

# Tips for Success

Making the most of your EIBTM participation



[www.eibtm.com](http://www.eibtm.com)



## **EIBTM 2010 - Planning for Success**

Exhibitions are one of the most powerful, versatile and cost-effective tools available. As an exhibitor at EIBTM 2010, we are totally committed to ensuring your experience with us is highly positive and that by working together we can help you achieve your business objectives and make this years EIBTM the most productive ever.

We have put together this easy to use guide to help you and your team plan your participation at EIBTM. In conjunction with the Organising and Marketing Manuals and the new EIBTM Wallplanner (available on the Exhibitor Zone at [www.eibtm.com](http://www.eibtm.com)), this guide is full of practical tips, hints and advice which will help you exploit all the opportunities available you pre-show, on site and also post show.

The EIBTM team, part of the wider Reed Travel Exhibitions team, is full of experienced exhibition, event and meetings professionals so if after reading this guide (or any of the resources listed on the website) you still need some help, we would be delighted to hear from you.

The key to successful exhibitions is teamwork and the EIBTM team look forward to helping you at every stage. Don't underestimate the amount of planning and preparation required to exhibit successfully. Effective planning and follow-up can mean the difference between a bad show experience and a good one. But it can also mean the difference between a good show, and a truly exceptional one.

We look forward to working with you and seeing you in Barcelona.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Graeme Barnett", is shown on a light yellow background.

Graeme Barnett  
Exhibition Director



## **1. Part of your Meetings and Events sector strategy**

### **A strategic marketing tool**

Exhibitions, like advertising, direct mail, PR and direct selling, are a strategic sales and marketing tool. They should be used as part of an overall marketing strategy, not in isolation. EIBTM has been carefully designed to work in tandem with your integrated communications plan that specifically targets the global Meetings and Events industry.

### **Consider the benefits**

To make the most of your participation at EIBTM 2010, you need to understand exactly what benefits exhibitions in general offer:

- **Highly targeted** -With their carefully focused profiles, and highly targeted audiences, exhibitions allow you to direct your sales and marketing effort accurately and cost-effectively, with minimum wastage.
- **Face to face contact** - The most persuasive form of selling, and of building customer relationships.
- **The buyer comes to you** – exhibition visitors are pro-active buyers. They make a conscious decision to attend and set aside valuable time to do so. Many are specifiers and influencers who it might otherwise be impossible to identify.
- **3D sales & promotion** -Nothing beats the impact of a live demonstration. At an exhibition, buyers can see, taste, touch and try your product or service for themselves.
- **Neutral sales environment** – The buyer feels under no great pressure to buy, while the seller is not intimidated by visiting the buyer on his home territory.
- **Fast market penetration** – You can reach a large proportion of the market in a short space of time, to make the most of your participation, you need to understand exactly what benefits exhibitions offer: achieving more in 3 days in the case of EIBTM than you might otherwise achieve in months.
- **A powerful combination** - Exhibitions combine the mass-reach of advertising, the targeting of direct mail, the persuasive power of face-to-face selling, and the networking benefits of the Internet, to create a unique environment in which a wide range of sales and marketing objectives can be achieved.

EIBTM is totally geared to enable your company or organisation to achieve all of the above and more. Detailed planning and preparation is the key but it is also worth spending time to consider your expectations and agree a set of short, medium and long term objectives.

### **Be Realistic About Your Expectations**

Exhibitions generate millions of pounds worth of business every year and EIBTM is no exception. However, it is unusual for exhibitors to write all their business during the open days of the event. For most companies, the orders will come in the weeks and months and sometimes years after the show. You must be prepared to pursue your leads vigorously, and to track them on an on-going basis, so that you can trace as many sales as possible back to source. After all, as organisers, we want to make sure that a good lead doesn't go to waste and that the event is recognised for delivering that piece of business!



## 2. Setting objectives

### **Maximise the opportunity**

EIBTM is suitable for a wide range of specific sales and marketing goals, of which the most widely used are:

- **Generating sales leads** - Reach large numbers of buyers in just a few days, and maximise sales impact through product display and demonstration. Exhibition enquiries have an excellent conversion rate when followed up after the show.
- **Launching a new product or service** - Stands featuring new products are a major attraction for buyers and the media, the vast majority of whom attend exhibitions 'to see what's new'.
- **Penetrating a new market** - Exhibiting is one of the quickest and most cost-effective means of exploring and entering a new market, providing mass exposure and an instant database of qualified sales prospects.
- **Building customer loyalty** -Regular contact with customers shows that you care and exhibitions are an extremely time and cost-efficient means of keeping in touch.
- **Positioning/repositioning a company/brand** -Exhibitions can be used to quickly establish a new identity or change market perceptions about a company and its capabilities.
- **Market research** – Exhibitions bring together a complete cross-section of a market, making them ideal for customer research and offering instant feedback.
- **Building media relations** Exhibitions offer a rare opportunity to meet and influence the press 'en masse' and to generate coverage on new products or services, and or company developments.
- **Recruiting new agents or distributors** -Agents and distributors use trade exhibitions to find new companies to represent. If you are looking for new representatives, be sure to highlight the fact in your catalogue entry, and on the stand.
- **Obtaining competitive intelligence** - Exhibitions are an excellent place to observe competitors and assess their products and marketing messages.

### **Set clear objectives**

As you have chosen to exhibit at EIBTM, the opportunity exists for you to meet a number of the above objectives. It may sound obvious, but companies have been known to book into events that can't deliver their target audience in sufficient numbers to make their presence worthwhile and so they have very little chance of achieving any level of ROI. Setting a clear set of event specific objectives will give your EIBTM participation a strong focus and set a framework against which you can measure your Return on Investment or Return on Objectives.

### **Be consistent**

Your EIBTM objectives should be consistent with your company's wider marketing strategies/goals across the global Meetings and Events sector. This way, advertising, PR, direct mail, personal selling and exhibition activities are working to reinforce each other, rather than in isolation.



### **Set achievable targets**

Nothing is more likely to de-motivate staff than goals they can't possibly achieve, whereas realistic targets when accomplished are a real stimulus to effort.

Objectives should give direction to the effort and must be:

- Measurable in quantity and quality
- Achievable in a defined period of time
- Consistent with your company's goals, policies and marketing plan.

### **Prioritise your objectives**

If you have more than one objective, rank them in order of priority so you are clear where your greatest efforts should be directed. Don't try to do too much, or your resources will be stretched and your participation will lack focus.

### **Communicate your objectives**

Objectives, having been established must be communicated to the entire exhibition team, including external suppliers or contractors (PR Agency, stand designer), so that everyone pulls together and shares a common sense of purpose. If your stand is designed around your sharing partners, ensure that these objectives are communicated well in advance of EIBTM.



### **3. Planning for success**

It's easy to forget just how much there is to do to create a successful exhibition presence. It really is a team effort that brings together a huge variety of partners and suppliers, both in house and externally. EIBTM uses a wide variety of specifically chosen suppliers to ensure you get the best and most effective service as part of your package. In addition you will be using any number of suppliers to deliver the stand, graphics, literature, personnel, catering, technology, the list is endless. It's crucial to get then to get the planning exactly right

#### **Appoint an exhibition co-ordinator**

Put one person in charge of the project with overall responsibility for planning, budgeting, stand management etc – someone with authority who can see the project successfully through to its conclusion.

#### **Appoint a reputable stand designer**

Draw up a shortlist of suppliers and put the job out to tender. Insist on seeing a portfolio of each company's work. Talk to previous clients and ensure they are capable of working on time and within budget.

#### **Set measurable objectives**

Set achievable targets against which to measure your success. If generating sales leads, for example, base your target around your potential audience, number of stand staff and total number of opening hours.

#### **Read the manual!**

Read your EIBTM online manual carefully, as soon as it is available, paying particular attention to stand rules and regulations, and noting the deadline dates for returning order forms. Late orders and last-minute changes may incur a surcharge. You will also be able to download the EIBTM planner which highlights key dates and deadlines

#### **Confirm your exhibits**

Give your product managers plenty of warning, to ensure products, graphics, literature are available and in a suitable condition for display. If using 3<sup>rd</sup> parties such as actors, models, hospitality staff, remember to organise these into the schedule, ensuring they all live your brand for the duration they are working for you.

#### **Manage you Appointments**

As part of the Hosted Buyer programme, buyers are committed to making appointments with exhibitors they want to see. These appointments are scheduled via the online diary. Hosted Buyer preferences are matched with exhibitors and via the Pre-Scheduled Appointment setting software, a personalised diary is produced for each buyer and each exhibiting company. These are available to view pre show (via the Exhibitor Zone) and it is important that your staff are geared up to meet these potential customers and provide accurate and relevant information. In addition, as an exhibitor, you can request appointments with Hosted Buyers through the online diary system.



### **Publicise your presence**

Prepare your press release(s) and catalogue entry and submit them by the deadline date. Mail out invitations to your prospects, Hosted Buyers or trade visitors, giving them an incentive to visit your stand. The EIBTM website offers many publicity opportunities -check out your options.

### **Co-ordinate media activities**

Maximise your promotional budget by coordinating your EIBTM promotions with other media activities. Drop a flash on your trade adverts saying 'see us on stand XXX', include invitations in direct mail, and publicise your participation in customer newsletters and on your web site. Utilise the power and reach of the EIBTM website which can deliver brand messages over the course of a 12 month period to a global community (during 2009, 309,000 unique users visited the EIBTM website. In addition, a schedule of communications was sent to our database of over 20,000 meetings industry professionals worldwide.)

### **Select and brief stand staff**

Select staff early to ensure availability and allow adequate time for training. It doesn't always follow that the best sales staff are the best at attending a trade show! Think about who within your organisation lives the values of your brand and welcome the opportunity to meet the customer! Draw up a duty roster and ensure all staff are fully briefed on the stand exhibits, their role, and the company' objectives. After all, anyone attending EIBTM is representing your company and brand and therefore needs to understand the specific messages and values to be adopted, especially important if using outside personnel.

### **Devise an efficient system for handling enquiries**

The way you capture and qualify Hosted Buyer and visitor information at EIBTM will determine the speed and efficiency with which you can follow up leads. Devise an 'enquiry form' for use by stand staff on which vital visitor details can be quickly recorded (e.g. products of interest, purchasing authority, date of intended purchase etc).

### **Prepare to follow-up leads**

EIBTM leads are hot leads if properly qualified. Fast and efficient follow up is essential to reap the maximum sales return. Establish a plan of action before the event, and be sure to allocate sufficient time and people to the task. All leads should be contacted within a week of the exhibition if possible, two at the most.

### **Draw up a timetable of key tasks**

Using the manual, and working backwards from the exhibition, draw up a timetable of key tasks, highlighting who is responsible, and deadline dates for completion. Copy it to all involved in the exhibition effort.

### **Establish clear lines of communication**

Breakdown of communication is a major cause of problems at exhibitions. Make it clear to your suppliers (and the EIBTM team where necessary) who their points of contacts are. Hold regular briefing sessions with the team to keep everyone up to date on developments.



## **4. Budgeting and cost control**

### **Plan ahead**

Consider your exhibition requirements for the whole year. Modular stand systems can be adapted to suit a wide range of sites, and re-used in part or whole to suit your needs. Above all, ensure that your focus for your participation focuses on the key events in your schedule (EIBTM being one of them) and that they drive your selection of stand design.

### **Draw up a detailed budget**

Look at your objectives, determine the essential tasks necessary to achieve them and then estimate the costs involved. This will give you a minimum budget on which to build. Be sure to anticipate all likely items of expenditure. Be generous when allocating funds: add 10% to all anticipated costs.

### **Consider a stand package**

Many organisations do not want the cost of a large or complex custom-build stand. EIBTM offers stand package options for shell scheme exhibitors, inclusive of everything from furniture and floor coverings to electrics and power an excellent way to control costs, as you are aware of your commitments up-front.

### **Record your spending**

Keep an on-going record of expenditure against budget and a central file of all purchase orders and invoices. Note reasons for overspend to help you plan more efficiently and budget more effectively next time around.

### **Return all forms by the deadline**

Late orders and last minute charges often incur a surcharge. The EIBTM online manual clearly highlights deadlines and provides forms to be completed and sent to contractors.

### **Think 'exhibition presence' not 'exhibition stand'**

Don't make the common mistake of blowing your entire budget on stand design. Remember to allocate sufficient funds to promotion, staff training and subsistence, and post-show activities such as telemarketing and direct mail, to convert leads into sales. EIBTM if used in the most effective way is not just a 3 day event but an integrated mix of communication channels and can provide year round access to your target market.

### **Choose a reliable stand designer**

If you are opting for a custom-build stand, choose a designer with a proven ability to work to schedule, and within budget. Contact your exhibition contractors association for a list of members. Talk to previous clients about the company's track record.

### **Go straight to a stand contractor**

Going straight to a stand contractor is likely to be a more economical solution for exhibitors on a limited budget, particularly if you take the modular approach, as many contractors include free design consultancy as part of the overall stand package.



**Take advantage of free publicity**

Editorial coverage is one of the best endorsements your company can achieve (assuming it's positive!). And it's free. Take time preparing your press information and onsite pack and circulate it in good time to the EIBTM's PR agent and trade press. Ensure your PR team are in regular contact with Cut Communications, EIBTM's international PR Agency who can assist and advise on what opportunities exist.

**Sales literature costs money!**

Don't leave expensive brochures on the stand for all and sundry to pick up. Produce a concise sales leaflet for general distribution and keep the glossies back for those with a genuine interest. Don't forget, many buyers now like information to be available to download onto a memory stick, it saves lugging tonnes of paper around the show and back to the office and is more environmentally friendly.

**Keep a tight control on expenses**

Establish at the outset exactly what costs the company will pick up. Give staff a 'per day' allowance for meals and entertainment -any expenses over and above this should be paid for by the individual and reimbursed after, if appropriate. Keep anything valuable including alcohol, mobile phones, laptops or exhibits on the stand locked away at night.



## **5. Choosing, designing and building your stand**

This should be in direct relation to your specific event (or sector specific objectives). There are many things to consider when deciding on the stand design (budget, number of products to be exhibited, number of partners etc) but it is important to understand the options available:-

### **Review your options**

- **Shell scheme/Pipe and drape** -a modular system, erected by the organisers on your behalf, comprising side and rear walls, carpet and name board. Stand fittings can be hired as required and 'stand packages' complete with furniture, lighting and power are often available. Ideal for first time exhibitors, those with limited budgets and/or administrative resources, and those looking to control costs.

- **Modular display system** available in a growing range of styles, shapes and materials, allowing a high quality presence for much less that it would cost on a custom built stand. Can be quickly erected and dismantled, reducing contractors costs on site, and are re-usable enabling costs to be spread across several events.

- **Custom-designed & purpose built** -for companies who want total freedom of expression and a truly individual exhibition presence. Expensive, because they can rarely be re-used. For this reason, 'half-and-half solutions, -re-usable modular interiors around which are constructed 'one-off' exteriors are increasingly favoured for the cost savings that can be made.

### **Determine Stand Size**

Your stand size should be determined by your objectives: i.e. by the type and number of exhibits, the amount of free floor space needed for visitors (bearing in mind the number of leads you are aiming to take), the features you need to include reception desk, storage space, hospitality area etc. and, of course, by your budget.

### **Check proposed site for service access**

If you are demonstrating working machinery check the positioning of service ducts before confirming your stand site, or you may be forced to compromise on your display. Check for the presence of supporting columns, for the same reason. For large exhibits, consider the proximity of the stand for good access, and for convenient disposal of waste from working machinery demonstrations.

### **Prepare a written design brief**

This should detail your objectives, exhibits, service requirements, graphic requirements and stand facilities, and include information on design rules and regulations, critical dates and budget.

### **Draw up a short list of suppliers**

To protect your investment, and ensure good standards of service and workmanship, stick to reputable suppliers. Call your exhibition contractors association for a list of members. Insist on seeing a portfolio of their work. Talk to previous clients to make sure they are capable of delivering on time and within budget.



**Put the job out to tender**

To get the best overall design solution and value for money, space-only stands should be put out to tender, ideally to three of four companies. For large or complex products you may have to pay for detailed proposals.

**Prepare a budget and work schedule**

Having appointed a designer/contractor establish, in writing, exactly what they are responsible for. Confirm the budget and get a detailed breakdown of costs. Agree a work schedule and establish clear reporting procedures. If the stand is big or complex, visit the contractor to see work in progress and be present on site during build-up, not just on the final day.

**Check conformity with rules and regulations**

All exhibition stands must conform to certain international and local venue (Fira Barcelona) regulations covering height, loading, fitting, building materials etc. and these will be detailed in your exhibitor manual. Designs for 'space only' stands must be submitted to the Organising Manager for approval.

**Arrange essential services**

Electricity, water, waste disposal, gas, lifting and telephone connections must be booked through the official contractor via order forms in the Exhibitor Manual. If in doubt about your requirements, talk to the contractor to ensure sufficient supply.

**Organise transportation, handling and storage**

Ensure all packages and crates are clearly labelled with your hall and stand number, and that someone is on site when the goods are delivered. Organisers will not accept them on your behalf, and packages have a habit of going astray. Most venues will not have space for empty packaging cases -you'll need to make arrangements with your shipping agent.

**Allow sufficient time for installation**

The show goes on whether your stand is ready or not. Make sure that the complex stand your designer is proposing can be built in the build-up time available. Shell scheme visitors shouldn't underestimate the amount of time it takes to install an effective display. Don't leave it until the last minute and assume it will all look OK it won't.

**Leave your site as you found it**

At the end of the event, you will be required to leave your stand space as you found it and pay for any clearance or make good any damage.



## **6. The essence of good stand design**

### **Form should follow function**

Before you consider what your stand will look like, you need to be clear about what you want it to do for you at EIBTM. What are you going to exhibit? How many visitors are you hoping to attract? Will you require a reception desk, demonstration or group presentation area, lounge area, an office? How much storage space will you need? How many stand partners will you have?

### **Choose a design that fits your image**

The design of your stand says a tremendous amount about your company. Think carefully about what image you want to project. Do you want to appear friendly and customer-orientated, prestigious, high tech or go getting? Brief your designer accordingly. Shell scheme exhibitors should pay careful attention to graphics. Displays cobbled together at the last minute from cheap materials do nothing for a company's image as a professional organisation. Creative use of quality photography can transform a bland wall into a spectacular backdrop for your meetings and discussions.

### **Beware of psychological barriers**

The more open a stand, the more likely people are to step aboard. Platforms can act as a psychological barrier and are best avoided. Always imagine yourself in the position of the buyer and check that your stand does what you want it to and is inviting on the eye!

### **Don't try to dictate traffic flow**

Freedom of movement is fundamental to good stand design. If you try to control traffic flow around your stand too rigidly, you will expend all your energy directing visitors rather than doing business with them.

### **Movement excites interest**

A moving exhibit is much more likely to attract the eye than a static one. If your product or service cannot be demonstrated, look at other ways of creating movement for example, through the use of light, audio-visual displays or rotating signs and display plinths.

### **Height increases visibility**

The best-space only stands also call attention to themselves from a distance. Height needn't be expensive - a simple column or pillar with your company name on can be extremely effective. Think carefully about the location of the stand and the flow of visitors. Use every design opportunity to attract their attention.

### **Say what you do**

Don't assume that everyone will know what you do from your company name alone. If you're not a household name, or it's not immediately obvious from your display what you can offer, use graphics to spell it out.

### **Reception point for Hosted Buyers**

Some larger stands should incorporate a reception area to greet Hosted Buyers, ensuring they are welcomed and passed to the person allocated for their appointment. A good first impression counts!



### **Promote benefits, not features**

Exhibits should be presented as solutions to specific needs and problems. Don't bury benefits in a long list of features. If your products are the fastest, quietest, most durable or economical on the market, say so. Keep detailed technical data to hand in a brochure.

### **Keep your stand messages brief**

Hosted Buyers and visitors are bombarded with information at exhibitions and can only take in so much. Where possible, stick to bold headlines and, if necessary, bullet points.

### **Don't skimp on photography**

Photographs are a universal language and have got great visual appeal assuming of course, that you use good images. One of the most common complaints from stand designers concerns the poor quality of photographic material they are given to work with. If photographs form an important part of your display, and for many destinations and hotels this is especially the case, plan ahead.

### **Ensure text can be easily read**

Text should be placed at eye level or higher on the stand. Upper and lower case print is much easier to read than block capitals. If you do use longer text, stick to short sentences and paragraphs and use clear, well-spaced type. Make sure that any translated language actually says what it needs to! Check and double check if there is any doubt!

### **If it's new say so!**

The word 'new' is one of the most powerful words in advertising. If you are exhibiting a product or service for the first time, label it accordingly on the stand for all to see. Use the EIBTM website and on-site show daily and catalogue to highlight what's new to Hosted Buyers, trade visitors and media.

### **Exhibitor Stand Awards – New for 2010!**

With competition to attract the attention of buyers and visitors stronger than ever at EIBTM, a new Awards programme for all exhibitors has been introduced which recognises a number of key disciplines in delivering an impactful stand presence at the show.

The full list of categories below will be judged by an independent panel of Judges on the Opening day of EIBTM with the winners announced the following day:-

- Best Stand Design Overall
- Best Stand Design – Shell Scheme
- Best Stand for Doing Business
- Best Stand Personnel
- Best Stand Feature/Attraction
- Most Innovative stand within the Technology and Event Services Village
- Sustainability (judged by Sustainability Events Limited)
- Hosted Buyer voted Best Stand (judged by Hosted Buyers attending EIBTM)

Further details can be found in the Exhibitor Zone at [www.eibtm.com](http://www.eibtm.com)



## **7. Publicising your presence at EIBTM 2010**

### **Start with your objectives**

Different objectives require different promotional strategies. For example, if you want to raise awareness of a new brand, product or service at EIBTM, banner advertising on the website and sponsorship either pre-show or on site will ensure a high profile and attract more buyers and visitors. If you have already identified your prospects, carefully targeted direct mail and exclusive stand invitations would be more appropriate.

### **Co-ordinate your activities carefully**

Exhibitions should be treated as an integral part of your marketing effort not as isolated events on the marketing calendar. Use the event to reinforce themes running in other media; put 'see us at..' flashes on existing advertising; promote your participation on your web site, and in customer newsletters.

### **Read the publicity guide**

EIBTM, like many trade shows produces a full guide to marketing and publicity. Available on the website, make sure it is forwarded to the right person (your marketing manager, or PR agency); take advantage of all free publicity opportunities; and be sure to meet all deadlines.

### **Invite your customers and prospects**

Recent research has shown that 83% of the most successful exhibitors (in terms of business generated and leads collected) had mailed their customers and prospects before the show. (Source: Centre for Exhibition Industry Research). You can mail your own lists, buy a list or mail the event's list of pre-registrants. Include a ticket and a covering letter and/or incentive giving them particular reasons to visit your stand.

### **Submit a catalogue entry**

Exhibition directories/catalogues are the definitive guide to who's exhibiting, what they are showing and where they can be found. Available at the show, they are increasingly published on event web sites to help attendees plan their visit. Use your free editorial entry to highlight new products/services and company developments, stressing benefits over features.

### **Prepare a press pack**

Ideally, your pack should contain a press release (or releases) on new product launches or company developments, stressing the benefits; background information on the company, preferably in the form of a fact sheet; and photographs, clearly captioned. Alternatively, download all your press information on a USB stick and provide this to journalists as a more sustainable option.

### **Inform the media of your activities**

Find out from the organisers which media are doing show previews (most show publicity guides carry a list). Note the deadlines and submit your news and photos in good time. Send your news to the event's publicity manager too, for inclusion in the official show preview and review.



**Consider sponsorship**

Use sponsorship to stand out from the crowd. EIBTM offers a range of 'off-the shelf' sponsorship opportunities, from carrier bags and signage to Hosted Buyer Lounge and press office sponsorship. The best option would be to discuss a tailored package with your Account Manager that helps achieve your EIBTM specific objectives.

**Use the web to maximum advantage**

The EIBTM website is increasingly being used by Hosted Buyers and trade visitors to plan their visit and maximise their time at show. Take advantage of all publicity opportunities including on-line catalogues and product directories, news pages, banner advertising and hyperlinks to your own site.

**Mail additional prospects after the event**

Mail the prospects you didn't have time to meet, after the event. EIBTM can provide access to the event attendance database, and you can target very selectively, for example, by job title, product interest, geographical location etc. You can either rent the list for single use or purchase it for adding to your own database of prospects.



## **8. Stand staffing and organisation**

Imagine designing a truly creative and inviting exhibition stand that meets the brief perfectly. What could possibly go wrong? Probably the single biggest impact on a successful trade show is the people on the stand! After all, business is done between people and not companies! Your success depends largely on the collective talent, product knowledge and energy level of your staff so take time to select the right team. Investing time in getting a team of motivated and informed staff will not only make your job easier but also give you every chance of having a fantastic EIBTM.

### **Appoint a Stand Manager**

Stand managers need to be efficient, flexible, and diplomatic to deal with the many responsibilities at show, from motivating stand staff to liaising with contractors and welcoming important guests.

### **Choose your team carefully**

Ensure the right balance of sales and technical staff, as well as senior managers. One of the greatest complaints from visitors about exhibitions concerns the lack of knowledge of stand staff. Buyers attend exhibitions with very specific questions on product performance, price and delivery. Make sure you have staff available who can answer them.

### **Pick staff that are willing *and* able**

A positive attitude is vital if staff are to make the most of the event, and not undermine the enthusiasm of others.

### **Don't skimp on numbers**

EIBTM is hard work. Allow for adequate cover during busy periods and rest breaks. The costs of bringing one or two more people will be outweighed by increased productivity.

### **Involve stand staff in the planning**

If stand staff feel part of the project from the outset you'll be much more likely to win their commitment and support.

### **Draw up a duty roster**

Give staff adequate breaks to avoid fatigue and boredom. 2-3 hours is about the longest most people can sustain their energy levels. Copy the rota to all team members, so they know who is on duty at any given time.

### **Brief the team thoroughly**

Hold a briefing session before EIBTM covering exhibition and personal objectives, exhibits, enquiry handling procedures, dress code, logistics, catering etc. Give each team member a written summary for reference on the site.

### **Stand 'selling' is a specialist skill**

Set aside a day to teach the fundamentals of how to encourage visitors onto the stand, how to open and close conversations, how to qualify visitors, and the impact of their own body language. It will make a dramatic difference to performance. Of course, with EIBTM's pre



scheduled appointment system, your diary of appointments means that stand is likely to busy at all times so everything needs to run to time!

#### **Use an efficient lead-recording system**

Devise a tailor-made lead recording form for fast completion. Products of interest, type of business, purchasing authority etc. can all be listed so each interviewer has simply to tick the appropriate box.

#### **Use incentives to motivate staff**

Set individual staff targets for lead gathering, and reward achievement. Run light-hearted competitions with prizes for the winners.

#### **Look after staff comforts**

Stay as near to the exhibition as possible to avoid long journeys. If you have a sizeable team, hire a minibus to ferry yourselves to and from the hotel. Provide wholesome food on the stand and plenty of soft drinks.

#### **Establish some basic stand rules**

Discipline is essential on an exhibition stand. Establish a few ground rules for staff, covering punctuality, dress code, wearing of badges, use of the hospitality area and the drinking of alcohol on the stand.

#### **Keep your 'house' in order**

Put a member of the staff in charge of everyday 'housekeeping', with responsibility for ensuring that the stand is kept tidy, ashtrays are empties, literature is replenished and any damages to the display are quickly fixed.

#### **Ensure adequate security**

Lock away valuables in an office or cabinet at night. Telephones and alcohol are particularly susceptible to abuse. Depending on the value of your exhibits, you may wish to hire your own security guard overnight.

#### **Recognise and reward achievement**

After the show, tell your team what was achieved, and ask their opinions on how the results could have been bettered. Repay their effort and commitment with a small token of thanks. If they feel appreciated they'll be much more likely to try even harder next time around.



## **9. Following up after the show**

*“Exhibition industry statistics report that less than 20% of all show leads are ever followed up, over 80% are wasted. “*

Don't fall into this trap. Make a point of contacting each one of your qualified leads or the entire effort could have been worthless

### **Plan your follow-up *before* the show**

Set a deadline for making initial contact, and a system for ensuring that ALL leads not just the hottest, are pursued to a conclusion. If you don't have the resources in house you should consider using the services of a mailing house or telemarketing agency.

### **Clear diaries for a week after the show**

Make sure those responsible for lead-follow up set aside sufficient time to complete the job. Set aside a week, possibly two, depending on the number of enquiries you expect to take.

### **Prioritise leads according to urgency**

Categorise all enquiries as soon as possible – preferably as they are taken on the stand. For example: A (definitely interested/immediate buying intention); B (actively considering purchase within the next six months); C (gathering information for future reference.)

### **Follow up immediately**

To maximise response you need to strike while the iron is hot. Category A leads should be dealt with immediately. Have a fax machine or office-linked computer on your stand, so they can be relayed to the office for immediate action. ALL leads should be responded to within a week, two at the most.

### **Be persistent**

Most exhibition leads take between three and eight months to come to fruition. Those involving the purchase of capital equipment or other high costs can take much longer. Prospects must continue to be contacted at regular intervals until a sale is concluded, or the lead dries up.

### **Track all leads**

Establish a central database of enquiries on computer. When distributing enquiry forms, retain a copy of each one in a central file, and record on it the name of the person to whom it has been distributed. Assign each lead a code so that it does not merge with the general sales database and can be tracked through to the accounts department for when the customer is invoiced.

### **Establish an effective sales reporting system**

Getting sales people to record and report on the progress of enquiries is important if you are to have any financial measure of success. But it can be a problem, especially when dealing with regional offices. When distributing leads, attach a report form which must be completed and returned by a deadline date, indicating lead status. If the sale is ongoing, issue a second report with a new deadline, and so on until the lead is pursued to its conclusion.



**Carry out a sales audit**

An alternative to on-going lead tracking and sales reporting is to carry out a sales audit at an agreed period after the show. Ask each sales person to prepare a report indicating the status of all leads passed to them, the value of sales achieved, and anticipated value of future sales. Repeat the exercise at a later date.



## 10. Evaluating EIBTM effectiveness

It is crucially important that your investment and involvement in any trade show is properly evaluated and EIBTM is no exception. Every trade show is different and each exhibitor needs to create its own methodology or framework for evaluating its participation at each event. As well as being able to justify your investment, a sound evaluation will identify what you are doing is right and delivering against your objectives or what needs to be reviewed or changed.

### **Measure your results**

Depending on your objectives, there are a number of ways to measure exhibition success. It is a good idea to use as many as possible, to get the fullest picture of your achievements:

- . • **Value of sales achieved** – providing an efficient tracking system is used, it should be possible to ‘close the loop’ on many exhibition enquiries and assign a value to sales achieved.
- . • **Number of leads qualified** – does the number match your target? What is the quality of the leads?
  - **Cost per useful contact** – divide the total cost of exhibiting by the number of leads generated to help establish the cost-effectiveness of the exercise.
  - **Number of new contacts made** – compare the list of enquiries with your existing customer database. How many are new contacts? How would you have otherwise made these contacts?
- . • **Levels of customer/market awareness** – survey a cross section of visitors after the event asking them what they can recall about your company, your exhibit etc.
- . • **Media coverage generated** – keep a log of all press cuttings, including local and national press, trade press, official show preview and review, show daily newspaper. Use a press-monitoring agency if necessary. Get a circulation figure from the organisers for the show preview and daily. Establish the area of page space you received in editorial and calculate the cost of an equivalent advertisement. Evaluate the content of the editorial achieves. To what extent did you succeed in getting your message across?
  - **Other** – some benefits cannot be measured scientifically but are important when considering overall exhibition effectiveness. Consider the role the event has played in generating customer goodwill, building team spirit within the organisation, monitoring competition activities etc.

### **Evaluate your performance**

Having measured results, you need to pinpoint and analyse the causes of success or failure, so you can make improvements next time around. If targets were not met, to what extent was it caused by the organisers (quality/quantity of visitors, organisational problems) or by your own efforts? Consider all areas of your participation, from planning and budgeting, to stand design, promotion and staff performance.



### **Debrief the exhibition team**

What did the team think of your performance? Hold a debriefing session while the event is still fresh in everyone's mind so that problems can be assessed and resolved for next time.

### **Prepare a post-show report**

Write up your conclusions and recommendations in the form of an EIBTM post-show report. Include samples of promotions undertaken and photographs of the stand. It will give you a huge head start next time around; and will provide a solid foundation on which your successor can build, should you move on! Ensure that your senior management team get to see a copy so they can see how their Marketing budget has been spent but also to understand what the results were. It should draw on conclusions and make recommendations on:-

- Viability of set objectives
- Choice/suitability of exhibits
- Evaluation from sharing partners
- Proficiency of planning and budgeting procedures
- Effectiveness of stand brief and resulting design/layout
- Proficiency of stand designer/contractor
- Effectiveness of show-linked promotions
- Performance of stand personnel as a group and individually
- Efficiency and follow up of leads

### **Provide feedback to the Organising team**

Feedback is critically important to any event organiser and EIBTM is no exception. As an exhibitor and customer, this is your opportunity to tell us exactly how it is and spending 15-20 minutes completing the online post show research study would provide valuable information which can be used to improve EIBTM for the future.

