



British Promotional  
Merchandise Association Ltd

## EXHIBITING – PRE SHOW

Taking a stand at a trade or consumer show represents a significant commitment in terms of time and money for your company. The BPMA has produced this Fact Sheet to help maximise your return on that investment.

### 1. ENSURE YOUR EXHIBIT IS AN INTEGRATED PART OF YOUR MARKETING PLAN

- For the best results, exhibiting should be a strategic part of your overall marketing plan and not be a 'stand alone' exercise.

### 2. DATES

- Make sure the dates work for you – look at tying in with product launches, seasonal releases, etc. etc.
- Check it does not clash with other events in your marketing calendar. Make sure everyone knows the dates, puts them in their diary and does not book holiday at this time.
- Include the boss in this and invite him to come to the stand to see his team in action and to assess the opposition present and market in general. Prepare a calendar of who will man stand on which dates.
- Be aware there are show dates for visitors and show dates for exhibitors (which include build-up and breakdown days).
- Book hotels and make travel plans in advance.
- If your team is coming together it could be a good time to have a sales meeting at no extra cost.

### 3. ENSURE THE SHOW ADDRESSES YOUR TARGET MARKET

- Ask the organisers to give you a breakdown of visitors to previous shows and a précis of their marketing campaign to ensure that the show is addressing your target market and appealing to the decision makers in that market.

### 4. CHOOSE YOUR STAND SITE CAREFULLY

- Having made the decision to exhibit, choose your stand site carefully. Discover which companies are on the surrounding stands. It could be a competitor, but you may prefer to be located close to someone who offers a complimentary product or service.



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## 5. CONSIDER THE DESIGN AND LAYOUT OF THE STAND

- Even a small stand can make an impact and a little time spent considering the layout will help you maximise use of space.
- You can usually book either 'Shell Scheme' or 'Space Only'. Shell scheme will usually include various essentials such as lighting, carpet, shell walls to which you can affix visuals and logos, furniture and possibly security, but do check. Or you can book stand only and have a free-standing module created.
- Make sure you or your stand contractor include the logos of any trade organisations you belong to as this will enhance your professional standing.
- Design the stand to encourage visitors to walk on – don't make it too enclosed.

## 6. CO-ORDINATE YOUR PRE-SHOW CAMPAIGN

- For maximum impact, ensure that your pre-show marketing, direct mail, advertising and PR campaigns are co-ordinated both in terms of design and execution.
- Also make sure that the exhibition name, dates and your stand number are added to all mailings including invoices, e-mails, ads and company literature in the build up to the show.
- If you are planning to have any literature printed for the show – commission it in plenty of time.

## 7. TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE FREE TICKETS MANY ORGANISERS OFFER

- Or better still, issue your own tickets, designed to co-ordinate with the rest of your campaign to offer instant recognition of your stand when the visitors reach the show. If neither of these is possible, simply write to your customer database, including current clients, past and potential clients, and invite them to visit YOUR stand at the show.
- If possible offer them an incentive – the opportunity to enter a prize draw, receive a free gift or some important industry research.

## 8. TARGET PRE-REGISTERED VISITORS

- Ask the organisers if it is possible to have a list of pre-registered visitors and target them with direct mail via post, e-mail, fax, etc.



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## 9. LIAISE WITH THE SHOW'S PR DEPARTMENT OR AGENCY

- They will be glad to receive and distribute your NEWS (but not product puffs), to magazines previewing the show. BUT don't rely entirely on them, write and issue your own press releases to relevant press. Bear in mind that editorial copy dates for previews in monthly magazines can be two or three months in advance of the show.
- A press release should contain the basic facts – who, what, where, when and how – and should avoid advertising hype. Keep it short, sharp and to the point and add the name and telephone number of the contact and the date of issue. If you have one, also issue a good quality visual to support your story.
- ALSO discuss any proposed stand attractions or activity with the exhibitors PR dept. to ensure you are not doing exactly the same as several other exhibitors, or something that will clash time-wise with a major show activity.
- Ask whether there are any show awards that you can enter to maximise publicity opportunities.

## 10. PREPARE PRESS PACKS

- Prepare press packs to be displayed in the press office at the show where journalists will have the opportunity to collect them. Also keep a few on the stand for visiting journalists. A press pack should contain:
  - A press release
  - A company brochure or exhibition leaflet
  - Visual images to illustrate your exhibit.
- These should be contained in a company folder or a clear plastic folder. Either should be clearly marked with your company name and stand number.