



GREAT BRITISH MARKETING

How to...

MAKE THE MOST OUT OF EXHIBITIONS



INTRODUCTION

For any business, exhibiting at a trade show can be a highly effective way of building brand awareness, making new contacts and generating sales.

But for British manufacturers, exhibitions offer a particular and frequently **lucrative** advantage because they provide a **unique opportunity to demonstrate new and existing products face-to-face** with existing and potential customers.

In an age where manufacturers are increasingly bringing the physical and digital worlds together to save money and time, exhibitions are a great way to **keep up-to-date with the latest industry developments** too.

Benefits

- ◆ Build credibility and visibility
- ◆ Make new connections with customers and suppliers
- ◆ Strengthen existing business relationships
- ◆ Demonstrate products, services and technologies
- ◆ Launch new products, services and technologies
- ◆ Keep up-to-date with industry developments

Manage the risk

There's no hard and fast guarantee you'll come away from an exhibition with the results you want but there are things you can do to make success more likely. FIG has more than 20 years' experience helping manufacturing business make the most of out of trade shows and exhibitions and we've put this guide together to help you do the same.



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TOP TIPS TIMELINE

Managing your exhibition presence is a complicated process with more project dependencies and deadlines than the Brexit negotiations! The key to success is in the planning - before, during and after the event.

Your specific timeline will depend on the type of show and what you want to achieve from it, but here are some helpful pointers for each stage in the process:

BEFORE

1. KNOW WHAT YOU WANT TO ACHIEVE

Set quantifiable objectives and work out how you'll measure success against them. Exhibitors are often looking to make sales or find clients or prospects but you're missing a trick if you don't have a couple of other objectives to work towards – like expanding your international customer base, strengthening relationships with existing customers or launching a new product.

2. STAND OUT

A vibrant, attractive stand will encourage people to come and visit you – it's the initial hook for the entire lead generation process. Create a theme that is consistent with your business to ensure people remember you.

3. TAP IN TO TRADE PRESS

Manufacturing exhibitions are really well attended by trade journalists so if you're doing something newsworthy (like launching a new product) arrange an interview with one of them on your stand. If not, consider a stunt that will get people talking...

4. GIVE A TALK

This can be a highly effective way of getting in front of a specific audience, building credibility within your sector and getting on the right side of exhibition organisers. You never know when you might need their help...

5. COMMUNICATE

Tell customers and contacts you're going to an exhibition in advance; let them know where you are and what they can expect to find on your stand. Consider VIP invites to product demonstrations or post event drinks.

EXHIBITION ADVICE FROM OUR DESIGNERS

'Keep stand visuals simple. Too much information and you'll risk a confused overall effect.' **Callie**

'To create really impactful, large displays, you'll need good quality imagery. Make sure yours are 300dpi or higher. Check with your designer.' **Chris**

'Having a theme to work with makes the design process much more straight forward and gets better results.' **Emma**

'Make sure graphic designers know exactly how the stand will be constructed and how much space they have to work with.' **Dave**

ON THE DAY



DO

- ◆ **Arrive early** - the day before if possible. If your stand relies on internet access or other technical services you might need several days to set up and iron out any issues.

'The cost of an overnight stay (or two) compared to cost of not being able to exhibit is negligible.'

- ◆ **Enjoy the limelight** – be confident about your brand, your products, your people. Visitors will feed off of it and you'll have better conversations as a result.
- ◆ **Get social** – post what you're up to on social media and link in to other attendees.

'Many exhibitions have hashtags and Twitter walls you can link in with too.'

- ◆ **Help not sell:** when talking to prospects ask open questions about their needs and problems. Be prepared with a response for the common themes of; saving money, saving time and working more efficiently.
- ◆ **Boost your content library** with blogs and videos taken at the event.



DON'T

- ◆ **Go out the night before:** you'll need all your energy and enthusiasm to be effective on the stand.
- ◆ **Overload visitors with brochure and flyers** - the chances are they'll end up in an exhibition bin. Not only is it pointless, it's not very environmentally friendly. Save them for people who are genuinely interested in your business.

'Offer to post potential prospects a brochure – it's a good way to take contact details and facilitates a more personal follow-up.'

- ◆ **Overdo the gimmicks:** although they might attract lots of people to your stand, you risk missing out on conversations with the people you really want to talk to.
- ◆ **Leave inexperienced staff alone** - Always make sure there's someone on the stand who can answer difficult technical questions.
- ◆ **Forget existing customers** – it's much easier to sell to an existing customer than make a new one so prioritise any that visit your stand.

AFTER

1. FOLLOW UP. FAST!

Start the sales follow up immediately. A great way to focus your team's mind is to share the 'cost per lead' so they can see how valuable each lead is and how important it is to generate sales from them.

2. SAY THANK YOU

Always thank the staff, external professionals and other third parties who helped make your exhibition such a success. (Thank customers and prospects as part of the lead follow up process).

3. EVALUATE PERFORMANCE

A disciplined assessment of performance against objectives is necessary to establish return on investment as well as success against qualitative objectives. Some sales outcomes will not be realised until months after the event so it might be appropriate to update your evaluation periodically until all leads are exhausted.

4. REFLECT ON THE EXPERIENCE

It's worth reflecting on how the event went, from initial planning through to packing up the stand. What did you learn? What went well? What would you change? Which competitor stands stood out and why? Record the information to feed in to any exhibitions you're planning for the future.

5. USE THE MOMENTUM

Going to an exhibition is an uplifting and energising experience so use that momentum to feed in to marketing activities over the coming months. Use and re-use content generated. Review the competitor information you've collected for ideas about how you can improve what you're doing.



TAKING THE LEAD

To follow up leads in a meaningful way, remember as much information as you can in addition to the individual's basic contact details. Details like their specific business needs, decision making authority, level of interest expressed and any personal interests they mention can facilitate a much more personalised – and effective – follow up.

BUT note that from May 2018 you'll need to ensure compliance with GDPR Regulations around data collection and privacy. For more information go to <https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/guide-to-the-general-data-protection-regulation-gdpr/>

IN OUR EXPERIENCE

Given the time, energy and money involved in exhibiting at a trade show, it's often cost effective (and certainly less stressful) to get professional exhibition support.

FIG has more than 20 years' experience doing just that for British manufacturing businesses. Here are just some of the events we've been working on recently:

Company: Northwood Hygiene Products Ltd

Exhibition: InterClean in Amsterdam

Objective: Showcase Northwood's toilet tissues and dispensing ranges and launch North Shore, Northwood's new range of premium washroom dispensers and consumables for the away-from-home market.

How they stood out: Central bar area branded the 'Impressions Bar' encouraged visitors to enjoy a glass of champagne whilst networking. Three distinct display areas, which all included space for products to be attached as well as for literature to be displayed, were all designed according to the particular brand's styles.

What FIG did:

- ◆ exhibition strategy
- ◆ stand design
- ◆ branding for bar area
- ◆ developed product videos
- ◆ designed new brochures

DON'T FORGET

Regulations

If you're exhibiting at a trade fair you'll need to make sure your stand meets health and safety standards as well as the requirements under the Disability Discrimination Act.

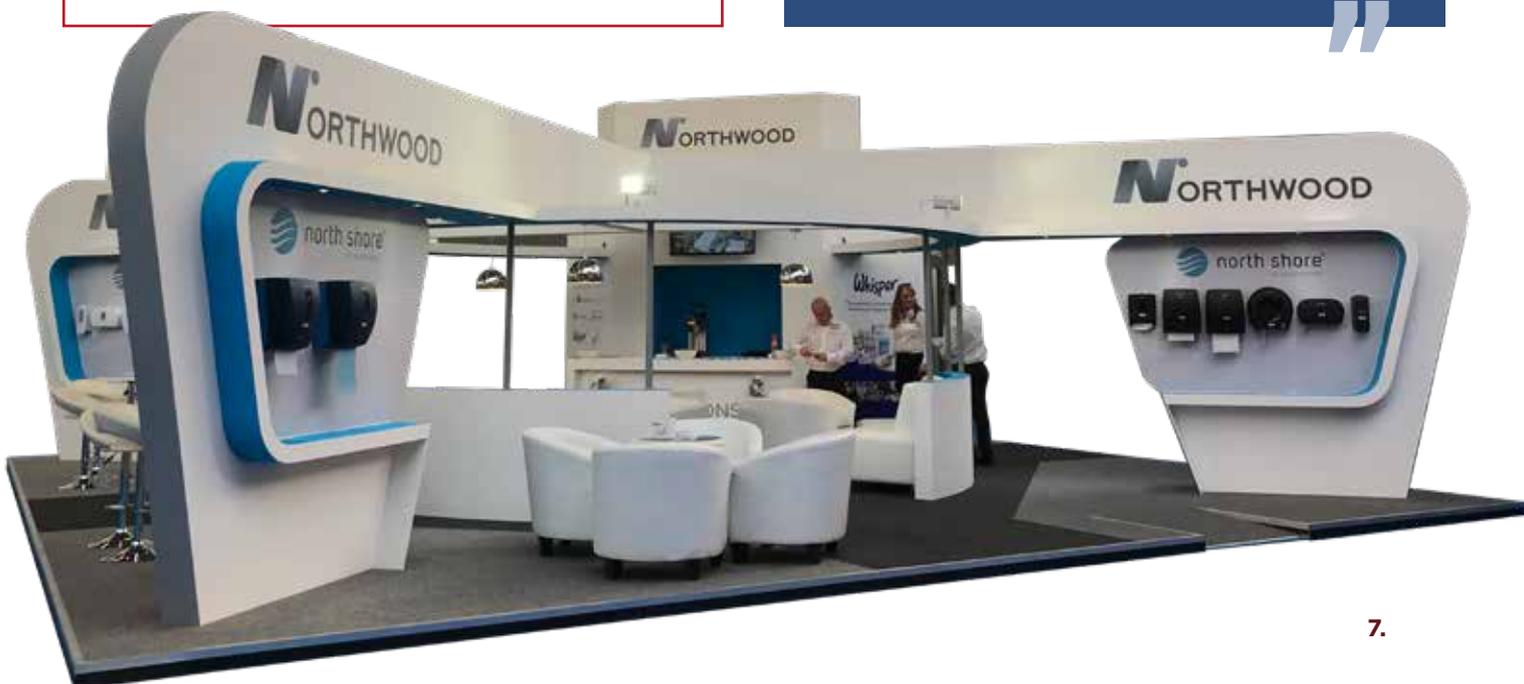
You'll also need to comply with sale of goods and data protection and privacy regulations.

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'The breadth of support FIG provided – from strategic branding advice through to designing the napkins we used on the stand – helped us make the most of this unique opportunity. We've had fantastic feedback from customers!'

**Paul Mulready, Marketing Manager
at Northwood Hygiene Products Ltd**

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Fastrak™ GROUP

Company: Fastrak Retail (UK) Limited

Exhibition: Retail Design Expo, Olympia

Objective: To communicate Fastrak Retail's key USPs to brands and retailers – in particular its ability to provide a complete retail display solution from design and prototyping through to manufacture and assembly.

How they stood out: Clear messaging, global representation of 360 Experience theme. Self-assembly flat pack vehicle assembly giveaway and race car experience competition.

What FIG did:

- ◆ Messaging
- ◆ Stand design concepts
- ◆ Stand graphics
- ◆ PR including editorial in show guide, exhibition profiles, arranged and briefed for interviews with trade journalists
- ◆ Social media management

DON'T FORGET

Insurances

Exhibition organisers will usually require you to prove you have appropriate liability cover in force but you can also buy exhibitor insurance – a combination of covers for event cancellation and disruption, loss or damage to property, and liabilities.



'We know exhibitions work because we first met Fastrak at The Northern Manufacturing and Electronics Exhibition 2017. Fastrak is now part of our Marketing Partner Programme. To find out more go to <https://fig.agency/marketing-partners/>

Company: MVIS Ltd and Bartco UK Ltd

Exhibition: Traffex, NEC Birmingham

Objective: To launch the first portable variable message sign (VMS) and Traffic Light Integrated Solution.

How they stood out: with a physical demonstration of the new solution which enabled customers to see its benefits in action.

What FIG did:

- ◆ Banners and blogs for websites
- ◆ Social media management
- ◆ Artwork and content for online exhibitor listings
- ◆ Designed marketing collateral
- ◆ Competition entry
- ◆ PR including preview coverage in trade publications and interviews with trade journalists that resulted in valuable post-exhibition coverage.



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At Traffex we are among our peers so the impression we make both on and off the stand is vital. With FIG’s support everything potential customers and partners see is professional, consistent with our brand and designed to communicate the benefits of the ITS solutions we offer.

Anne Ashman, General Manager at MVIS

Glossop Cartons

Company: Glossop Cartons

Exhibition: Packaging Innovations, NEC Birmingham

Objective: To showcase Glossop Carton’s packaging prowess in the vape, pharmaceutical and food and drink sectors.

How they stood out: eye-catching high street visuals and sample packaging.

What FIG did:

- ◆ Developed stand theme concepts
- ◆ Produced stand graphics
- ◆ Created 6 bespoke product packages
- ◆ Designed promotional emailshot



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The stand looked great and attracted a lot of attention for us. Working with FIG on the design allowed us to create a design that would showcase the key sectors we work in; vape, pharmaceutical and the food and drink industry.

Vicky Every, Marketing and Commercial Manager, Glossop Cartons



If you'd like FIG to help get the most out of your trade exhibition,
please get in touch at hello@fig.agency or call us on **01457 857111**

www.greatbritishmarketing.co.uk