involved – it will help them feel part of the event and motivate them.

What are your objectives?

What do you want out of the show? Your objectives should be precise and specific to your business – and of course you can have more than one. Use this list of possible objectives as a thought starter – the **WHAT** column is to quantify or explain what you want to achieve.

Before the show (continued)

Example:

Market Research Objectives	YES	NO	MAYBE	WHAT
Generate sales leads	✓			Generate 80 sales leads
Test your marketing/sales				

Objective checklist:

Sales Objectives	YES	NO	MAYBE	WHAT
Generate sales leads				
Make direct sales				
Build a contact database				
Launch new products or services				
Use offers to drive customers to retail outlets				
Customer Relationship Objectives	YES	NO	MAYBE	WHAT
Build relationships with current customers				
Up-sell customers				
Cross-sell customers				
Educate customers				
Reactivate lapsed customers				
Create customer 'ambassadors'				
Market Research Objectives	YES	NO	MAYBE	WHAT
Test a new product				
Test your marketing/sales materials				
Assess consumer awareness				
Discover consumer perceptions				
Trial new products and/or variants				
Brand Building Objectives	YES	NO	MAYBE	WHAT
Communicate by demonstrating				
Create market awareness				
Strengthen or change existing perceptions				
Position or re-position your brand				
Open new markets				
Channel Objectives	YES	NO	MAYBE	WHAT
Identify and recruit new distribution partners				
Generate media coverage				
Media/PR Objectives	YES	NO	MAYBE	WHAT
Get 'discovered' by the media				
Generate media coverage				



Using the objectives checklist

You can circulate a copy of this list to each of your participating people and ask them to fill in the boxes, then consolidate the results.

Once you've decided what you're going to focus on, and the results you want to achieve, put it in a sentence.

You should end up with something like this:

Generate 50 sales at the show and 80 sales leads: 40 from new customers and 40 from lapsed customers.

Or taste test the new food product line to 200 potential customers and get 150 competition entries and at least 100 email addresses.

Create the unique selling proposition (USP) that will get visitors to stop at your stand.

You may want to achieve 50 sales and 80 sales leads at the show but how are you going to attract people to stop at your stand?

Think about your product or service. You may already have a USP that you use in other communications, but a show gives you new possibilities that something like a print ad can't deliver.

Remember a visitor is interested in "what's in it for me" so focus on benefits.

Look for the 'news' angle. If you have a new product, new flavour – or even a special price or deal for the show – say so.

Everyone's interested in saving money, getting more value and improving their product experience – it's your job to tell them how.

When setting your objectives remember:

- Be realistic
- Related objectives tend to work better
- Don't pick too many or you'll lose focus
- Prioritise them in order of importance.

Don't only focus on immediate onsite sales.

Aim to drive sales after the show as well. A good way to do this is to generate a customer database and send periodic redeemable special offers. Don't forget to track the results!



Design your stand to sell

Your stand design and activities should reflect the measurable objectives you want to achieve.

Be bold. Be visual. Be single minded in your message. In nearly every case, simple messages work better.

Space is important

If possible, measure out your stand in your office or somewhere handy and mark the area with tape or objects. If you don't have space, use a scale drawing. Put your stand contents in place and make sure there's enough room for visitors.

Don't clutter your stand – unless you are a two dollar shop, simplicity is attractive.

Think about making a comfortable space to chat to visitors – and put yourself in their position. Would you feel comfortable chatting there?

Think about traffic flow – where people will enter and exit your stand – and make it easy for multiple visitors. Try not to block access or create bottlenecks.

The 3 second rule

Does your stand clearly communicate your main message in 3 seconds? This is how long you have before your visitor's attention wanders to another stand.

What's the brand or message here?



What's the brand or message here?



Design your stand to sell (continued)

How to be a successful consumer show exhibitor

GOOD!



Learn from experience

To help plan improvements for future shows, try the following:

- Take pictures of your stand at the show;
- Check out other stands for good ideas; and
- Get feedback from the people manning your stand.

Don't just stand there – do something.

Consumers at a show want to do more than buy something they want an experience. Bring your stand to life using the six senses (see the **“How to create an outstanding stand”** booklet for more about this).

Think about incorporating some activity on your stand; including:

- Movement – displays, models etc;
- Entertainment – people, videos, toys;
- Tastings – either casual or structured; and
- Demonstrations.

These all gain attention from visitors and provide an opportunity to engage them.

Your silent salesperson

The graphics and signage on your stand act as silent salespeople – put yourself in your visitor's shoes – look at your stand and ask yourself, 'am I getting the right message?'

Make the most of your graphics and signage

To maximise the impact of your materials, make sure you:

- Have your signage professionally produced;
- Can read the message from five metres away – if you can then lots of visitors can;
- Keep the message short, clear and easy to understand – don't use jargon or words your visitors won't know;
- Try headings that work well in other marketing material;
- Consider using a statement that will provoke useful questions from visitors;
- Have nothing important on the walls below one metre. Furniture and visitors will block it; and
- Check that all messages relate to achieving your measurable objectives.

For more details on the subject, read our **“How to create an outstanding stand”** booklet.

Setting up on the day

Every show has different requirements and timelines. The Exhibition Manual contains all the required information and any forms you need to fill out. It's best to read this about 3 months before the show so you can plan effectively.

**SPECIAL
OFFER!**

Invite everyone to the party!

Promoting your presence at the show

The organisers of the show will bring consumers into the event but not particularly to your stand. Don't miss out on maximising the value of the show; make sure you promote your presence to your customers.

Tell people what you'll be doing at the show and why they should take the time to visit you. Stress the benefits – think back to the unique selling proposition you created earlier and use that. Add some intrigue. Create a special offer for show visitors on some sort of incentive. Have some fun and don't skip this part.

The aim is to create a buzz that will translate into word of mouth promotion for your stand. This is where the Diversified team can help so be sure to contact them and find out about specific opportunities and activities you can get involved with.

Timing

You don't want to start too late or too early. Aim to start your campaign 3 months out but plan for maximum activity 2–3 weeks before the event.

Budget

Plan for 15% of your budget to go into promoting your presence at the show. Research shows that most exhibitors under-invest in this area, on average spending only 6%.

Seize every opportunity!

Call your Diversified contact and ask about all available opportunities – most shows have marketing material you can take advantage of.

Proven, cost-effective promotional activities

Direct mail and/or electronic direct mail (EDM)

Send personalised mail to existing customers and prospects. Tell them what they will see at your stand, where you are located and who to contact for further information.

Use this opportunity to reward loyal or previous customers. Invite them to your stand to redeem a special offer or invite a small group to a private function on your stand.

Your website

Make sure your site has detailed information about the show and what will be on your stand. Things to include on your site:

- Your stand number;
- A plan showing where to find you;
- How to get tickets to the show;
- A link to the show website; and
- Special offers.

Piggyback messages!

Add a show message to other communications.

For instance – put a footer on your emails, add a note on invoices, put a sign in your showroom or offices.

Invite everyone to the party! (continued)

How to be a successful consumer show exhibitor



Publicity and PR

Find out from your show contact if any publications are producing pre-show features. Consider placing an advertisement in the feature and try and get editorial by talking directly to the publication, or leveraging a PR agency (Check the PR section for more ideas).

Other ideas

- Diversified will often have promotional material that you can use such as hard copy and electronic brochures and posters. Talk to your show contact about what's available
- Ask any retail sales outlets that stock your products to invite their customers to your stand, and display brochures in their retail outlet
- If you have sales reps, get them to hand out brochures to retail outlets that stock your products
- Include details of the show and your stand in any newsletters you produce
- Change your company voicemail welcome to say "Visit us at (show name) on stand (number)"
- Consider advertising in the official show guide and appropriate consumer press

If you only do one thing

Mail your current customer database an invitation to visit your stand 2-3 weeks before the show.

Increase your brand awareness through competitions, giveaways and product sampling

Competitions & Giveaways

Consumer shows are often looking for giveaways and prizes that they can use in competitions through local media. Talk to your Diversified contact if you have any products you could offer.

Competitions can be a great way to build a database and reward customers. Run a prize draw on your stand to win a holiday, wine or some of your products. Be careful though if you are after a quality prospect list and do not encourage stand staff to open with "would you like to go into a competition". Get them to qualify first and ensure you get the details from the visitor that you want.

Make sure you pick a prize that fits with the demographic of customers you are trying to attract.

Drive customers to retail outlets that stock your product by offering vouchers that can be redeemed within 1 month of the show – this is a good way to measure return on investment as well.

Government regulations for competitions differ from state to state, so check the latest regulations before going ahead.

Promotion works

83% of the most successful companies (in terms of business and leads generated) at a range of exhibitions were the ones that took the trouble to mail their prospects and customers before the show.

Invite everyone to the party! (continued)

Product sampling & promotional opportunities at the show

There are often ways you can promote your presence in and around the show itself. Check out the show website or ask your Diversified contact about any opportunities available to you:

- At consumer events you can often raise awareness of your brand through product placement or sampling opportunities in a show feature or show bag – there's usually is an additional charge for this; and
- Sponsoring a show feature can add credibility to your brand and display it in high traffic areas.

Integrate for increased results

Don't treat having a stand at the show as an isolated activity.

Exhibitions are versatile and can be integrated to help other parts of your marketing aims and objectives.

Think before you print!

64% of literature picked up at shows are thrown away.

- Avoid handing out expensive literature – save it for follow-up communications;
- Consider an inexpensive piece to give away at the show;
- Offer to post or email more information; and
- Literature doesn't sell – people do! Use literature to enhance and reinforce your face-to-face conversations.

PEOPLE SELL



LITERATURE DOESN'T

Let us help!

Talk to your Diversified contact if you have any products or prizes to give away – they may be able to link them into a show promotion.

How to get PR and media attention around a consumer exhibition

The show's PR company is engaged primarily to represent the show itself. Exhibitor PR is the responsibility of the individual exhibitor.

To attract attention and coverage from the show's PR team, make sure you liaise with them and tell them of any PR angles and opportunities related to your brand.

They will be looking for stories and angles that will interest the target media. Often they will have a form you need to complete so make sure you ask for their contact details.

Don't forget to mention any VIP's or celebrities you will have on your stand.

For consumer shows, it's real-life human interest stories rather than technical product information that's likely to be picked up by the consumer press.

Start planning early – remember that some publications are bimonthly so make sure you send your information at least three months before the show.

Have a press release completed with supporting photos or images available for press use.



Tips for effective product sampling:

Offering samples of products is a big part of exhibiting at many shows. Here are a few simple tips for successful product sampling:

- Make sure your stand is large enough with enough space for sampling and sales as well;
- Use clear, visible signage to encourage sampling;
- Engage visitors with knowledgeable and friendly staff to chat about the product;
- Have a special offer to encourage immediate sales or off-site sales after the show; and
- Comply with applicable food safety rules. These vary from state to state, you'll find them in your Exhibitors Manual.

Build on our advertising

Ask your Diversified contact which publications will have pre-show features. Consider placing an advertisement in the feature and try and get editorial.



Putting the right people on the job

Choosing the right people can significantly increase the chances of achieving and exceeding your show objectives. Visitors judge a good stand on enthusiasm, friendliness, company and product knowledge, listening, consultative selling skills and professionalism. Having your staff excel in these areas will put you ahead of the competition.

Involve staff in the exhibition planning process – you will have buy in and motivated staff for the whole show.

What makes good exhibition staff?

Take the time to select the right exhibition team. Train them on what the company hopes to accomplish at the show. They need to be comfortable and efficient at quickly greeting, engaging and qualifying visitors, giving a short demonstration, cross selling, gathering lead information and thanking and dismissing visitors.

You want employees with good product knowledge, great sales techniques, and a friendly engaging personality.

Get motivated staff. It's important that your staff want to be there. Are they motivated or do they resent having to work at the show? Think about their reasons and whether you need to provide incentives e.g. reward the person who achieves the highest number of leads in a shift or the overall best result from an individual or team.

Smart, passionate and professional staff



This could be your stand!



Putting the right people on the job (continued)

How many staff and who does what?

Take the time to think about the roles you want each staff member to play, here are some things to consider:

- Do you need staff with specific product knowledge?
- How will you handle any potential issues? Have a plan and decide who will deal with it; and
- How many? Think back to your goals and plan accordingly. Say you want to generate 500 onsite sales. If for example it takes 6 minutes to deal with each enquiry, a sales person can handle a maximum of 70 leads in an 7 hour day, and 210 over 3 days. You'll need to plan in breaks, so in this example, you'll need a minimum of 3 sales people to generate over 500 leads.

For more details on the subject, read our booklet; **"How to effectively select, brief and train exhibition staff"**.

Staff dress

How should you dress at an exhibition? Take a cue from your customers – you should be dressed the same or slightly better. Suited and booted sales staff can frighten off a more casual visitor crowd.

Uniforms can make your staff easily identifiable and turn them into a network of moving advertisements for your company. Use bright colours and logos to stand out from the crowd.



Chat isn't cheap!

Chatting to visitors who are not likely to become customers can make your stand look busy – but it's wasting time and missing opportunities to sell to other visitors.



It's show time!

What to do on the day

Be ready to go

Get in early and have the stand setup and ready to go at opening time.

Have a daily briefing...

Get together every day to discuss any issues, report on progress of goals, reassess what still needs to be done. Keep the energy up and positive.

Record and classify all sales leads and visitor enquiries

Have a system to capture all sales leads, enquiries and other relevant information. Decide how the follow up is to be done before the show and have someone responsible for the process, which may include:

Consumer show visitors don't have visitor badges so electronic stand trackers are not available to track sales leads. Use lead forms and file them immediately. Remember to keep forms simple – tick boxes can make them faster and encourage completion.

Know what information you MUST have to follow-up a lead and anything else that would be useful to know.

Classify your sales leads and enquiries and make sure the hottest leads get attention first. Below is an example of lead classification, however you may find that sorting your leads by product interest, territory or area of interest may be more useful.

- a) Large order, ready to buy;
- b) Small order ready to buy OR large order, longer time frame;
- c) Small order, longer time frame;
- d) Send literature. Add to database; and
- e) Other (e.g. press)

Use the sample lead form available as part of this series of booklets.

Collaborative competition

Set your staff targets and reward achievements.

Encourage them to share ideas and techniques – even rewarding the best of them.



Reap the post-show rewards

Follow up, follow up & follow up!

Consumer shows are a great way to generate an immediate return at the show, but there's long-term value in following up leads from the event.

Every visitor detail you received should get a follow up. Follow up your most valuable leads first and aim to have them all followed up within 1 week of the show and the remainder no later than 3 weeks. Sooner if you can do it by email – people expect email to be faster.

Eight winning ways to follow up after a show

1. A personal thank you email from the staff member they met at the show;
2. A personalised letter or email containing information requested at the show;
3. An invitation, or confirmation, to subscribe to your e-newsletter;
4. A reprint of any press coverage or article;
5. A reminder of the expiry date of a show special or an extension of the offer date for customers who didn't buy at the show;
6. A special offer redeemable within a month after the show;
7. Update your web site thanking your show visitors; and
8. Add a contact form to your web site for people who didn't attend the show.

Measuring your results

Track the leads and measure your results by your goals. Don't just do this immediately after the event but track them 3, 6 even 9 months later. Only then can you fully assess the value of the exhibition.

De-brief the team the week you get back.

Go through a team performance checklist. Do an honest appraisal of what worked and what didn't.

Amazing but true!

Many leads are never followed up. Don't waste potential business and ensure you follow up ALL leads.

Other booklets in this series that may interest you:

- **How to create an outstanding stand**
- **How to be a successful trade show exhibitor**
- **What a marketing manager needs to know when planning for an exhibition**
- **How to effectively select, brief and train your exhibition stand staff**

*Help and inspiration are
only a phone call away*

We're here to help, inform and inspire you. The information in this booklet is just the beginning – talk to us and discover how you can make the most of your investment at the show.

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