



The Journey of a First-Time Exhibitor

**From selecting an event organised by
Exhibitions & Trade Fairs, to successful
participation and follow up.**



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6. Booking the Space & Finding a Contractor

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To finish...

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If you already have some experience then you may wish to skip certain sections or dip in and out to find ideas and inspiration to maximise your effectiveness at an event.

Choosing an event

Finding the right audience

Just like printed media, exhibitions are often audited, so if it's high volume and high quality visitors you are looking for check that the audit matches your list of prospects. Ask our sales staff to provide a breakdown of the type of people who attend the event. For existing events they should have a list of past visitors and demographics.

Getting the right location

If you're looking to expand into new areas then an exhibition can create an ideal launch pad for demonstrating or handing out samples — the location of the exhibition will have an impact on the people that attend and can offer additional opportunities for wining and dining.

Trusting the organisers

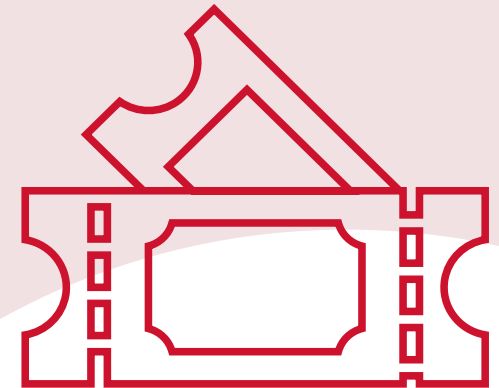
A sign of a good organiser is whether the company is a member of an association. In our instance, we are members of the Exhibition and Events Association of Australasia. The event may also have support from a trade body or association who sit on a steering committee to ensure that the event represents the industry.

Still not sure?

Why not go along as a visitor and see what you think before committing. Exhibitions offer a unique sales platform where you can meet prospects face to face. All of these visitors would have chosen to attend so in effect they are positively inclined to buy. It's a well known fact that events offer the greatest return on your investment providing you follow some very basic rules.

See who else is exhibiting

If your competitors attend then it can be a sign of a good event. If they aren't then you may be able to gain market share by tapping into new areas.



Setting objectives

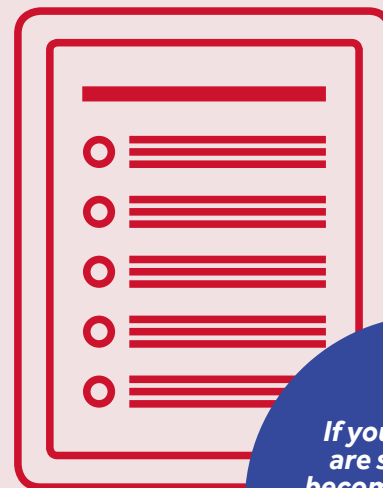
Decide on your objectives for the event

You may have a few, but make sure that they don't clash and you are not stretching the team by trying to achieve too much. At busy events it can be difficult to remember a list! Incorporate the event into your marketing mix to ensure your overall campaign is giving the same message. Try to be specific with your objectives i.e.

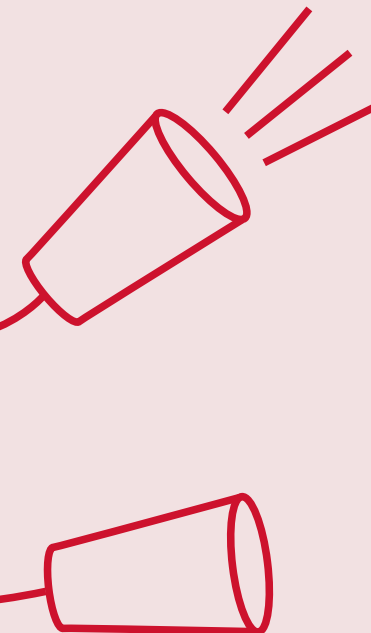
- to secure 3 new leads for follow up a day
- to make 12 appointments
- to see 10 existing clients
- to build your database by 90 new names

Communicate them!

It is very important to make sure that whoever ends up manning the stand fully understands your objectives otherwise your careful planning could be wasted and remember less is more!



If your objectives are specific they become measurable and you can calculate your return on your investment more easily.



Types of Stands



Shell schemes...

- Are often the most basic stand package and are sold in square metres.
- Give you a basic structure to sell and promote your products or services.
- This usually includes carpet, a fascia board for your company name and stand number and one, two or three walls depending on your configuration. Often these are a modular construction, typically with white walls and aluminium joints.
- The range is growing and all possible permutations are now available including a **Custom Built** stand or **Semi Custom**.
- Be sure to check if your stand includes lights, power and furniture as part of your package. This may need to be booked separately.



Space only

- This is when you hire the floor space only.
- It is down to you to design and build something that fits the space.
- Space only stands are generally taken by clients that are having a custom built exhibition stand. They can normally be built to a height of 4m before planning permission is required. This is usually the cheapest option as you have the added expense of filling the space.



Number of open sides

Often you will have a choice over the number of open sides — four open sides are referred to as an, **Island Site**.



Early Arrangements

BOOKING THE SPACE

FLOOR PLANS

Logically, the earlier you book the better the choice of stand type and location you will have.

When booking your space, consider where competitors and feature areas are and what you plan to do with your stand.

Allow enough room for any products, staff and visitors. Think about whether you need storage incorporated as part of your stand and any private meeting areas or hospitality that you wish to use.

If you're running any on stand activities you will need to make provision for standing room and observers.

Try to plan for the number of open sides available and ensure that your furnishings do not obstruct entrances and exits from your stand. Most stand designers will be able to advise you whether the space you have reserved will be sufficient for the activity planned.

FINDING A CONTRACTOR

PREFERRED CONTRACTORS

For all our shows, we have preferred or recommended contractors, usually responsible for building shell scheme stands. Their details are in the Exhibitor Manual.

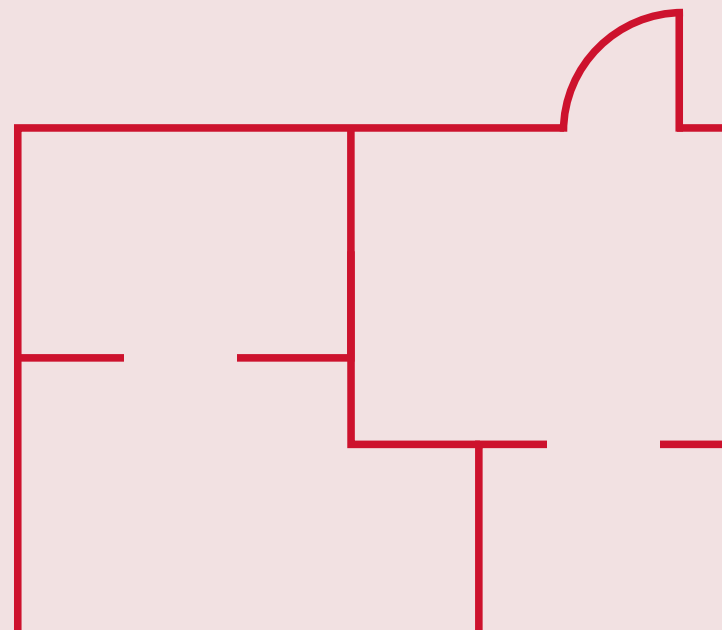
For a Space Only site, you can appoint your own contractor. Think about their overall experience and not just the cost. Do they have operatives in the country or countries you plan to exhibit at? Often they will have a network of operatives that can smooth the passage of your goods as well as build up and break down your stand.

They may have freight forwarding or customs clearing agents they know who can add value, avoiding any nasty surprises.

Some simply offer a design and build service; others offer a fully integrated service that can be tailored to your exact requirements.

The better the brief you give them, the more fit 22for purpose your design will be. It is often best to suggest ideas you have rather than to give a completely open brief. It helps to think about what you hope to do on your stand, what you like about other stands you have seen as well as any pet hates.

They will incorporate your requirements whilst complying with any Health and Safety requirements to design and build the perfect stand for you. If they are the approved contractors on a particular event they will have some knowledge about other builds and what colours and designs are being used at your event.



Planning your stand

THE EXHIBITOR MANUAL

For all our shows, the Exhibitor Manuals are available online and via the Online Exhibitor Portal. It is designed to make planning and participation in an event as easy as possible.

They typically contain a number of sections dealing with logistics, Health and Safety requirements, deadlines and order forms.

Often exhibitor action checklists contain things to do and order as well as deadlines for securing discounted rates. They feature a show schedule including the build up and break down hours that your contractor will need to be aware of.

Typically they contain information about age restrictions, display rules and regulations, fire and safety regulations, and also general policies applicable to the event; contacts lists for staff who you can call should you have any questions as well as any official contractor listings and order forms

and rates for the various contractors such as audio visual, IT rental, floral, photography, security and temp personnel.

It includes details regarding exhibitor badge order forms, and any lead retrieval options. In some cases there are locations of the hotels near the venue as well as order forms for utilities that the venue offers.

These include services such as electric, cleaning, security, plumbing, telecommunications and catering. It is also where you will find further information about order furnishings, carpet, rental options, signs and graphics, staffing and material handling. Sponsorship information, advertising, public relations and marketing information, including VIP tickets for your customers and prospects are usually also included. In short it should be your bible for all things event related.

HIRING FURNITURE

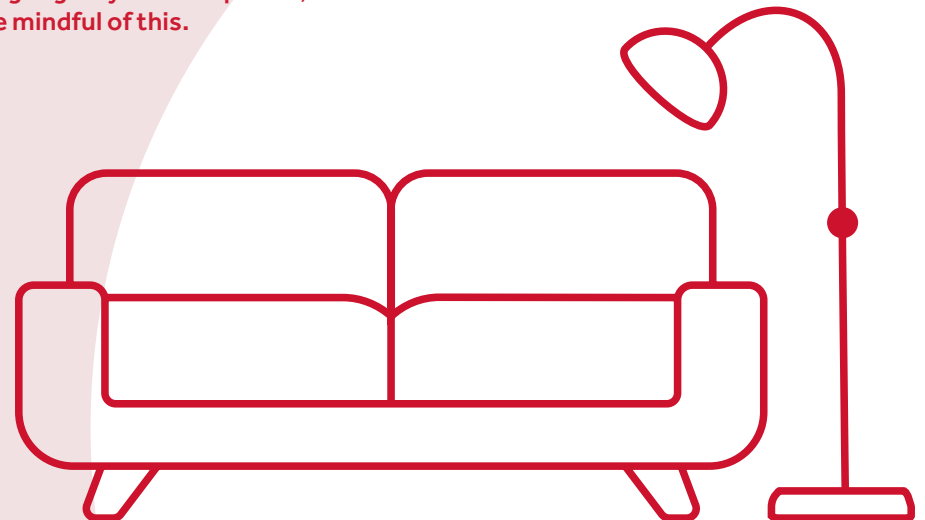
Unless you plan to bring your own furniture, it is customary to hire furniture for the duration of the event.

The exhibitor manual will have full details of packages arranged by the organiser. There are a number of companies who hire furniture, many with extensive stock.

Leaving it too close to the show might give you less options, so be mindful of this.

For all of our shows, we provide furniture packages as part of your shell scheme stand costs, so ask us to verify your options.

Chairs and tables are only a small part of the picture — you may need literature racks, storage with lockable sections as well as items like waste paper bins and coat racks.



Electrics & Audio-Visual

ORDERING ELECTRICS

WATTAGE AND AMPAGE

It's not just lighting (spot, fluorescent, track or free standing) that needs to be considered but also more innocuous items like kettles and laptops and phone chargers.

You will need special outlets to power a kettle or coffee machine and it is imperative you do not just order one socket and use multi-plug adaptors as you will create a fire hazard as well as risk blowing the whole circuit. These will need to be ordered in advance. **Tip!!** To avoid penalties, organise this earlier on.

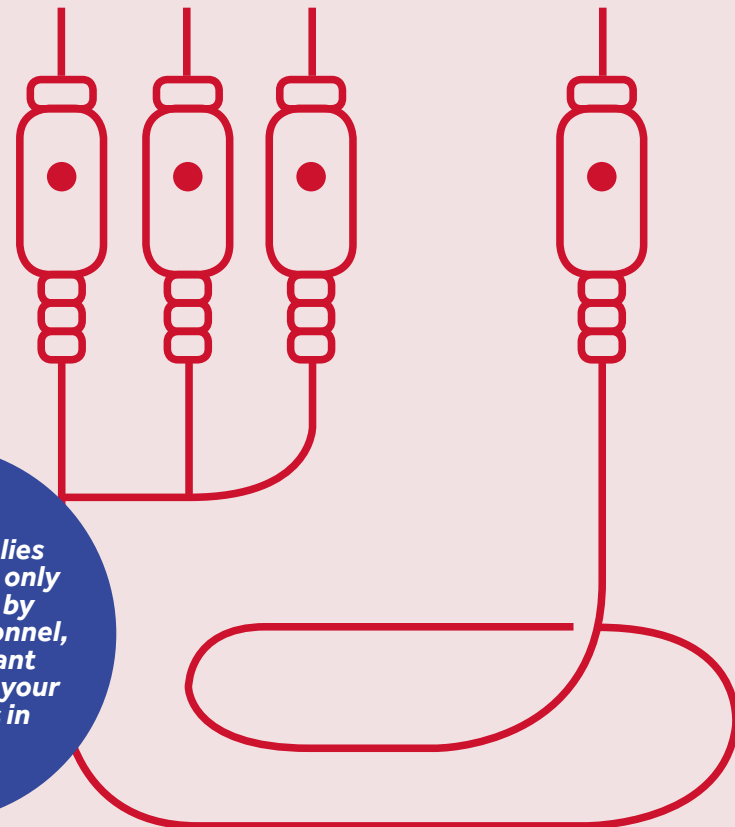
AUDIO-VISUAL REQUIREMENTS

SOUND & VISION

It is often easiest to hire in any specialised AV requirements you may have. Not only will the AV contractor have the latest equipment but they will be used to being hired for events and so can advise you about volume levels and contrast ratios.

Most packages are flexible to allow for individual requirements and typically include installation and insurance. You will need to make separate arrangements if you need a technician to attend for the duration of your event, but most will set it up and ensure you are happy with everything before leaving your stand, making provision for glitches and emergencies.

Electrical supplies to the stand can only be carried out by authorised personnel, so it is important you think about your requirements in advance.



Communications & Utilities

BROADBAND, PHONE AND I.T. NEEDS

COMMUNICATION

Most venues will have Wi-Fi connectivity and/or some system for getting online access. In some instances this is included but others it is an extra. Similarly, most venues will support good cellular reception but it is possible that you might need alternative or landline access.

Exhibitor manuals will detail availability, options available and pricing.

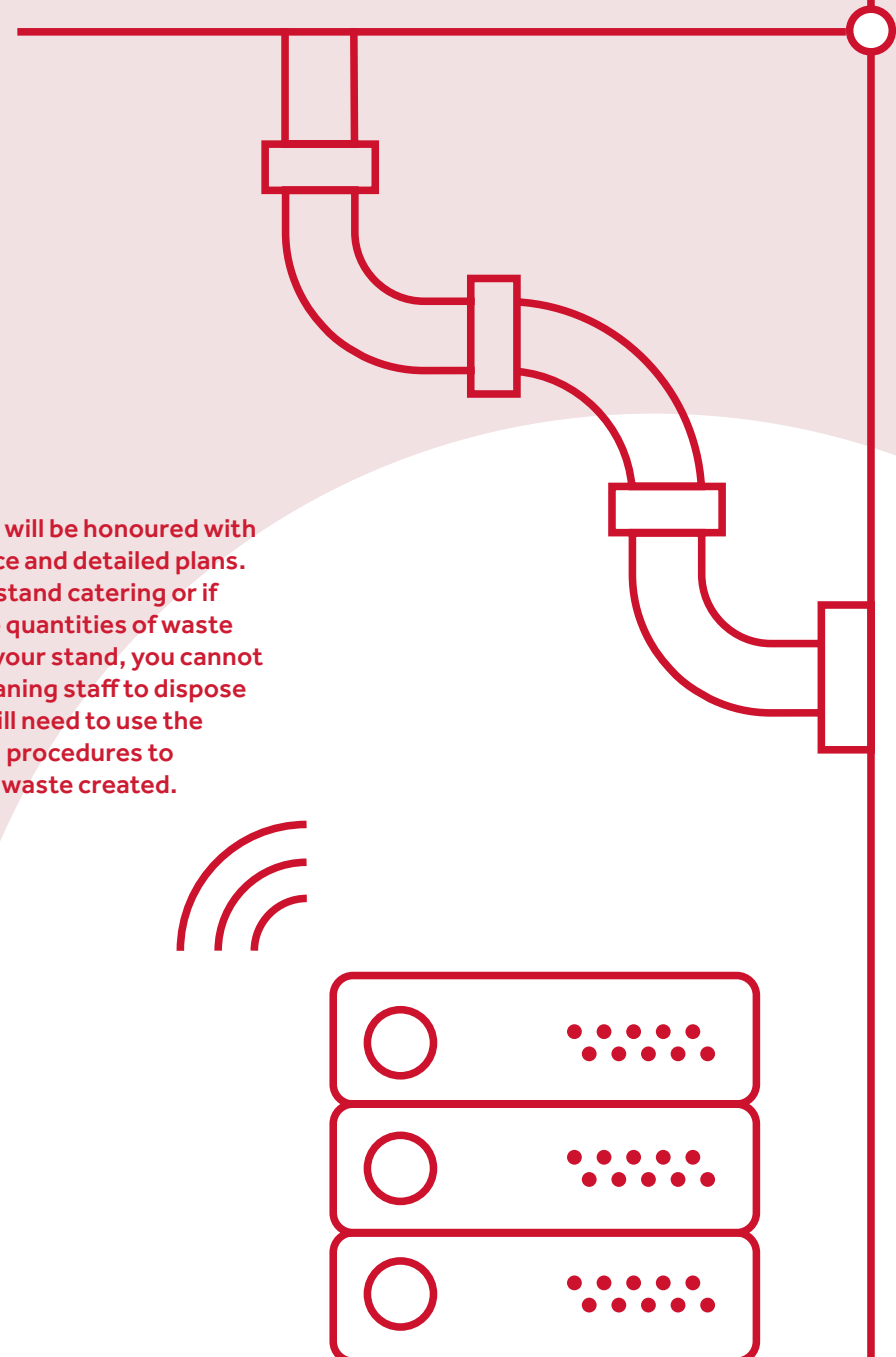
WASTE, WATER AND OTHER SERVICES

Depending on your needs and products you may need waste and other utilities to be connected to your stand. In some instances, venues have these connections under the show floor and in others you will need to ensure your stand designer incorporates these requirements into your design with a raised floor to your stand.

It is important that we understand your needs as soon as you have established them so the relevant paperwork is included in your exhibitor manual.

Most requests will be honoured with sufficient notice and detailed plans. If you have on stand catering or if there are large quantities of waste generated on your stand, you cannot rely on the cleaning staff to dispose of it and you will need to use the recommended procedures to dispose of any waste created.

Your stand designer may need to incorporate a raised floor to your stand for water and waste.



Signage & Requirements

GRAPHICS & ACCESSORIES

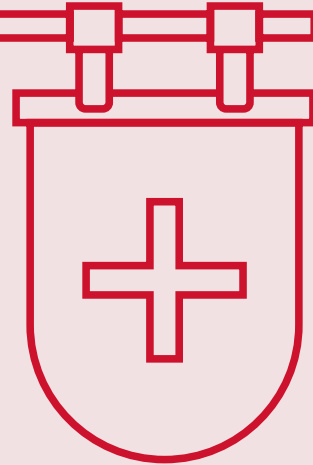
MESSAGING AND GRAPHICS

Graphics should be clear, bold and attractive to the visitor. Visitors respond best to colour, movement and bullet points.

Your graphics should say who you are and what it is that you do.

Think about how you are going to fix your graphics to the stand walls — especially if they are modular, without damaging your rented shell scheme panels.

Your exhibitor manual or contractor will advise on the best fixings and in the case of larger units they will also have to conform to Health and Safety regulations.



If you are exhibiting outdoors ensure your graphics are strong and resistant to the sun which can fade them.

Your visitor should be able to look at your graphics and get your message within 6 seconds or your message could be missed.

Consult the experts to get something that works well in an exhibition environment.

HEALTH AND SAFETY REQUIREMENTS

WORK WITH HEALTH & SAFETY

Rules and regulations can be daunting but it's important to note that they are designed and implemented for good reason.

Contractors and venues will accommodate most scenarios if the relevant H&S laws are adhered to.

You are responsible for carrying out a risk assessment of your stand (outlining any trip hazards etc) which you or your stand contractor will need to file with us. Full details of obligations are available from us. Not having the right measures in place could affect your insurance and your participation at the event.

Legislation will vary from country to country so practices that are

commonplace in one may be forbidden in another. It is impossible for an exhibitor to be aware of all the individual requirements but it is expected that responsible organisers will have researched and published a comprehensive set of guidelines for you to use.

MINIMA, MAXIMA AND THE LAW

Full details of what you can and cannot do will be outlined in the exhibitor manual.

You will be able to establish maximum build heights, floor and wall load bearings as well as options for access and egress. There will be logistical issues as well as legal requirements to follow.



Transport, Logistics and Accommodation

NEAR OR FAR?

Most venues have limited accommodation on site. If you want your team to stay at the property adjacent to the venue you need to book early. Check with us to see if there are arranged discounts or price-plans.

The further away from the venue the longer the travel time and possibly the greater chance of delayed staff arrival for opening times. If the venue is popular with other exhibitors and visitors, that may in turn increase available networking opportunities.

SHARING OR SOLO?

In terms of stretching your budget, it might be better to ask staff to share rooms, or commute if possible and use the savings to increase your hospitality budget.

If money spent in one area is delivering results, it doesn't make sense to reduce it because of extra costs involved with exhibiting.

FROM CUSTOMS TO STORAGE

Depending on where you're exhibiting, you may need to arrange for products to be shipped overseas.

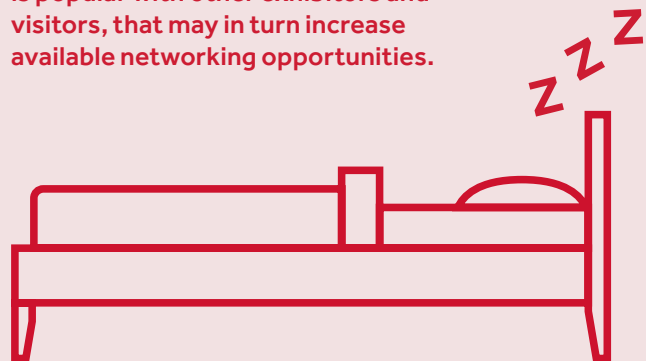
Customs regulations can be complicated and in some instances you will need a local agent to smooth the path of your goods in transit and ensure safe delivery to the venue.

There might be additional tax implications and import/export

duty to pay. Organisations exist to handle this area and we have agents on file that we recommend.

If you have a re-usable stand you may need to discuss storage with the contractor and a refurbishment programme as appropriate. In the event they arrive early, make provisions for storage at the other end until they are ready to be received.

Always allow plenty of time to ensure your goods arrive well in advance of the show, in case of unforeseen delays.



Save money where you need to but not at the expense of generative activities.



Exhibitor Badges & VIP Tickets

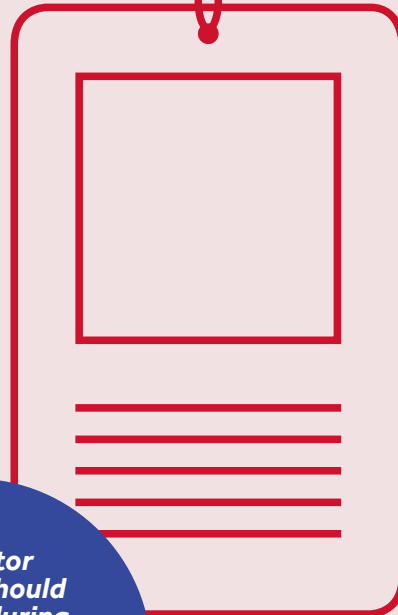
BADGES

Badges will normally be emailed to you, included in your exhibitor manual or sent directly by post. They should include your name, position and company name.

They'll also help with easy entry on the days of the event and you will need to order one for each member of staff who will be helping on your stand.

You will also need to order any contractor passes to allow your stand builders to gain access during build up and break down times. Along with these you may need car parking passes to allow you to enter the venue so you can deliver and collect material for your stand.

Exhibitor badges should be worn during the show so your visitors can readily identify you and your colleagues.



VIP TICKETS

In some cases, we offer a VIP service whereby you can nominate your key clients as VIPs. Their status will be upgraded and they will have special facilities made available to them, from swift check-in through to special lounges for them to relax and do some work.

Some exhibitors are reluctant to send out tickets to their key clients because they don't want their competitors to meet them at the show.

Order more complimentary tickets – remember it helps both you and us if more people visit the show.

Those key prospects/customers however, will probably visit the event anyway so it is better that they come with an invitation from you rather than from your competition! Better still, if they have seen that you were responsible for their upgrade in status.



Data Capture Options

OPTIONS

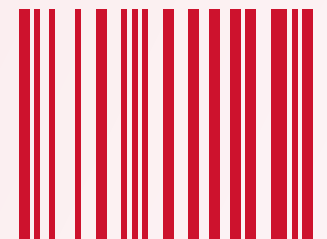
Think also about how many staff you intend on having on your stand and whether they will all require a data capture device or whether you are going to assign roles. Think through the process from scanning a badge, through to safe receipt, to dissemination, to the sales team, through to matching it to your company database. Will the person collecting the lead also be the same as the one who follows it up? You might need to grade your prospects into hot, warm and cold, so your sales staff have some sort of priority to work from.

HOW EVER YOU DO IT — DO IT!

WHAT'S IMPORTANT IS THAT YOU CAPTURE THE DETAILS THAT YOU CAN THEN FOLLOW UP ON LATER.



Your scanning device should enable you to access details quickly and produce downloadable outputs or reports on a daily basis.



Pre-Show Marketing & PR

LET PEOPLE KNOW

One of the golden rules to successful exhibiting is to inform new and existing customers that you will be exhibiting.

- Have tickets in your lobby or reception area or give them to your sales people to distribute to their contacts.
- Mail invitations and send out all the tickets we may provide.
- Get a list of the trade publications that are running show features and consider advertising there.
- Adjust your e-mail settings to include a signature panel that urges them to visit you on your stand.

PR

Utilise the services of our PR teams as this may not cost you anything.

They will know which publications have what deadline, who is worth writing to and how you could spin your story so it is more likely to appear in print.

- Find out if they are having a press office at the show and how the journalists like to receive the information.
- Don't forget to update your own website to show details of how prospects and clients can attend the show and a map of your stand.
- Also think about post show PR - any deals signed or bits of business closed or research results and customer feedback?

PRINT

Make sure you order enough business cards for you and your staff. Do you need to order data capture pads, brochures, posters and leaflets in advance? Are your graphics panels, posters and freebies ordered? Do you need to think about any corporate gifts or giveaways that you plan on using? If you are organising a business card draw, do you have a suitable receptacle and supporting literature to indicate what is going on? Are you wearing the same 'uniform' or corporate colours? Have you thought about web entries and entries in the show guides?

GIMMICKS

What can you do to attract people onto your stand in advance of the show? Can you run a teaser campaign or announce a new launch? Do you have a demonstration worth watching? Will you have a speaker revealing some research? Can you offer an incentive for them to come and redeem a voucher on your stand?

Your imagination should be the only limit.



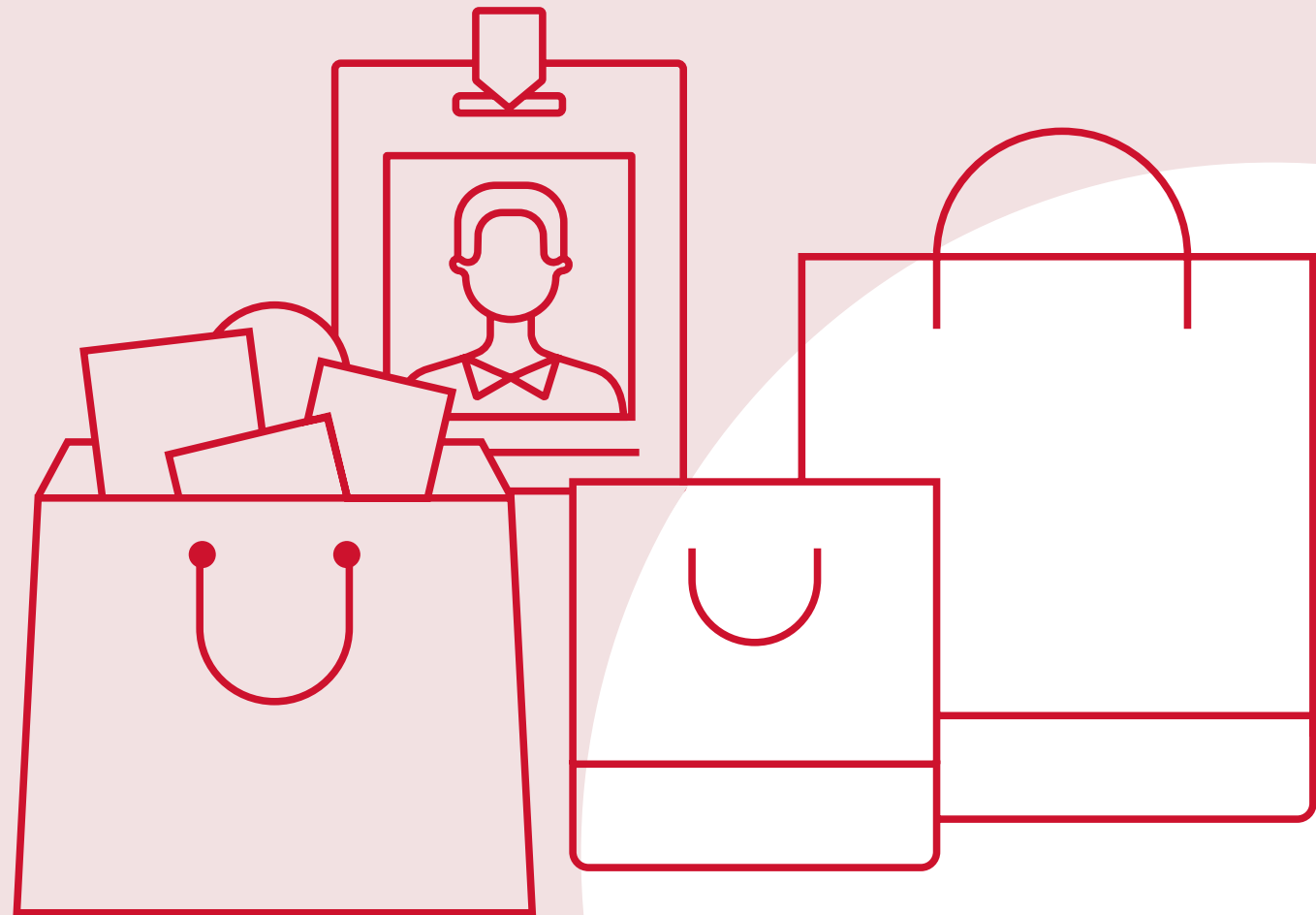
Sponsorship Options

MAXIMISE YOUR PRESENCE

Think about your objectives and consider whether your stand is sufficient or whether you need a higher profile? It may be possible to slightly reduce your stand size and become a sponsor.

You will have opportunities to sponsor everything from the lanyards and the carrier bags, reception areas, the 'You-are-Here' boards as well as hospitality areas, seminar theatres and the car parks.

The choice is enormous and you need to consider what profile you are after and how best to achieve this. By sponsoring certain items you can be as visible or subtle as you wish to be.



Security, Cleaning & Catering

SECURITY AND CLEANING

Exhibition stands are vulnerable to dirt and sometimes theft. We have appointed cleaning contractors who are responsible for cleaning the common areas but will also clean your stand if you ask. If you have valuables that are easy to steal, it is best to either lock them away at the end of each day or make arrangements for your stand to be made more secure. This could include security guards, who will spend the whole night on your stand.

If you have laptops, mobiles or products that are easy to steal, it is best to either lock them away at the end of each day.

It is also worth checking whether your current insurance policy will cover activities on a stand or whether you need a separate policy just for these activities.

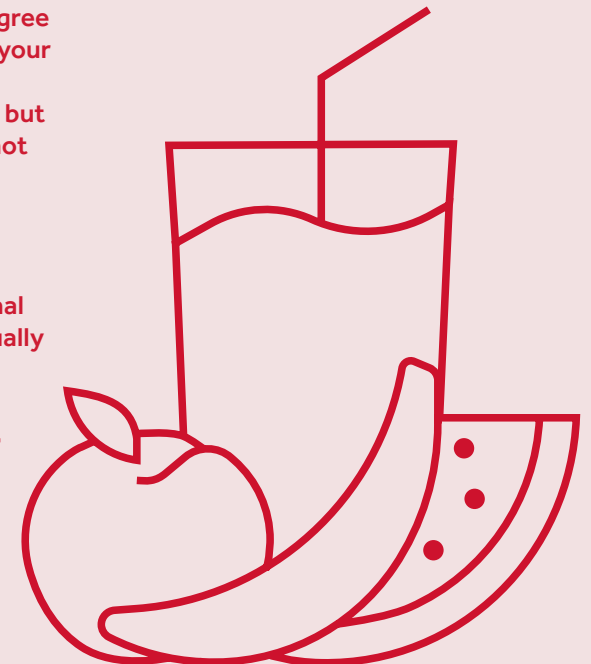


FOOD AND DRINK

The majority of venues do not allow exhibitors to arrange their own catering as they will have their own in-house concessions and caterers. You can agree a corkage fee for food and drinks on your stand if you need to bring your own. Product sampling is usually exempt but there are limits on what can or cannot be distributed free of corkage.

If you intend to set up a 'cooking facility' (say to replicate restaurant food or special national/international cuisine) then arrangements can usually be made through us.

In the case of corporate hospitality, venues and their caterers are used to all requests from simply supplying product to staffing a bar and silver service needs.



Flowers & Temporary Staff

FLORAL DECORATIONS

It is possible to order anything from a simple artificial potted plant or fresh flowers each day, through to a replica rain forest with living plants and trees if required.

Full details of options available will usually be in the exhibitor manual. With some of the customs restrictions on live plants and roots, it often makes more sense to hire than buy.

Some stands can appear to be quite sterile, so softening the edges with planting can be very effective.

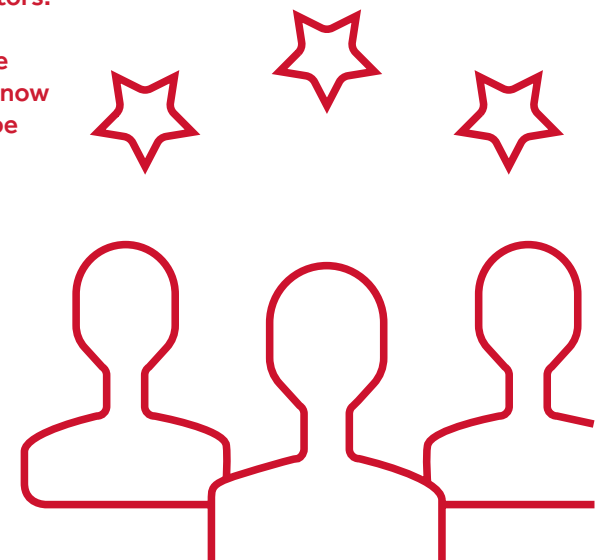


AGENCY PERSONNEL

Staffing agencies have come a long way over the last few years and now there are many organisations that specialise in providing temporary stand staff. They are often well trained and briefed to ensure that they help you maximise your opportunities to interact with visitors.

They can be useful even if you have enough of your own staff as they know how to approach visitors and can be briefed to have sufficient product knowledge to act as ambassadors for your company.

If you make them feel part of your team, temporary stand staff will often perform above and beyond and can be a real asset.

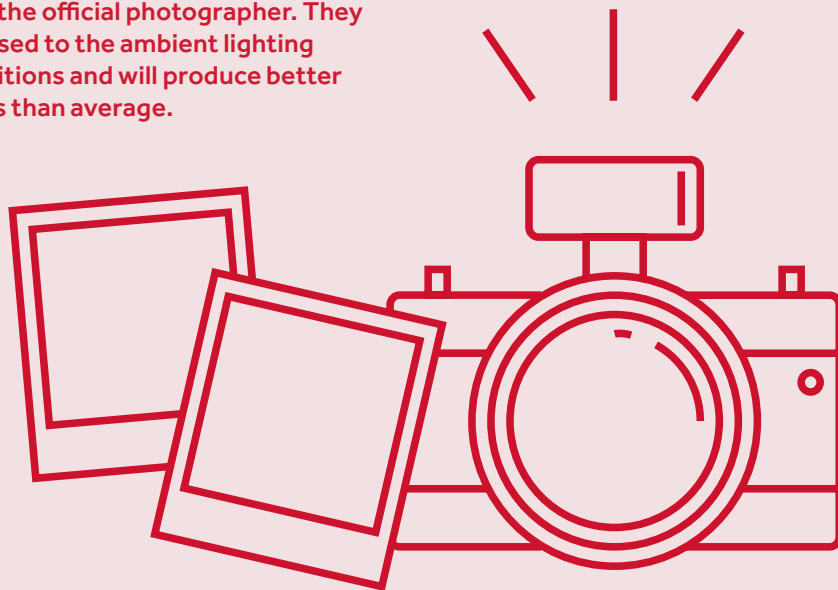


Photography & Speaking

SNAPSHOT OR CORPORATE LITERATURE?

If you are happy to record the event with a few snaps on your mobile then help yourself. If however, you wish to make use of the images at a later date or as part of an extended marketing campaign it makes sense to connect with the official photographer. They are used to the ambient lighting conditions and will produce better shots than average.

If you have any specific requests or if you need particular people captured on your stand you can brief them in advance. Much of this information will be in the exhibitor manual also.

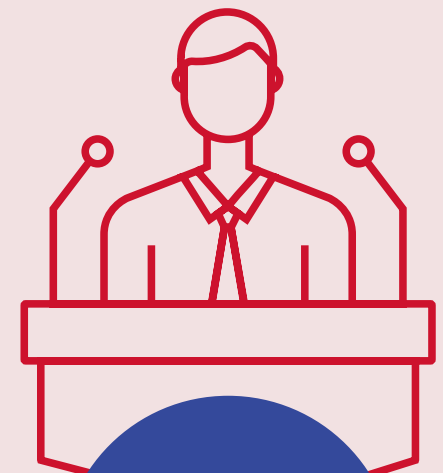


SPEAKING OPPORTUNITIES

Some events or sponsorship packages will also have opportunities for speaking, either as part of a conference or via seminars and presentations. They can be incredibly successful if your speaker is engaging, authoritative and credible. However, audiences do not suffer fools gladly, resent any sales pitch and will judge your company by the quality of the presentation.

The end of a presentation is often where questions and leads emerge. Make sure you have a method to sign post interested parties back to your stand after the event and you can capitalise on the interest.

Speaking opportunities are also a way of generating interest pre-show and potentially good material for press releases and an excuse for select invitations to prospects.



If you are going to present, make sure you have a good speaker who knows their stuff.



Stand Tips

BUILD UP AND BREAK DOWN

SHOW TIME

The days immediately before a show are referred to as Build Up. We will have detailed how long you have to build your stand. This is when all the services you have ordered and the designs you have approved come together. You will also be given time slots when you may enter the halls to stock up your stand and when you must vacate by. For some simple shows it is one or two days in the lead up to the actual event. For some of the larger shows build up can last for weeks.

Similarly, when it is all over and the contractors come in to dismantle it all (Break Down) you will be informed of how long you have to do it and when you need to vacate the halls.

We are very strict on these times as they are in turn under contract with the venue with quite possibly the next show waiting to build up theirs.

ON SITE STAND MANNING TIPS

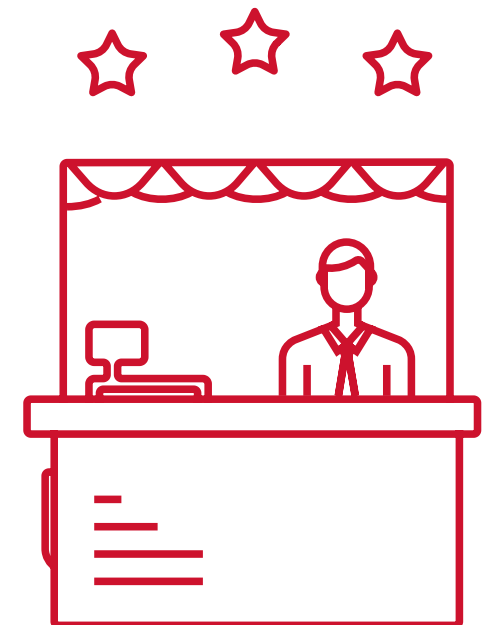
YOUR STAND STAFF MAKE THE DIFFERENCE

Visitors will judge you by how they see you and your team interact.



- Are your staff trained properly?
- Do they ask open and engaging questions?
- Do they look approachable?
- Are they aware of how their body language makes them look and are they smiling and using open posture?
- Can they answer all possible questions they are likely to be asked and do they understand your objectives?

A small investment to train your people on how to man the stand will yield results many times over.



After the Event

FOLLOW UP

YOUR LEADS

In some instances, exhibitors do not follow up on their leads effectively.

Research suggests that it can take up to twelve separate contacts to convert prospects, so contact them, re-contact them and contact them again.

If you followed the advice under section 13. **DATA CAPTURE** your sales people will have a priority list to call from. Monitor your results and compare these with your objectives to calculate your return on your investment.



WASH UP

POST EVENT ANALYSIS

Now the event is over ask yourself some questions: How close did we get to our objectives? What worked and what didn't? What were our competitors doing that we liked? Were there any better locations? Was the size adequate? Involve the staff who manned the stand with you. What did they think? What did they see that you could adapt and use yourselves next time?



The more constructive you are on reflection the easier it will be to improve next time. Book early and start planning the next one from a stronger base.





Careful planning leads to strong results

So spend some time doing this upfront. Use our handy Exhibitor Training Modules, they'll show you just that. Find them all at www.etf.com.au

For more information, contact your Exhibitions & Trade Fairs' representative. They can help you through the guides and answer any questions you have. After all, if you're going to ask a question, ask an expert!

Exhibitions & Trade Fairs has been creating and delivering award winning exhibitions and conferences since the 1970s. Around Australia and across the world. B2B and B2C. Large and small.

Our team has experience across incredibly diverse sectors, from energy storage, construction, mining, oil & gas, irrigation, automotive, manufacturing, to travel and lifestyle. We offer a full suite of services, so we tailor what we do for different organisations depending upon their needs. The result is an excellent event — from its quality as an industry-building tool to its ROI.