



brand buddies

# EXHIBITIONS

Things worth thinking about

The end of the show and the announcement that “the exhibition will close in five minutes” does not mean that your job is over. Far from it. Now is when you need to harvest its fruits. You must follow up all your interesting meetings during the event. Everyone is listed in your new customer register and, crucially, that important first contact has already been made.

Surveys show that meetings at exhibitions lead more quickly to contracts than traditional sales activities. But you have to act fast, before the customer loses interest. Hopefully, you will have many new customers to cultivate – and time is short as usual, particularly because your “normal” workload has been piling up at the office during the show.

A good piece of advice is to dispatch a follow-up letter as quickly as possible to the people you have met, in order to maintain customer interest. You can then work systematically to establish closer relations with each contact. Sales visits, offers, teleconferences or mailing more detailed information on your products are useful ways of forging good new business. After the show, you must also start the important process of evaluating its results against your objectives.

Assessing an exhibition involves checking the goals set for it and seeking to explain why they were either attained or not met. Ask yourself how it went, whether your objectives were met, why things turned out the way they did, what can be blamed on the exhibition itself and what is down to your own contribution.

This evaluation can form the basis for your next exhibition participation. Perhaps other appropriate shows exist? Perhaps you could come up with activities to attract other types of people at the next event? The assessment should be documented in writing to ensure that the lessons learnt are not the sole possession of one or a few people in the company. And now the time has come to start planning again.

## Make it hard for your customer to say ‘no’

Make sure you have the right message that best describes your products/service, it is worth bearing in mind that those benefits might be obvious to you but not to the potential or existing client, do your homework and check what it is that might turn your customer ‘on’ rather than ‘off’. If your target group is outside your country of origin make sure your language and communication skills are at least as competent as your product, otherwise you will create an inconsistent level of quality that could be your sales pitfall! In short it is worth investing in competent marketing literature that transforms your products into tangible assets to your target, remember, making it hard to say ‘no’ is not just the work of your salesman rather than an integrated effort starting with marketing support that stands out for all the right reasons.