

HOW TO GET THE BEST FROM AP&M

Whether you're an old hand or completely new to exhibiting, the guide below should help you get the most out of ap&m europe.

INTRODUCTION

So, you've picked your spot, signed your form, booked your space and spent the money, now what?

The best way to approach the show is to break the exhibiting 'experience' down into its sub elements and then work your way through methodically & logically, whilst trying to avoid the common mistakes & pitfalls.

PLANNING

"By failing to prepare you are preparing to fail" – Benjamin Franklin

Read Your Exhibitor Manual

First & foremost – go the Exhibitor Zone, download the manual and read it. The manual is available as both a single, downloadable file AND as a series of smaller 'chapters' covering discrete elements of the show and your exhibiting experience. Everything else you need to do will be that much clearer and easier once you've done that.

Understand the show

Before you can even begin to effectively plan, do you understand what it is you've signed up for? ap&m europe is first and foremost a Networking event. If you plan to spend your time stood at your stand, hoping that the right contact will stop by and introduce them selves, you're probably cutting your chances of actually meeting that 'Mr Right' in half. ap&m europe is a networking event, so plan to do some networking.

Are you fully up to date with everything happening at the show? Do you know what is happening? Where it is happening? When it is happening? & Who will be there? Unless you understand what is going on at any point in time, you won't be able to plan to maximize your efforts and you'll have a less than optimum experience. Therefore, make sure you know:

- When & where the two evening receptions are taking place
- What time the show opens to visitors and what time airline delegates can expect to show up (they're not the same).
- When the conference breaks for refreshments, lunch etc.
- Where refreshments are served (VIP Lounge)
- What time Meet the Buyers starts and where it takes place (more on Meet the Buyers later)
- What Seminars are taking place when, and who might be attracted to them?
- Where your competitors, suppliers & customers (if any) are exhibiting on the floor

Set specific goals

Once you've got your head around what the show is, the single most important thing you can do before attending the EXPO is to ensure you and your team know the specifics of why you are attending.

Whether this is to generate 50 new leads, launch a new product to the market, speak with 5 specific companies or use our conference & seminars to brush up your know-how, make sure you specify and communicate the objectives to your staff who will be in attendance. Our EXPO is becoming increasingly versatile, opening up new ways of getting value from it, so make your goals equally wide ranging. If you limit your self to just a single, simple objective of (say) generating 20 new sales leads, you'll have missed an opportunity to generate real value for your business. Appendix A contains potential 24 potential goals – you can probably identify several more that are specific to you.

Plan your stand to meet the goals

If you're looking to entertain existing customers and you have the physical space, try and create a lounge within your stand. If you want to generate lots of new sales lead, don't make your stand too comfortable or you risk it filling up with people trying to sooth their aching feet and you won't get a high enough flow of people through it – you can always take existing customers to the VIP lounge or one of the cafés around the Grand Hall for more relaxed, in depth conversations. If you're launching a new brand, make sure you have prominent and quality graphics. If you cannot physically display your product / service on your stand, then a looped video on plasma screen, or online demonstration via your laptop can be extremely effective. Ensure your stand is full of the tools you need to reach your targets.

The number of staff manning your stand and the mix of disciplines should also be goal-driven. Do you need technical staff to explain things in detail, perhaps top managers to meet with key decision-makers, or energetic colleagues who can bring people in off the aisles? Do you want to bring people from your Engineering / Supply Chain / Logistics / Planning functions to make use of the show to strengthen your own Supply base. If you are a large company, how do you deal with unplanned staff who are visiting the show independently of your exhibiting efforts?

Train your show staff

The first rule of exhibitions is 'The people make the stand'. Selling & promoting at exhibitions is very different to one-on-one meetings or account management over the phone. Make sure all your staff know their goals. This will help make them feel more confident in being proactive about achieving them.

Ensure your staff are fully up to speed on the What, When, Where, How, Why & Who of the show – if they don't understand how the show works, they can't do their jobs.

Need a little more help? There are many stand-staff training courses available that can help staff develop skills they'll need, including a film and e-learning exhibitor resource package from the Association of Event Organisers. Contact the AEO on +44 (0)1442 873331, or visit www.aeo.org.uk

PRACTICALITIES OF EXHIBITING

Below are some practical reminders of the more mundane (but no less critical if they go wrong) things that you should be thinking of in your preparation for the show:

- Find out what equipment the recommended suppliers provide (e.g. screens, tables, chairs, internet)
- Source the equipment you are providing yourself and organise getting it there
- Make sure your display materials fit the space and works with existing equipment

- Check fittings - such as power or internet connections - for the electrical equipment you are using
- Make sure you have enough stock of products and promotional material
- Check what the loading / unloading & parking arrangements are
- Locate and book your hotel and know how to get to and from the venue
- Give yourself plenty of time with shipping of material to Olympia if it is coming in from overseas – a delay in customs can leave you with an empty stand.

PROMOTE YOURSELF

There is a huge range of things you can do to maximise your presence and media foot print, most of which cost nothing more than the time it takes to do them.

Tell people you are there

Research has shown that 83% of the most successful companies at a range of exhibitions (in terms of business generated and leads collected) were ones that took the trouble to communicate to their prospects and customers before the show. [Source: CEIR]

As an organizer we offer a FREE E-flyer creation service, personally branded with your company's logo. Just visit the exhibitor zone to select the e-flyer design you prefer (there are three to choose from) then send us your logo – we'll create the e-flyer and send it back to you for use with your contacts. We can even provide individual links so that you can track whether your customers are registering using your e-flyer.

The same can be done with the downloadable buttons & banners for your online activity. Or we can provide you with show logos to create your own. Make sure that as much as is practical, your website, email signatures, Twitter feeds, LinkedIn profile etc. reference your attendance and invite people to come and see you.

Brand Promotion

In addition to just telling the world that you will be there, give some consideration as to how you can stand out from the rest, both before, during and after the show. It is not necessary to spend anything over and above your booth rental to have a successful show, but if you do want to support your presence with additional branding there is a huge range of options open to you. You may want to have your company logo, and web link next to your name in the exhibitor roster and from the interactive floor plan, or augment your profile in the show guide with the addition of your corporate profile. Alternatively you may want to run your own adverts in trade press or even sponsor the event.

Fill out your online profile – NEW for 2012

Every exhibitor has the opportunity to fill out a short profile on the ap&m europe website. In addition, you can upload a capabilities matrix so that visitors to the show searching for specific services can identify you – if you don't fill out your profile and fill in your matrix, how will they know to come find you?

Show announcements – NEW for 2012

Your Online Company profile includes a section to add Show Announcements. These Announcements automatically populate a Show Announcements page on the website and will be printed in the EXPO Guide in chronological order. Tell us about any product demonstrations, service presentations, competitions, receptions, tweet-ups, and more that are occurring on your stand. Major activities planned (such as contract signings).

PR – NEW for 2012

This year, ap&m europe will have a show daily, published on Wednesday 2nd and Thursday 3rd May. A print version will be available for all event attendees and a digital copy will be emailed out to our entire

database. The Show Daily will include information about upcoming seminars for that day, event highlights and Show Announcements from exhibitors & sponsors, alongside interviews, articles and highlights from the previous day. If you have an announcement to make, perhaps of a new contract signing or significant increase in your capabilities, you can either contact us ahead of time (if you have advance notice) or come by the ap&m stand at the front of the exhibit hall during the show and hand in a press release.

Advertise

Not everyone has the budget or capability to create adverts for the show guide, and it's certainly not a pre-requisite for having a successful show, but if you want to improve your chances of making a wider impact, a show guide advert can be just the thing. Given free to every attendee at the show, PLUS 1,000 copies mailed to airline personnel across Europe after the event, the show guide is a great way to lift your brand and message above the throng.

Pre EXPO priming at ap&m Online Europe – NEW for 2012

Six weeks before ap&m Europe, UBM Aviation host the industries only virtual event, **ap&m Online Europe** (www.apmexpoonline.com). Acting as both a stand alone networking & learning event AND a primer for ap&m Europe, this is an ideal vehicle to begin engaging with the audience that you can expect to meet at Olympia in May. Whether you attend as a visitor (which is free), interacting with other attendees or as an exhibitor / sponsor, setting out your stall for the community and taking part in the seminar & live webinar programmes, **ap&m Online Europe** is a cheap & easy way to kick start your engagement with the ap&m Europe community.

MEET THE BUYERS

At the core of the Networking which takes place at the EXPO is our Meet the Buyers one-on-one meetings. A more detailed explanation of how the system works will be sent to all nominated Exhibitor representatives closer to the show, but here are a few basics which everyone should be aware of:

1. Each Buyer makes them selves available for up to 18, ten minute meetings. Once these fill up, there are no more available with that Buyer.
2. Meetings will be booked and managed using a dedicated, online system which will go live approximately two weeks before the EXPO. Each exhibiting company must nominate one person to receive an individual log-in & password.
3. It is the responsibility of each Exhibitor to book and manage his or her own meetings; no one will do it for you.
4. The system will go live for everyone at the same time and all meeting slots are available for everyone to book on a first come, first served basis.
5. Meeting slots are released in waves, so you have to prioritise who you want to meet, with the most critical meetings selected for the first wave.
6. There will be a brief Bio (equipment operated) for each company sending Buyers to help you decide whether they are relevant to you.
7. Once you have booked your meetings, there may be still more Buyers registering who you might be interested in meeting – it the responsibility of the Exhibitor to go check for new registrations.
8. Once meetings are booked they can be changed.
9. All exhibitors will have a final opportunity to change their meetings on site at Olympia on the afternoon of Tuesday 1st and / or Morning of Wednesday 2nd.

Once you've selected who you want to meet with, make sure you have your strategy in place for how you're going to approach those meetings. Here are a few things to remember:

- Do as much research as you can before hand – find out as much as you can about their current & future fleet / equipment and current supply arrangements. You'll be better able to explain how you might be able to help them, and if you determine that they are a poor fit for your business (or are tied into a long term agreement with a competitor) you are then able to cancel the meeting ahead of time and re-use the meeting slot.
- Don't expect to make a sale or close a deal in the 10 minutes you have – as one experienced exhibitor has put it: "The purpose of a meeting is to get another meeting".
- The person you are meeting may not be the person you are ultimately after (e.g. you sell avionics repair and the person you're meeting 'Buys' Line Maintenance). Providing that the organization as a whole is in the market for your kind of product / service, **THIS DOES NOT MATTER** – you will have created an 'in' to the organization from which you can progress.
- Try to avoid the temptation to give out lots of literature / brochures etc. After 18 meetings they're likely to just throw it away rather than get bogged down with it. Better to have some on your stand so that you have a reason to invite them to it later if they are genuinely interested.

ON-SITE – (OTHERWISE KNOW AS THE FINAL 3FT)

What to do at the show. The most difficult part of the process is making sure you turn opportunity into business.

Attend Everything

As has already been stated, the EXPO is a versatile event with a lot happening over a 3 day period. Check the Exhibition Schedule carefully and make sure you assign at least one person to take part in every activity. Don't miss out on potential meeting opportunities by skipping receptions, or not staying for the full event. Whether it's attending an evening reception, coffee break in the VIP Lounge, listening in on one of the open seminar topics relevant to your company or having lunch in one of the five cafes around the Grand Hall, you never know who you'll bump into.

Speak fluent body language

It's no secret that the secret to success is acting like you are successful already.

Avoid the usual mistakes & pitfalls:

- Don't spend your time head down on the laptop / blackberry catching up on e-mails
- Don't hide at the back of the booth, avoiding eye contact
- Do Smile & say Hello to people as they pass by – don't underestimate how shy people can be, even if they are actively there to see you.
- Don't be rude or dismissive to those who aren't there to buy from you – you may be turning away genuine non sales related opportunities for your business, and today's distraction / annoyance may be tomorrow's customer, employee or even your boss.

Pay attention to these simple body language tips for exhibitors

- Make sure to make eye contact with visitors
- Smile and be enthusiastic (even though you got to bed at 4am after a party/reception)
- Have open body language at the booth – ie no crossed arms or crossed legs but with a pleasant look and ready and willing to talk to people.
- Don't give any reason for visitors not to make contact with you
- Be a good listener – Don't interrupt; show interest in what the visitor has to say and ask questions. Interact!

It may be common sense but it's not always common practice!

Focus on your targets

Chances are your key prospects are a subset of the total audience at the show. Decide who your key targets are and brief your team to focus on them. Set your goals accordingly. Not just to speak to 50 new people, but to speak to 40 new directors and 10 CEOs, for example. Then get proactive. Don't let visitors walk on by, browsing your stand whilst you attempt to make eye contact, smile and remember to portray an open body language.

Work the show

Irrespective of how 'prime' your location is, the most successful exhibitors are those who know how to 'work' a show, not those that pick the 'best' spots. You should think of your exhibition space not as a static display area but as a base of operations from which your staff can make intelligence gathering forays and 'strategic strikes' into the rest of the exhibition hall. At most shows there are hubs of activity

such as refreshment points, smokers corners, VIP Lounges, Wi-Fi spots, product display areas and so on. These hubs attract large numbers of attendees. At the better shows (like AP&M) these attendees are wearing badge which are marked in some way to allow you to tell at a glance who someone is. For instance, at the EXPO, visitors, exhibitors & conference delegates are all identifiable by the colour of their badge.

The more successful Exhibitors will leave a personable host on the stand to answer queries, collect business cards and generally play host while they send the rest of their staff on fishing trips to these hubs (and the rest of the show in general) to reel in potentially useful attendees. If this sounds cold and clinical, almost mercenary, it is because that is exactly what it is. You have spent a lot of money on being at the show, don't waste it by just sitting there – a 'Build it and they will come' philosophy, will only lead to disappointment.

Get out there into the show. Make the first contact.

Collect lead information

How many times have you walked away from an exhibition with a pocket full of business cards and only a faint notion of who you're holding in your hand? Make a point of noting down your conversation with a visitor, and what you've said you'll do for them. If it helps, create a simple template that you can make notes on and staple business cards too.

The more information you can obtain about your potential customer, the better focused your post-show follow up can be. One option is to consider light pens. Rather than just capturing badge information, you can set pre-determined tasks, and scan a task against a visitor. This information can be sent directly back to your offices in real time, so that when your visitor returns to work the next day, they already have your information waiting for them in their inbox.

Working Meet the Buyers

Meet the Buyers is a very busy time at the EXPO, with well over 1,300 face to face 10 minute meetings taking place. Following the rules below will make the experience easier for you, the Buyers you are meeting, and us to manage:

1. Turn up at the Meet the Buyers holding area in plenty of time for your first meeting
2. When not having a meeting, return to the Holding area.
3. When the ten minutes is up, leave your seat promptly and make way for the next person.
4. If you believe someone is sat with your Buyer during your meeting slot, ask them politely to move, or ask one of the stewards to do so. They may ask to check your schedule to confirm you have the right slot / person
5. If someone approaches you to say they believe you are sat with their Buyer in your slot, please be polite and check your schedule – it can be very easy to get time slots and personnel confused, particularly if an airline has sent multiple Buyers.
6. Remember the points raised in the Planning section – make good use of your ten minutes and always try to arrange a follow up meeting or call.
7. Please be gentle with our Buyers – they give up a lot of their time for you and we want them to come back again in the future.

Breakdown

It is tempting to try and break down early, particularly if you have a lot of work to do, a long drive ahead of you or are just tired after two days of hard work. Avoid this temptation at all costs. A potential customer can walk buy at any time right up to the last minute. If you're breaking down you'll miss it and it gives the wrong impression to customers – that you care more about yourself than them. You're also in breach of Health & Safety regulations and you could be the cause of the show being prematurely closed by the Fire Marshall (it's happened before) – in which case your company would be banned from ap&m for life.

AND FINALLY

Unless you measure success by the sales that come through the door after an event, and therefore cannot say whether it has been good for you or not for some time after, give some consideration to what you plan to do for the 2013 show BEFORE you come to this year's EXPO. Over 80% of our exhibitors cite 'location on the plan' as being in their top two considerations when booking space, and over 70% of next year's space is likely to be sold by the end of the EXPO.

You may not have gotten your first pick this year, so make sure you come to the event with authorization to sign up for the following year. If your goals are linked to a particular aspect of our event, or would have been better served by a more advantageous position, booking early could mean you are in a prime position for achieving those goals.

POST SHOW - REAP THE REWARDS

Don't go back to work after a trade fair and forget all about the useful information and leads you have gathered. Following up after the event is probably the most important part of the whole process - if you put it off for too long, you risk losing all the benefits you worked so hard to achieve.

Trade shows do not generate sales – you do

Exhibitions and trade events do not generate sales – they generate opportunities to sell. The sale is made by you, either at the event, or more typically in the weeks, months and sometimes years afterwards.

De-brief the team

When you get back to the office, sit down with the stand staff and key managers. Do an honest assessment of what worked and what didn't. Elicit suggestions for improving performance for future events. Your staff's insights are a valuable asset, especially while their impressions are still fresh.

Measure your results

Remember your specific, measureable goals? Now is the time to measure your success against them. If you exceeded your goals, try to determine why, so you can replicate that success at the next show. If you fell short, figure out what you could do better.

Track the leads

Don't just evaluate your results immediately after the event. Many companies produce written lead-tracking reports three, six and even nine months after a major exhibition to track the new contacts right through to the bottom line. If the sales cycle for your product or service is up to 18 months then that's how long you should be measuring your results. Only then can you truly determine the value of the leads generated and your own competence in converting them into business for your company.

Follow up all contacts

Every visitor to your stand should receive a timely follow up. The degree of follow-up will depend on the classification of the contact, ranging from a simple thank you letter to a sales visit, phone call or information pack. To your prospects, the days and weeks following the exhibition make it clear who most wants their business and who may not be ready to handle it. Don't blow it now!

Reserve a place for next year

If you've met or exceeded your goals, but weren't able to book at the event, now is the time to lock in a prime location for next year, while you still can. Assess the floor plan carefully. Make use of the online interactive version to identify key spots for you. Then put a call in to your account manager.

Write a final report

Summarise the results achieved against the goals you set. Share the report with key managers from sales, marketing and top management. By the time next year's show comes up, you should all have a pretty complete idea of the value of your participation.

APPENDIX A – POTENTIAL GOALS

Here are over twenty specific goals that exhibitions can help you achieve:

Sales

- Generate sales leads
- Make direct sales
- Build a contact database

Customer Relationship

- Build relationships with current customers
- Educate customers
- Up-sell and cross-sell customers
- Collect customer testimonials
- Re-sell lapsed customers

Market Research

- Market test a new product
- Research your marketing campaign
- Test market awareness and perceptions

Brand Building

- Create or raise market awareness
- Position or re-position your brand
- Educate by demonstrating
- Boost financial analyst/investor perceptions
- Develop new markets

Strengthen your Supply Base

- Educate existing suppliers to your way of working
- Identify alternate Suppliers
- Learn about new supply models & structures

Channel Support

- Identify and recruit new distributors or partners
- Support your sales channels
- Build your reputation as a partner

Media Relations

- Get on the 'media radar'/generate coverage
- Build relationships with key editors and journalists