

ORGANISING AN EXPOSITION WITHIN A CONFERENCE

Having an exposition during a conference is a major asset. The size and significance of the exposition depend on private sector involvement in the domain covered by the conference. The exposition must be an integral part of the conference even though specific marketing tools are required for its organisation.

A) The benefits of an exposition

- For participants: getting extra information, seeing new products and techniques, establishing commercial contacts.
- For stand-holders: presenting new products and services, and giving demonstrations, establishing high-level contacts, saving time and money, increasing visibility (with scientific endorsement), and raising company profile.
- For organisers: substantial financial contribution, alternative advertising (with stand-holders publicising the event), side events to conference.

B) Making it a success

Single venue:

- Conference and exposition must be held at the same venue and, whenever possible, blend into one another.
- Visiting the exposition must come naturally to the participant. All along the day s/he must be able to cross over to the exposition: on arrival (exposition visible from welcome desk), when looking for information (information desk, internet access and meeting point within the exposition area), when coming out from meeting rooms, during breaks (organising coffee breaks in the exposition area).

Tying the exposition into the proceedings of the conference:

- Organising an exposition on a topic directly related to the purpose of the conference makes it easier to find prospective stand-holders and makes the exposition more attractive
- Make stand-holders part of the conference by encouraging them to sponsor (financially) or address a session.
- Encourage stand-holders to invite speakers or participants to the conference by paying registration fees and, possibly, transfers and accommodation.

Allocation of time

- Exposition and conference must open simultaneously.
- Over and beyond coffee breaks, the programme must include free time to visit the exposition every day.
- A formal opening of the exposition must be organised either with personalities present at the opening session or with the chairperson of the conference and members of the organising committee.

Social interaction

- Invite stand-holders to attend all social events on the programme (soirées, cocktail evenings, outings) It gives them an opportunity to further contacts with their customers in a friendly and informal atmosphere.
- Leave one evening free so that stand-holders can take customers out for a meal or organise an evening out.

Privileged partnerships:

- In the lead-up to the conference, send stand-holders personally-addressed letters providing an update on speakers, topics, registration received...
- More than sponsors, they are partners who can bring a lot to the conference (alternative advertising...).
- Provide a comprehensive list of participants so that stand-holders can follow up on their commercial contacts.

Targeted marketing:

- Develop a specific and detailed database of potential stand-holders which includes the contact details, including e-mail address, of all the people in the company who may be interested (chairman, managing director, sales director, marketing director, communications director, etc.) and send them personally-addressed e-mails.
- As early as possible (before company budgets are prepared in September or October), send a commercial dossier highlighting the scientific interest of the conference, the number of expected participants, their profile and background (in particular for foreign participants). Show stand-holder how they can play an active role in the conference itself (stands, moderation of workshops, advertisement in the programme...).
- Involve the organising committee in the commercial operations by asking members to contact directly directors of companies they know or buy from.
- On receipt of the stand-holder's registration, send the technical dossier including the layout of the expo area, a description of stands, the rules of the exposition, request forms for furniture, power supplies, badges, etc., information on insurance policies, times of assembly and dismantlement of stands, deliveries, storage, security, cleaning...

Setting up specific services:

- Unless you contract an exposition organiser (whose fees are usually a percentage of the takings) make sure one individual is in charge of liaison with stand-holders.
- Ensure stand-holders have access to specific services.
- Accommodation: make sure stand-holders can enjoy discount conference rates during the assembly and dismantlement of stands.
- Catering: tray meals for those running the stands, coffee and drinks for stand-holders.
- Dedicated welcome desk.
- Dedicated parking spaces.
- Providing stand-holders with light handling equipment.
- Storage area for packaging of products on show.
- Cleaners, security...

C) Budget

STANDARD BUDGET FOR AN EXPOSITION DURING A CONFERENCE

TAKINGS		AMOUNT	UNIT PRICE	TOTAL
Stands	Area			

	Extra fee for corner stand			
	Processing charge			
	Ready-to-use stand			
Advertising	Initial advertisement			
	Draft programme			
	Final programme			
	Book of abstracts			
	Conference minutes			
	Insert in souvenir bags			
Sponsors	Social events			
	Souvenir bags			
	Subsidies			
Misc.	Organising a session			
	Commission from contractors			
	TOTAL TAKINGS			

EXPENSES				
Expo area rental	Total surface of expo area			
	Assembly and dismantlement days			
	Exposition days			
	Welcome desk			
	Dining hall/Bar			
	Storage area			
	Offices			
Stands	Infrastructure			
	Carpet			
	Lighting			
	Signs			
	Ready-to-use stand			
	Extra cost for decoration			
	Extra cost for furniture			
Misc.	Signposting			
	Cleaning			
	Insurance			
	Fitting-out reception area			
	Decoration			
Staff	Security guards			
	Hostesses			
Publicity	Printing the commercial dossier			
	Printing the technical dossier			
	Exposition handbook			
	Meeting with stand-holders			
	Media			
	Information leaflets			
Running costs	Fees of professional organisers			

	Staff (marketing staff...)			
	Technical costs			
	Postage, telephone...			
	Travelling expenses			
	TOTAL EXPENSES			
BALANCE (Takings - Expenses)				

Remember

●

Having an exposition during a conference is a major asset:
 Participants get extra information
 Stand-holders introduce their products and services
 Organisers get a substantial financial contribution

●

To organise a successful exposition
 you must set up specific services
 for stand-holders

●

The exposition must be an integral part of the conference.
 Leave participants enough free time to visit the exposition.
 Stand-holders can be included in the social events programme
 (soirées, cocktail evenings, outings)