

Come Prepared – Your onsite Check list

- 1 Know what your objectives are and make sure all your staff are aware of these.
- 2 Engage with your prospects and customers pre-event. They will be there so make sure they visit you and not your competitors. Visitors only plan 3 stand visits – the rest are 'stumbled-upon'.
- 3 Send prospects a floorplan with your position marked on it.
- 4 Include banners on your emails and on your websites – the marketing team will create ones with your stand number on if you ask.
- 5 Engage with the exhibition's twitter account. While onsite the events often trend on twitter. Tweeting allows you to reach thousands of key buyers both onsite and further afield. Highlight special events and competitions. Tease buyers about new launches.
- 6 People come to shows to see the actual product. It is important to have enough products for people to taste, feel, handle. This is why people visit shows rather than just surf the internet and moves the debate away from purely price.
- 7 Have your twitter handles on your stand and make sure staff are also tweeting not just the main contact.
- 8 It is imperative that stand staff are fully briefed & trained pre-event. What are the key messages / products you would like to promote?
- 9 Plan lead capture and follow up in detail. Having someone back at the office who responds to all enquiries that day is impressive and gets the detailed information in front of clients while you are still top of mind. It dramatically improves your chances are getting to the next stage and closing the deal. Whether you use hard copy or digital solutions it is up to you.
- 10 Keep all collateral brief, to the point & memorable.
- 11 When planning staff levels build in breaks to lunch etc.
- 12 Set targets and measure staff each day. Make sure they don't see it as a 'jolly'.
- 13 WiFi in exhibitions halls can be unreliable due to the sheer volume of people trying to use it. If your stand / demonstrations need internet access book a hard-wire.
- 14 Ask open-ended questions – don't let people give you a no before you have managed to engage them.
- 15 Drink lots of water. Most show tiredness and back ache is actually due to dehydration.
- 16 Develop and translate digital media kits and give these to the onsite press office. Journalists don't like hard copy.
- 17 Bring a camera – when you do your post-show review it will help to jog your memory about what worked and what wasn't so great.
- 18 Bring plenty of business cards in both your native language and English. Always bring double the number you think you will need.
- 19 Trade show kit should include box cutter, scissors, 2-sided tape, duct tape, Velcro, sampling cups or cocktail sticks, napkins, rubbish bin, phone chargers, picture hooks, first-aid kit, aspirin, lots of pens, clipboards, post-it notes, stapler, calculator and of course business cards and data capture devices.
- 20 Determine if you will need a translator on your stand.
- 21 Comfortable shoes – gel inserts help.
- 22 Bring copies of any certificates or awards.
- 23 Always enter the show awards well before the event – it will ensure press coverage and help you rise above the rest.
- 24 Plan the appropriate show attire. Events are more casual than they used to be; so suits aren't always needed but you are there to represent your company.
- 25 Don't sit down at the back of the stand fiddling on your phone – you can't find any new customers that way.
- 26 Look happy / approachable.
- 27 Never leave phones, laptops or tables lying around on your stand. Thousands of people are in the hall and some aren't as honest as others.
- 28 Know how to close a conversation and move on – the final sale will be done post-event. You are there to maximise the opportunity not have a lengthy chat with an existing client.
- 29 If you want to engage with existing clients plan a set time for a drinks or other reception and see them all then.
- 30 Prospect follow up is essential – do it immediately, before you go out to dinner or home each day.
- 31 Know the customs and shipping issues before you arrive in the country.
- 32 Book onsite for the following year – you will save money and get the best stand positions.
- 33 Build a relationship with the show team. They love talking and tweeting about new products and come in to contact with lots of buyers and influencers in the trade.