

# WHAT A MARKETING MANAGER NEEDS TO KNOW.

WHEN PLANNING FOR AN EXHIBITION



# Welcome

***I knew that, but I didn't know this.***

*This document is designed for marketing managers who are familiar with the strategies of mainstream marketing, but are not aware of the unique opportunities available by participating in an exhibition.*

*If you would like to know more about stand design, exhibition logistics and briefing your people at the show, you'll find valuable information in the other booklets in this series.*

## Read on and you'll discover:

- **Unique** opportunities available at shows;
- **Objectives** you can set as show goals;
- **Successful** show marketing promotions;
- **What** questions to ask your Diversified representatives; and
- **Where** to look for more information.

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# Where exhibitions can fit in the marketing mix and measuring ROI

*A unique ability and flexibility to achieve your objectives*

Exhibitions are a medium unlike any other, in that they can deliver a broad range of messages and experiences to a tightly targeted audience. This means that by using exhibitions, either alone or in conjunction with other marketing activities, you can achieve a wide range of business goals.

Depending on your strategic requirements and the nature and state of your business, you may be looking to achieve one or more of the following 28 common show objectives (or you might prefer to define your own):

## **Sales objectives**

- Generate sales leads
- Make direct sales
- Build a contact database.

## **Customer relationship objectives**

- Build relationships with current customers
- Upsell and cross-sell customers
- Educate customers
- Collect customer testimonials
- Re-sell lapsed customers.

## **Market research objectives**

- Market test a new product
- Research your marketing campaign
- Test market awareness and perceptions.

## **Brand building objectives, educate by demonstrating**

- Create or raise market awareness
- Position or re-position your brand
- Develop new markets
- Boost financial analyst or investor perceptions.

## **Channel support**

- Identify and recruit new distributors or partners
- Support your current sales channel
- Build your reputation as a partner.

## **Media/PR objectives**

- Get on the 'media radar'/generate media coverage
- Build relationships with key editors and journalists.

# Where exhibitions can fit in the marketing mix and measuring ROI (continued)

What a Marketing Manager needs to know when planning for an exhibition.

Strategic Goal	Suggested Metrics	Notes & Suggestions
<b>Sales</b>		
1.1 Generating sales leads	No. of A, B, C leads, etc.	Use qualifying rating system; Use your sales conversion rate to measure value of leads
1.2 Direct sales	Orders taken/Revenue	At the show, and in following weeks and months. Don't forget lifetime value of new customers
1.3 Building contact database	No. of new contacts	Use quality rating
<b>Customer relationships</b>		
2.1 Building relationships with current customers	No. of customers met and recorded	You might pre-determine a desired action (e.g. a demonstration) for customers
2.2 Educating customers	No. of 'update' sessions held	
2.3 Upselling/cross-selling customers	No./value of sales to customers	See 1.2
2.4 Generate customer testimonials	No./quality of quotes won	
2.5 Regaining lapsed customers	No./value of lapsed customers met	Follow & record successes
<b>Market research</b>		
3.1 Test marketing a new product or service	No./quality of feedback sessions	Survey form? Questionnaire? Test a different offer each day?
3.2 Test marketing campaign	No./quality of feedback sessions	
3.3 Researching brand awareness/perception	No./quality of feedback sessions	
<b>Brand building</b>		
4.1 Building brand awareness	No. of gross impressions* at, during, after the show. No./quality of seminar/demonstration attendees	Calculate equivalent value of these attendees impressions if bought as advertising
4.2 Positioning/re-positioning brand	Gross impressions of specified message delivery. No./quality of seminar/demonstration attendees	Beyond 'logo viewings'
4.3 Demonstrating benefits	No./quality of seminar/demonstration attendees	
4.4 Boosting financial analyst investor perceptions	Editorial coverage in financial press	
4.5 Developing new markets	No./quality of contacts from new market	Including new sector or country
<b>Channel building</b>		
5.1 Finding new distributor partners	No./quality of partners met or signed up	Consider likely lifetime value
5.2 Supporting current sales channel	No. of dealers/partners met	
5.3 Building your reputation as a partner	No./quality of prospective partners met	
<b>Public relations</b>		
6.1 Generating editorial coverage	Column inches/broadcast minutes gained	Pre-, during the post-show
6.2 Building relationships with editors/journalists	No. of editors/journalists met	Calculate equivalent value of these impressions if bought as advertising
		Quality of interaction

\*Source: Exhibition & Event Association of Australasia. [www.eaaa.com.au](http://www.eaaa.com.au)  
Gross impressions is the total opportunities to see, i.e. total attendance of show + readership of press in which coverage was generated.

# Before the show

## Don't let your stand, stand alone

Like many marketing investments, the return from participating in a show can be multiplied by linking it to related marketing or advertising activity.

**For example, it has been said that a business should spend at least the same amount, or more, promoting a sponsorship in which they become involved.**

Aligning your activities with those of the show can enhance your brand in a range of ways, including:

- Adding credibility;
- Increasing brand awareness; and
- Distinguishing you from your competitors.

## Use existing material

Every show has promotional material for their exhibitors. Ask your Diversified contact what promotional opportunities are available. Most shows will have some or all of the following:

- Printed tickets and e-tickets;
- Discount tickets;
- Posters or display material;
- Web banners; and
- Linking web buttons.

### *Use your contacts*

**Speak to your Diversified contact about available promotional opportunities. Remember to ask them for a copy of your show's marketing campaign to see if you can complement any of the activity.**

## Add your own activities – here are some pre-show marketing activities we recommend that you do

### Add your own activities – direct mail

Send personalised mail or email to existing customers and prospects. Aim to deliver at least three invitations in the time leading up to the show. Companies that do so receive at least 50% more traffic than those that don't according to CEIR - Center for Exhibition Industry Research.

Don't forget to tell people:

- What they will see at your stand;
- Where it is; and
- Who to contact for more information.

### Add your own activities – your website

Put detailed information of the show and what will be on your stand. Make sure you include:

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

### Add your own activities – advertising

If you're planning to run any advertising (consumer or trade press for example) in the 3 – 4 months leading up to the show, include a call to "See us at the [insert show name]". You'd be surprised how many show visitors quote this as their reason for attending.

Ask your Diversified contact if any publications are producing pre-show features. Consider placing an advertisement in the feature and try to get editorial by talking directly to the publication, or using a PR agency (See the following section on PR).

### Add your own activities – other ideas

The aim is to build awareness of the show among your potential customers – and give them a reason to attend. Here are some thought starters:

- Ask sales reps on the road to hand out tickets or brochures;
- Put details of your stand at the show in newsletters;
- Change your company voicemail to say "Visit us at (show name) on Stand (stand number)";
- Add "see us at .." to your people's email signature.

### *Time is everything*

Send out invitations and reminders to arrive:

- 2 months prior
- 30 days out
- 1 week before the event

### *Be early!*

Plan ahead. Getting involved in seminars, showcases etc is not a last minute activity.

### *Create an event*

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



## Generating PR around a trade or consumer event

The show's PR company is there primarily to generate publicity for the show. Publicising a stand, or news of what an exhibitor is doing at the show is the responsibility of the individual exhibitor. However, there are ways to attract attention and coverage from the show's PR team.

The show's PR people will be looking for stories and angles that will interest the target media. Often they'll have a form for you to complete – ask if there is one:

To get maximum coverage at trade shows make sure you tell them:

- Why you are exhibiting at the show;
- Any new technology, unique products or product improvements you will be exhibiting;
- Whether you will have any VIP's or celebrities on your stand;
- Any customer stories (including pictures where possible) where your product has provided benefits; and
- Be ready to provide copies of any previous PR you have received.

For consumer shows make sure you push the real life human interest stories first. Technical product information is much less likely to be picked up by consumer press, but don't forget to mention any new products that you have.

## Briefing the people on your stand

Having people with the most appropriate personalities, knowledge and experience will significantly increase the chance of achieving your show objectives.

Each business situation is different, however the following are some generic points to consider:

- Have people on your stand that understand the goals you have set for the show and how you will measure them;
- Everyone should know their own and their team's responsibilities;
- Your people must want to be there. They should be excited and motivated – not unhappy or resenting having to work over the weekend. Look at it from their point of view, why are they there, would a performance incentive engage them?
- Motivating your people is essential. It's worth considering team activities, pre-show meetings, sales incentives e.g. the person who achieves the highest number of leads in a shift or the overall best individual or team; and
- Involve prospective stand people – and other relevant people – in the exhibition planning process and as much of the decision making as you can. You'll excite and motivate them.

### ***Look in trade press***

**During the year keep an eye on the trade press and see what articles are published. Stay alert for similar news opportunities in your business.**

PEOPLE SELL



LITERATURE DOESN'T

## Use sales literature effectively

Research shows that 64% of all print literature picked up at shows is thrown away! It's worth considering an inexpensive piece focusing on the message that you want to communicate at the show and reserving more expensive brochures to send in follow-ups or hand to qualified prospects.

## Promotional opportunities at the show

There are often a range of ways you can promote your presence in and around the show itself. At some shows there are also special events that representatives from your company can attend.

A good way to discover opportunities is to check the show's website. You should also ask your Diversified contact about the availability of opportunities including:

- Sponsoring a show feature. Sponsorship adds credibility to your brand and builds brand awareness in high traffic areas such as entrances, registration areas and lounges;
- Advertising in the show's catalogue; and
- Product placement or sampling opportunities in show features or the show bag. There's usually an additional charge for this service.

## Use what sells

Literature and displays don't sell – people do. Ensure your people use sales aids as a support, not a substitute for a conversation.

## Give it away!

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

## If you're participating at a trade show, consider:

- Sending your people to networking functions;
- Sponsoring a networking function or similar event;
- Presenting at seminars;
- Being represented at show or associated awards;
- Entering key buyers' programs; and
- Being in new product showcases – most shows will have a web page for this.

## Competitions & giveaways

These can be very cost-effective ways of raising the profile of your brand or product – and raising awareness of your participation at the show.

Show organisers and publicists are often looking for giveaways and prizes that they can place in competitions through local media. Talk to your Diversified contact if you can provide any products or services.

- On-stand competitions and prize draws can be a great way to generate a database and reward customers; and
- Offering vouchers that can be redeemed within 1 month of the show drives customers to retail outlets and helps you measure ROI.



## After the show

### Reap the rewards - follow up, follow up & follow up!

Shows are an effective way of generating a short-term return, but they can also be a great way of generating results in the long term.

If you've taken visitor details to be followed up then make sure you do. Follow up and follow up. The days and weeks after a show make it clear to visitors who wants their business most.

Every visitor whose details you collected should receive a follow up. Follow up your most valuable leads first and aim to have them all acted on within one week of the show. If your sales team, or other third party, is following up on the sales leads ensure that they follow through on this.

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:

- Using a lead tracker system that logs the visitors' details from their name tag bar code – normally only available at trade shows.
- Drawing up a lead form and keep details in a file – use the sample lead form available as part of this series of booklets. With a lead form keep it simple and consider using tick boxes to encourage completion; and
- Know what information you MUST have to follow-up a lead and anything else that would be useful to know.

#### **Tap into templates**

Use our lead form template to record details of new prospects.

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)

#### **De-brief the team the week you get back**

Go through team performance checklist. Conduct 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 consumer  
show exhibitor**

■ **How to be a successful trade  
show exhibitor**

■ **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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