A Worthy Destination: How to Design a More Effective Stand
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Your stand plays a critical role in your exhibiting success. It's where your prospective customers learn what you are all about. It's where your team lives for a few days. It communicates your company's identity. It can differentiate you from the competition and make you stand out in the crowd. It can draw visitors to your stand like bees to a flower. A well-designed stand makes a huge difference in the overall effectiveness of an exhibition.

The key question to ask when creating your stand is, "What is our brand identity, and what do we want our primary visitor to experience, remember and do as a result of visiting our stand?" A thoughtful and well-crafted answer to this question will put you above the competition.

Here are seven key tips to help you design a more effective stand:

1. **Budget**: At least, 20% of your total exhibition budget should be allocated toward stand decoration. Do not skimp here. Too much is on the line. Consider renting as a way to get more out of the stand and more flexibility for the investment.

2. **Stand Location:** Research by Exhibit Surveys (A U.S.-based company who works with exhibitors, organizers and venues) found that there is no direct relationship between the location of a stand and the success of the exhibition. That being said, if you can choose your location, a good approach is to plot the main entrance to the exhibit hall on the floor plan and draw a triangle with the point at the entrance. Ideally, you want to be in that triangle. Also, consider locating near a large stand that attracts a lot of people.

3. **Stand Size:** You need enough space to house your stand, furnishings, demonstration equipment, staff and visitors. It is always better to have a little more space than you need than not enough space.

4. **Layout:** Make it easy for your visitors to enter and exit the stand. Avoid placing tables across the entrance. Create distinct zones for engaging visitors, demonstrating your products or services and closing leads and/or sales.

5. **Identity and Branding**: Carefully consider the identity and brand message you want to communicate and make sure your stand supports both. If you are positioned as leading edge, or fun and easy to work, or solid and stable, then make sure your stand design supports this identity. Work closely with your stand designer to select construction materials, shapes, and colors that support your company's identity.

6. **Graphics:** There are three questions in the mind of a visitor as they walk the exhibit hall aisles: 1.) What does your company do? 2.) Why should I care (from the visitor's perspective)? and 3.) Who is the company? Make sure your graphics answer these three questions quickly, visually and effectively. Legibility is critical, consider your location and determine how far away you want a visitor to be able to read your graphics. Less is more. A strong headline with a compelling visual and a few bullet copy points is all you generally need.

7. **Creative Interactivity:** Remember, you not only compete with your direct competitors but every other stand on the floor. You must offer an experience worthy of a visitor's time. One of the most effective ways to do this is through product or service demonstrations. Ask, "How

can we bring our product or service to life?" "How can we make our product/service accessible and easy for visitors to interact with and understand?", "How can we prove our claims?

These seven tips will help you design an incredibly effective stand – a stand truly worthy of a visitor's time – a stand that makes a powerful contribution to the success of your exhibition program.

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