

# HOW TO CREATE AN OUTSTANDING STAND.



# Welcome

*Read on and you'll discover how to:*

- **Design** your stand;
- **Deliver** the right message with signage;
- **Find** the best value options;
- **Appeal** to all the senses; and
- **Use** the experience of others.

## *Wow. Gosh. Boring. Erk!*

A visitor's first impression of your stand is important – and how they see your stand will be crucial to your success at the show. You don't have to spend big dollars to have a stand that works.

The secret is knowing what you want to communicate. Keeping it simple and single-minded along with careful planning will deliver winning results.

### **Have you set your goals?**

If you're reading this guide, we assume you've already set your goals for the show. We recommend that you don't try to design your stand before you determine your goals and set measurable objectives. If you haven't done that, we suggest you read the appropriate "**How to be a successful exhibitor**" guide in this series.

# How to create an outstanding stand (continued)



Setup for sampling and conversation



## Plan your stand to achieve your objectives

In many ways, your stand is like any other piece of communication you have with your existing and potential customers.

Your stand needs to engage, inform and motivate the visitors to the show who are your target audience.

**Put** yourself in your prospect's position.

**Think** about how they will see your stand.

**Remember** your show objectives:

- If you want to sell widgets, there should be widgets clearly visible, a widget demonstration would be even better; or
- If you want to qualify and generate leads for a large purchase decision, perhaps somewhere to sit and have an extended conversation with your prospects would be appropriate.

In any case, what's on your stand and how it's set up should be related to what you want to achieve and what you have to do to get there.

Demonstrating will attract crowds



Setup to sample and display



A seating area will encourage extended conversation



## The influence of your floor plan

How you lay out your stand and place items on your floor and walls not only affects the look of your stand, it also changes the way visitors perceive it and therefore react to it.

For example:

- **An open design** shows your stand is easily accessible, it's welcoming to potential clients and creates easy visitor flow. If this is your aim, try to make sure that at least 70% of your stand frontage is open;
- **A closed stand** shows that you are aiming to attract a more select visitor and this design will reduce your visitor numbers accordingly.

## 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 your people and 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?

## Furnishing your stand and traffic flow

Furnishings – including displays, banners, chairs and tables – will change the way people perceive and react to your stand.

Choose your furnishings carefully, remembering:

- Lots of comfy furniture encourages people to drop in and stay on your stand. Do you really want that? Current customers might take up too much of your time. Unless they are your main reason for attending try to set aside specific times for customers ideally in a hospitality area on or off the stand;
- Think of your stand as a story. Do you want to tell everything to the visitor walking past – or do you want to get them to come in and find out more. How you place displays and information will affect this; and
- Don't create unnecessary physical barriers that may impede access to your stand and products or information. Typical barriers include furniture, mobile banners and people!



# What does your stand say?

## Display why you're at the show

Imagine looking at your stand for 3 seconds, or better still, find someone who's not familiar with it and ask them to glance at it, 1 second, 2 seconds.. stop.

What did you – or they, see? What's the dominant feature, key message and take-away memory?

If all three of these don't overlap, it's time to rethink your stand graphics or design.

Your stand should clearly communicate your core message in 3 seconds. This is all the time you have before you will lose a visitor's attention to another stand.

Remember the old KISS principle – Keep It Simple Stupid.

Here are some guidelines to help you achieve this with your graphics:

### ***Stand out from the crowd***

**If this is your first show, try going to some others as a visitor for research.**

**Look for ways to make your stand individual and a stand-out to visitors.**

**Stunning graphics won't work alone.  
Sales people need to close a sale**



- Have nothing important on the walls below 1 metre. Furniture and visitors will block it;
- Only use professionally produced signage. Your stand reflects the values of your company. Amateur signage suggests that other areas of your company are equally as unprofessional;
- Make sure you have enough signage to properly decorate your stand. If you only have a poster or two stuck on the back wall what impression will that give?
- Make sure you can read the signage from 5 metres away – if you can't read it clearly then lots of visitors will miss it;
- Use a few larger images rather than many small ones which will just look cluttered and don't use anything smaller than A3;
- Maximise legibility by using light text over dark colours or dark text over light colours, never use dark on dark or light on light;
- Think integrated marketing. Use graphics that you have used elsewhere, or if new, ensure you use them in any pre-show marketing that you will be doing; and
- Stunning graphics will stop and engage visitors – but it can be wasted effort if you don't have a staff member there to finish the job!

# What does your stand say? (continued)

How to create an outstanding stand

What's the brand or message here?  
You have 3 seconds.



## Make words work for you

Signage is a combination of images and text – pictures and words. To be effective, both have to be right and complement each other.

When you're thinking about words, here are some points to keep in mind:

- Keep the message short, clear and easy to understand – 6–10 words, maximum;
- Try to avoid using buzzwords or jargon your visitors may not understand;
- Try headings that have worked well in any other marketing material you have done;
- Consider using a statement that will provoke relevant questions from visitors;
- If possible, use high impact words like "New", "Free", "Now", "Save" etc.;
- Use upper and lower case lettering – signs all in upper case are harder to read; and
- Don't forget your call to action!

And here...

BAD!



Can you see the message here?



## Testing your text

Try printing out alternative headlines for your signs and stick them on a wall.

Live with them for a while. See which ones people comment on. Develop new ones. This can result in stronger signage.

# What does your stand say? (continued)

How to create an outstanding stand

## Professionals can help stretch your budget

Professionals can help you get more for your money – whatever your budget – whether you go for a complete stand upgrade or simply fill part of your wall space with graphics.

**Here are some examples of what you can do to the walls of a normal shell scheme 3x3m stand. Prices start from \$750 – \$3500 + gst.**

Infill Panels back wall



Seamless Fabric walls



Seamless Fabric back wall



Seamless Fabric back wall



Custom Digitally Printed Carpet

Infill Panels

**Alternatively, you can produce some signage to go in your stand**

FABRIC WALL



RETRACTABLE ECONO-ROLL (2.4m)



# What does your stand say? (continued)

How to create an outstanding stand

## *Don't be afraid to ask*

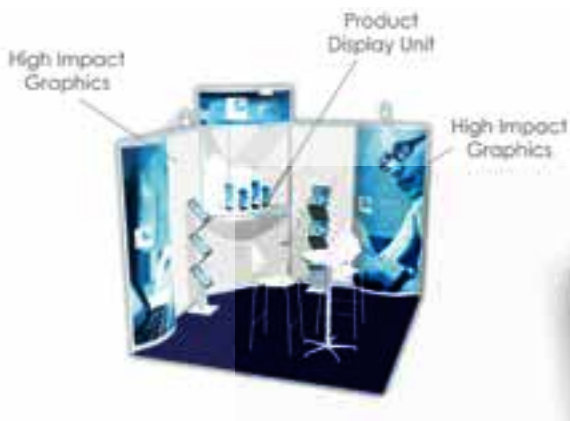
Attend other shows as a visitor.

Look for good ideas, materials,  
props and signage you like.

Ask the people on the stand where it  
came from – or who to ask to find out.



If you want a custom-build option then consider these options at \$3500 – \$5000 + gst.





# What does your stand do?

*Be more than just a place where your people meet*

Your stand can be more than just a place where your people meet show visitors. We've covered how it can communicate using signage and enhance visitor engagement by being properly laid out. But your stand can do more than this – it can attract visitors, highlight your product or service benefits and build your brand by providing a strong, relevant and memorable experience.

Here are some thought starters – proven approaches to creating stands that work harder.

## Engage the senses

Exhibitions are an extremely versatile form of marketing, enabling you to use all 5 senses to drive home your message.

## Think about what your visitors could say or remember:

- I saw it on their stand;
- I touched it on their stand;
- I tasted it on their stand;
- I smelt it on their stand; and
- I heard it on their stand.

## Do the coffee test

Next time you visit a show, check how many stands have coffee machines. It's not just to offer visitors a coffee, it's proof of the power of attraction of smell and taste.

**Bold and strong colours can greatly increase the chance of your stand being noticed. On a brand recall survey from The Good Food & Wine Show this stand rated highly.**



## Think about communicating using all 5 senses, here are some points to consider:

- Light your stand well – properly lit stands attract attention – our eyes are attracted to bright lights;
- Use colour to attract attention, bright colours can be attractive – or distracting. Make sure you use pleasant combinations!;
- Use quality carpet and padding. The soft touch underfoot says quality to your visitors – and the feet of your people will thank you for it!;
- Contrast to the aisle flooring with different types and colours of floor; and
- Don't hide your products away – let people touch and feel them.

**BAD!**



# What does your stand do? (continued)

How to create an outstanding stand

## Don't just stand there... do something!

As we've said, your stand can be passive or it can be active. And a vibrant, attractive stand works a lot harder for you.

Consider:

- Incorporating some activity on your stand to grab visitors' attention and create opportunities for engagement, e.g.:
  - Movement
  - Entertainment
  - Presentations
  - Demonstrations
- If your product doesn't move, put it in a display that does, offer a giveaway – do something to attract the eye; and
- Have your people wear a corporate uniform – even flashing name badges can work – it can turn them into a network of moving advertisements for your company



## Demonstrate, demonstrate, demonstrate

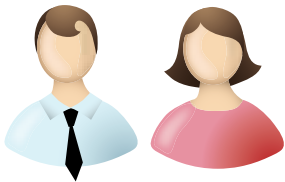
Product demonstrations not only attract passers by, but they provide opportunities for engagement and to highlight your product benefits.

Experience has shown that demonstrations usually work best if:

- Demo times are promoted in your pre-show marketing and clearly displayed on the stand;
- Basic presentations are limited to less than 10 minutes;
- You focus on the 2 – 3 main points that will appeal to the largest customer group and highlight solutions and benefits;
- The demo is structured with a beginning, middle and end;
- You generate a sense of enthusiasm – it will attract people, who will attract more people;
- The presenter connects with their audience – keeps eye contact with the crowd and greets newcomers with a smile or a nod; and
- There's a strong call to action at the end – it may be to fill out a form or talk to a sales person.



Mikey attracts the eye



# You thought I said what?!

## Briefing a stand designer:

If you are planning on attending more than one show, you should consider investing in your own custom made stand. Stand designers will bring a wealth of experience to the creation of a stand but your input is needed to create an effective stand.

Their response to you will only be as good – and relevant to your needs – as your brief to them. You can ask them for a list of what they want to know before you meet them, or be prepared to do the following:

- Give them a document that details your company history and values, what you do or make, where you are in the marketplace (No.1 or 2 etc.), how you are perceived in the market, your competition, your customers, your corporate marketing material and logos. This will paint a picture of your company;
- Clearly state your show objectives so they can design a stand that will help you meet them;
- Explain the activities you think may happen on the stand e.g. demonstrations, seminars, competitions, hospitality;
- Tell them how many people you will have on the stand – both your people and visitors;
- List any logistical requirements, e.g. portability, flexibility of stand, size and storage;
- List any mandatories such as logos, statements, images etc.;
- Give them a realistic and indicative budget;
- Tell them if the stand will be used for multiple exhibitions.

## Briefing your show people

Graphics and literature don't sell alone. Sales staff do. Your selection of staff on the stand will either make, or break, your success. Exhibitions are about relationships so ensure you have the right staff with the right attitude.

See "**How to effectively select, brief and train your exhibition stand staff**" guide in this series.

*Do they have the right attitude?*



# Other booklets in this series that may interest you:

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

*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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