



# Six Steps to Event Success

A MUST READ IF YOUR INTENTION IS TO  
SUCCESSFULLY EXHIBIT AT AN EVENT



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## INTRODUCTION

If your intention is to successfully exhibit at an event, by writing down your criteria for success you form your Goal. Breaking down that Goal into steps produces a Plan. A Plan backed by Action will drive you towards the success you desire.

This short guide tries to capture **6 Must-Do activities** that will significantly increase your chances of successes when attending and exhibiting at an industry event.

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1. YOUR GOAL
  2. THE PLAN
  3. ACTION!
  4. ON THE DAY
  5. FOLLOW-UP
  6. WHAT NEXT?
- 



Norse stand at RHS Chelsea 2019

# 1. Your Goal



Badger Countryside Ales

Your ideas and aspirations for this business marketing event, written down with a date becomes a Goal. A Goal should be specific, measurable, actionable, realistic and time bound (SMART.)

Think past the actual event and dream what a fantastic result would look like, write it down. Share your Goal, explore what is success for you, your colleagues, the business.

The key at this stage is to put them down in writing. Clearly, simply.

# 2. The Plan

When I write a Plan for a trade show or exhibiting at an event I try to keep it simple and start with a sheet with three headings; What, When, Who.

Then consider the key steps (stepping stones) to achieve or reach your Goal.

First, write down these big steps (up to 10) and then use this framework to fill out the details under each key step.

For example:

	Key Steps	Little Steps	When/ Who/ Notes
Timeline ↓	- Event Sign Up		.....
	- Event preparation		.....
		- Exhibitor badges	.....
		- Exhibitor packing list	.....
		- Exhibitor parking tickets	.....
		- Hotel booking, etc.	.....
	- Communications Plan		.....
	- Set up Stand (day before)		.....
	- Event Day		.....
	- Breakdown Stand (last day)		.....
	- Follow up		.....
	- Next Steps		.....

## 3. Action!

A Plan backed by action will drive you towards the success you desire, your Goal. Work your plan and track progress, I would suggest weekly, too ensure you and anyone else helping complete actions (your Who's) are on-track for the planned completion dates (your When's.)

This is just good practice to ensure your project is on-track to complete as planned, and if any issues arise you identify them as soon as practical and are able to take steps to put them right.

Make sure to add steps in your plan for promoting that you will have a stand at the event or trade show. Consider inviting existing customers as well at potential new ones. Think about ways to inform potential customers who don't even know about you yet – make the event an invitation to meet for the first time! Perhaps an interactive competition, a prize draw for example will encourage interactivity. Social media and more direct marketing methods can be used prior to the day.



Cafe Deli Go!

## 4. On The Day

Simply – work your socks off! This is your chance to meet and start to build new relationships. Put your laptop and phone away and focus on being approachable; smile and look welcoming.

Think about the space you have at the event. Don't just look at the floor space, look up and look exciting and engaging. Approachable body language is everything! Can you use the height of the trade show or exhibit space for flags or banners? Ensure your brand is represented and shown off at its best.

To attract people (potential clients or industry contacts) consider having a giveaway or competition – 'if they provide a business card they will win a).....' It's also amazing what free consumables like sweets or confectionery will do.

Plan time to walk around. Find existing customers and congratulate them on their stands (and possible use of your bespoke wooden branded ;- ) products at the event.) Spot potential customers, introduce yourself and take a photo of their stand to jog your memory later. Find your competition and gather useful information (brochures, photo of their stand, etc.) Talk to the people exhibiting around you, they are there with you, looking for business and may be able to share experiences and contacts.

Make sure there is always someone looking after your stand. Be prepared to capture interest (sheets to record people's details (enquiry/lead form), a pen, clipboard, stapler, etc.) Have water available, don't eat food at your stand, but take regular breaks and walk to avoid getting aches from standing (show days can be 7-9 hours long and you may have 2-3 days at the event.)

Be prepared to sell on the day (consider offering a special discount for orders placed on the day), but your key activity is to be collecting contact details for people showing an interest in your products and/or services that you can follow up after the event or trade show.

## 5. Follow Up

In my experience this is the absolute key activity.

You have paid to attend a business event (space), put a lot of effort into planning, promoting and buying those items to show off your business at its best.

You have invested all this time before, during and after the event with the intention of attracting interest, gathering contact information and starting to build business relationships with people attending the event who have shown an interest in your products/services, or who are people well known and/or experienced in the industry – your activity now should be focused on following up with those contacts and growing those initial and very tentative relationships.

First, capture all this great contact information in a Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system, spreadsheet or method you feel comfortable with.

Don't rush in and scare people away asking right away if they want to buy!

I would suggest you send an initial email or letter to thank people for showing an interest and reiterate the offer you had running on the day, or respond to a specific note you made on the day against their details.

A week or so after, if you have not heard from them, send another follow up message and remind them of where you met (the event) and an overview of your product/service and an invitation for an informal chat on the phone at a convenient time (you may propose an initial day/time.)

The key is to follow up. Be proactive. Work to build relationships, develop an understanding of the contacts business, their challenges and aspirations and see how you can match your products and/or services to help solve their problems. See how you can add value not costs.

## 6. What Next?

W.E. Deming (the father of modern quality control) made popular the Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) cycle.

This last stage of your event success is all about learning lessons from your experience and building improvements for the next event.

What went right? What went wrong? What could you do better and what went so well you need to ensure you do more of it next time?

Capture all this great learning and write it down, and share it with the team. Keep it safe and available for the next event you plan to attend.





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