

Writing an exhibition stand brief

A step by step guide to briefing your exhibition stand contractor

If you are reading this you've probably been given the task of writing a brief for a new exhibition stand. This page will help guide you through the process. It's not the definitive list of what you will need, but it's certainly an excellent starting point and will serve as food for thought.

Introduction

The exhibition stand design company will need to know a bit about your company in order to get a feel for how they should design your exhibition stand. A good starting point would be to list the following:

- A couple of paragraphs about your company
- The products you sell or services you provide
- The size of the company. i.e. the number of employees, a rough turnover figure (if you want to provide it - there is a great deal of difference between how a £100,000 company and a £100,000,000 company could/should look!)
- Are you an international company? if so, which countries?
- How long have you been established?
- Describe the company using five or ten words (i.e. young, vibrant, technology based etc) ?
- What are you trying to achieve at this exhibition, brand awareness, direct sales, etc?
- What are you exhibiting, products large or small, services etc?
- How will you operate the exhibition stand? By demos, visual with literature or A/V etc?
- How many of your staff will be working on the exhibition stand at any one time?
- Will you provide refreshments?
- Will you have 'give aways'?

In order to meet your requirements any designer and contractor would need to know where any previous exhibition stand design has failed. So also detail any thing else that could be relevant.

The new exhibition stand

You must now examine what you need from the new exhibition stand. A good starting point would be to consider the following:

- Outline the aims of the exhibition stand (to increase traffic to your website, increase product awareness, generate more sales, improve brand awareness, or showcase a new product or service).
- Who is the target audience? What are their demographics (i.e. members of the public or B2B, industry, turnover/income, socio economic background, language requirements etc).
- Is the new stand part of a re-brand, a new product launch or part of an ongoing strategy?
- Is there other branding/advertising taking place that the new stand should link in with?
- What are the unique selling points for your company, your products or your services?
- What industry are you aiming the stand at?
- Is the market saturated with competition? List a few competitors web sites.
- Do you wish to purchase the stand outright or hire it for each show? Generally an exhibition stand purchased out right will incur a storage charge unless used frequently. It will also be subject to charges for refurbishment and amendments.
- Decide upon a budget which should include everything.

The look of the exhibition stand

The exhibition stand should be an extension of any media, advertising or branding that you have. It is always helpful to be provided with a brochure, some marketing literature or the annual report to help get a feel for the company. So include them with the brief.

Design is subjective, in order to get an idea of the kind of exhibition stand that you like, it is often worthwhile noting details of three or four exhibition stands that you have seen and like. Not necessarily competitors or exhibition stands related to your industry - just give a few examples that you like: the colour schemes, the graphics, audio visual items or the structural elements etc.

Do you have access to any corporate images? Does your company have an image library? In larger companies you may find that another cost centre has already spent hundreds or thousands of pounds on photography and used it once. It would make sense to use these images if possible.

Design & technical requirements

- What site have you selected for your exhibition stand, is it island, open on three, two or one side(s)?
- Have you checked the proposed flow of visitors' traffic?
- What is the best orientation of the stand? Some times it might be better to be facing a large visitor attraction rather than the entrance.
- Do you wish your stand to be open and inviting or does it have to promote a more targeted approach with a private meeting room etc?
- Do you require a kitchen area?
- What services do you require (power, water and waste, telephone, internet etc) ?
- Will you have a platform floor? (All such floors require a ramp for disabled access)
- Do you wish to reuse the exhibition stand or elements of it?
- How many graphics and what form would they take? (Posters, light boxes etc)
- How much storage space do you require?
- Do you require display cabinets?
- Do you require PCs, plasmas etc?
- Do you require a reception desk(s)?
- How many literature racks, carrier bag hooks etc?
- Does your product require specialist lifting or handling etc? If it is very large it may need to be sited prior to the exhibition stand build.
- What is the maximum height allowed and do you wish to utilise this?
- Is it possible to 'hang' banners, stand elements etc from the ceiling?
- Do you understand the Health & Safety requirement is? If not, we can help - contact us.

Promotion

You are making an investment in a new exhibition stand, now it is important to consider how you will support that investment by promote the stand.

An exhibition stand should really be supported by a strategy of promotion and advertising, perhaps consider the following.

- Postal mail shots
- PR exercise
- Sponsorship



- Complimentary gifts and personalised invitations
- Web site promotion

This area of marketing is often not considered, many rely on the exhibition organisers to promote the event in its own right. This does not always help your company as you are probably one of many providing the same or similar products/ services at the show. If you do not tell your clients and potential clients you are exhibiting there is a very good chance that your competitors will be inviting them to their own exhibition stand! It will be useful for your designer and contractor to know what promotional activity you have planned and the timescales, so include a short paragraph on this in your brief.

Conclusion

You should finish your exhibition stand design brief with a short conclusion, outlining what you would like to receive back from the design and project management contractor/agency and by what date.

At CNM Exhibitions we provide a full design proposal, visualising the stand using your logos etc, the layout, the costs, the timescales involved and any assumptions and conditions that we have made.

Good luck with your exhibition stand design brief and don't forget to include us on your invitation to tender! - ian@cnmexhibitions.com