

This may sound funny coming from a stand design and build business but...

Exhibitors don't really want a stand.

Most don't even want to exhibit.

What they really want are SALES.

**Here's how to get them and how to make your
Event Marketing A Paying Proposition**

What's this all about?

It may sound strange coming from a company that designs and builds exhibition stands and displays but we know that what we supply is just a means to an end.

Our clients don't really want a stand. Truth be told, most don't even want to exhibit...

No, what they really want are sales.

The high value leads and sales that come from participation in trade shows.

We get that and understand that way of thinking and that's what makes our approach to stand design and build so different from most other suppliers you will meet.

But that's not our only difference, nor our motivation for producing this guide.

Why this report will be useful to you

It will show you why trade shows are one of the best ways to build sales

We'll explain why event participation makes great sense in the age of digital marketing

And we will present you with some proven strategies for reducing your event costs

To your success

Anthony Booty | Client Services Director
Guardian Display

Trade shows: Still the proven route to building enquiries and sales quickly

To day there are more trade shows and conferences taking place each year than ever before.

- 32,000 according to the latest market report from UFI, the Global Association of the Exhibition Industry.
- Not only are there more events but more people are attending them both as visitors or delegates: 303 million visitors just to exhibitions alone (source UFI June 2019).
- And because of those impressive numbers nearly 5 million companies exhibit within one or more exhibitions every year (source UFI June 2019).

The reason why exhibitions are so popular is not hard to fathom.

To quote again from UFI's June report;

"Exhibitions provide the opportunity for the physical showcase and demonstration of the latest products, services, studies, market trends and opportunities.

They function as a giant platform for face-to-face engagement and potential business relationship building.

This makes them indispensable even in the digital age where online marketing and exchange of thought have become extensive."



Attracting the most active buyers in a market

Trade shows and conferences attract the people who are most active in their markets.

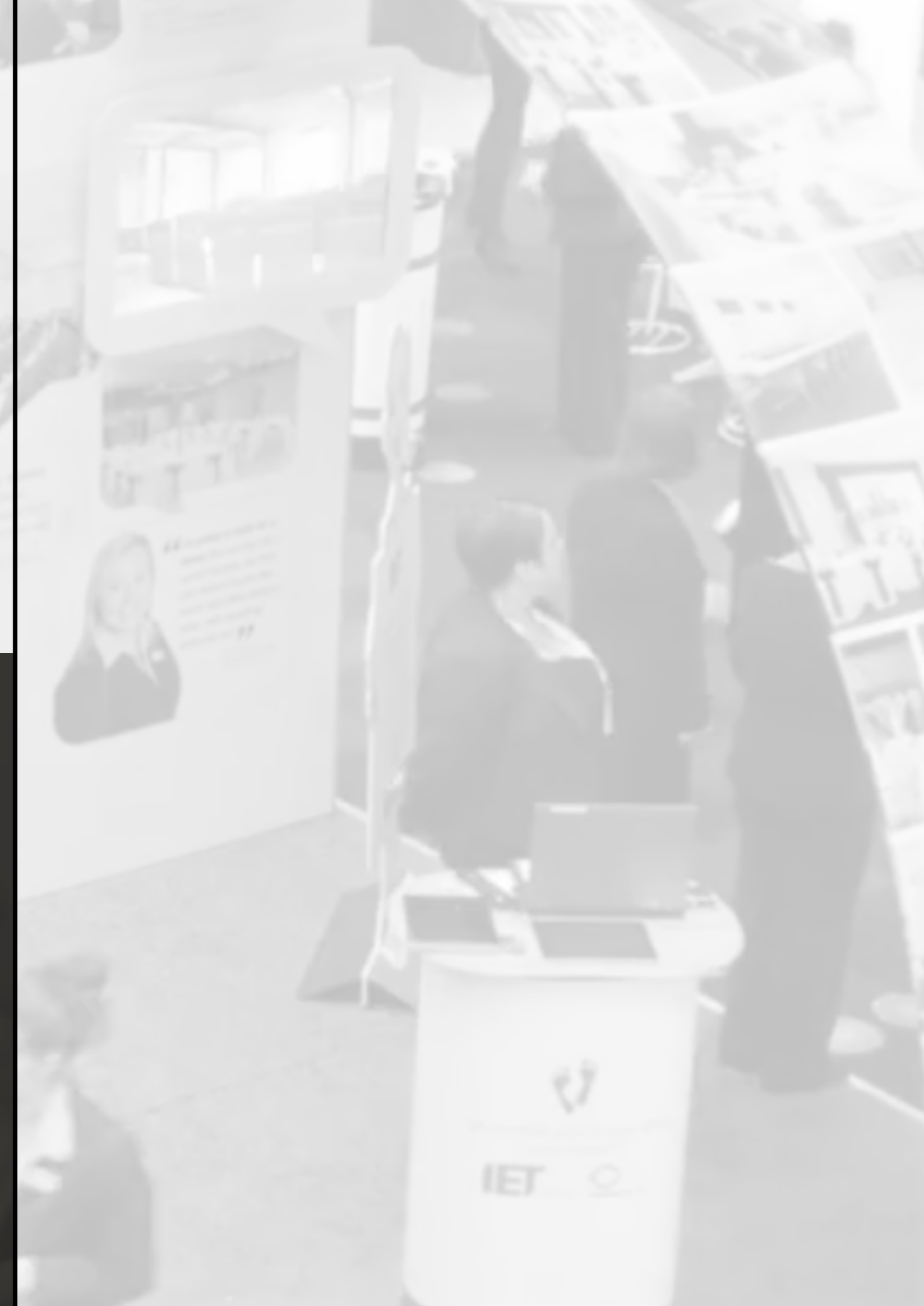
They take time out to travel to shows. They hunt out new ideas and solutions for their businesses.

And, they aren't too fussed about whether the businesses supplying those solutions are household names or how big their stands are.

That's what makes exhibiting so exciting.

There is always the chance to meet people from businesses that can transform your sales.

It's for these reasons that trade shows are a proven route to new sales even in the age of digital marketing.



Trade shows in the digital age

One of the criticisms levelled unfairly at trade shows is that you can't measure results as clearly as you can with digital marketing assets.

That's not really true, you just need to be clear on what you want to measure and what your measures of success for an event are going to be.

Tracking is critical if you are to have a true picture of the results obtained from an event.

Digital marketers will measure clicks, conversions, page visits, bounce rates, time on page or pages and a host of other things.

As an event marketer you can do the same.

Here are just a few of the things that you might want to record;

- Enquiries taken
- Sales appointments booked at the show
- Orders placed at the show
- Orders placed post-event
- The number of target companies seen on the stand
- Attendance numbers to on-stand talks and demos
- The number of people who sat in on your conference session
- Agents and distributors met at the event
- The number of samples distributed
- Visits to your web site pre and post-event

How trade shows reduce the number of steps required to make a sale

One of the biggest but also underestimated benefits of exhibiting is this.

Trade shows cut out big chunks of the sales process line.

For most businesses there are a number of steps or stages in a sale that have to be gone through before a sale is finalised.

From the initial generation of a lead through the different steps of quoting and re-quoting until a sale is finally signed.

The number of steps will vary depending on the industry in which you work and where your company stands in the supply chain.

Trade shows cut out that first and costly stage; prospecting.

Instead of firing out emails or phoning out to unknown people on a database, prospects at a trade shows come to you.

At a show, they have the opportunity to sound you out in a neutral space.

They can see if they like the way your business positions itself. Something they can't learn from an email.

And of course they have the opportunity to talk to you in detail about your product or service.

Your sales team receives live and accurate information about client requirements.

They know when an order is likely to be placed and what they need to supply beforehand to be in the running for winning the contract.

Most importantly, they have made personal contact with buyers that they can build an ongoing relationship with in the future.

In this way, huge chunks of sales time are saved and your company is catapulted along the sales process line.

How trade shows compliment digital marketing activity

Digital marketing and trade show participation work brilliantly together.

Use trade show participation as a marker around which you build digital marketing campaigns.

You can use your company's participation in an event as a focus for digital and content marketing campaigns.

Encouraging people to meet your business at a show offers an excellent way to take email conversations further.

You can book sales appointments and demonstration times. Or, invite people to sit-in on demonstrations and talks or, meet key members of your technical and management teams.





Trade shows: A live content marketing opportunity

Take the subjects of your reports, white papers and other forms of content and bring them to life in an event scenario.

Advice centres; seminars; the conference programme; on-stand videos; tutorials are just some of the ways that you can make your content live and impactful.

Build campaigns around shows that boost awareness of your business as well as short-term sales.

Offer downloads. Publish press stories and post-event, continue the dialogue with your market.

Trade show marketing as a paying proposition:

5 ways to drive down your lead acquisition costs

Our focus in this report is on helping you to reduce the cost of sales leads obtained from trade shows.

We are also keen to show how to make events better value in relation to the other marketing channels that you use.

Strengthening the ties between your digital marketing and your events is one solid way to do this but now we will suggest some others.

1. The importance of accurate measurement

For you to know the true value that your event programme delivers, you must measure results versus costs.

This sounds obvious but unless you are really focused on capturing both sides accurately, you won't be able to know for sure;

- What your return on event spend has been
- The true cost of an exhibition sales lead versus leads from other channels
- The average sales value of orders generated from events versus other sales channels

Accurate numbers also provide you with a firm base for comparing costs across all parts of your event budget.

You can compare space rates, hotel costs, stand build costs, AV etc.

Knowing your numbers will give you much more certainty when you budget and when you advocate to take part in more events.

2. Grading individual events

Another way to make your event marketing more effective is to weight your spend towards the events that produce the best results.

If your company takes part in multiple events each year producing a league table based on performance can prove very worthwhile.

Evaluate your top line results. Things like, enquiries collected or sales made directly and post event.

Add any other measures that you think should be evaluated but only if you can do so on a like for like basis.

To obtain a true effectiveness level, you then need to compare the costs of each event.

Space costs, build and staff costs can all be factored to provide a cost per square metre for each event.

When you do this exercise be sure to analyse your costs based on the number of open days for each exhibition as these may vary.

Once the analysis is complete, you can then list your events in order of best results obtained.

You might be surprised by what you discover.

Armed with this information, you may decide to increase stand space or staff numbers at events at the top of the table and reduce commitments to events that perform less effectively.

And you may also decide to drop events that don't meet the performance criteria that you set.

3. Improving the return on your stand space

The bigger your stand the higher your exhibiting costs will be.

Again, this sounds like we are stating the obvious but following-on from Point No.2...

- A bigger stand will mean higher floor space costs
- Potentially a bigger cost for your stand structure
- And you'll probably need more people to run the stand

So one of the first places to look when you are trying to control exhibit costs is the size of your stand.

Again, that's where a grading system for event performance is useful.

However, there is a counterbalance to the idea of reducing stand costs and that is to increase them at the events that perform best for your business.

Doing so could also improve the return that you get from your stand space at those events.

Why might you do this?

At events that attract the greatest number of people that are right for your product or service, it might well be profitable to have more space and more people on hand.

A bigger space allows you to show more products or to talk to more people.

Test your growth strategy in stages rather than making a big jump-up in space. This will protect you from any nasty shocks from individual events.

Keep your results analysis updated so that you know for sure which events perform best.



4. Use shell scheme to test new events

We do not usually recommend shell scheme to our clients but when it comes to testing out a new event or a new market, it's definitely the way to go.

A shell stand will keep your costs low and will enable you to test the water in a relatively low cost, low risk way.

And if the test works well you can always go back with a stronger stand next time.

[To see why we don't usually recommend shell stands see this post.](#)

5. Always consider the lifetime value of new orders

Knowing the typical lifetime value of new orders is vital if you are to truly evaluate the success of an event programme.

That's because orders that result from a trade show are rarely immediate.

If you know the typical lifetime value of orders within your business you can be braver when it comes to evaluating the results of your event marketing.

Let's say that the average lifetime value of a typical new client is £20,000 (you will know how many years a "lifetime" represents).

You exhibit at a show that has total costs of £6,000.

Let's say that you collect 40 new leads. Each lead has cost you £150.

Let's say that you convert 50% of those leads into orders. That's 20 new clients that at some point following the show commit to your business.

If those 20 new clients stay with your company for the normal lifetime duration of other clients, the true value of those twenty new orders won as a result of the show is actually £400,000.

That would represent a pretty cool return on your £6,000 investment.

What this exercise really highlights apart from lifetime value is the emphasis that should be placed on gathering high quality leads.

Without those leads, you can't make sales and there is no lifetime value.

Recognising this link between leads and sales prompted us to develop a service specifically focused on lead generation.

If you would like to know more about how it works email anthony.booty@gdisplay.co.uk

Our focus is on helping you get what you want

When your company takes part in an exhibition, there will be one or more reasons for doing so.

More often than not, it's to generate new leads (we've stressed how important that is).

But, you might also exhibit to build revenue towards the sales target in your budget for the year.

Or, you may have a new product to launch.

Or, you may want to meet particular companies and you plan to use the event as a way to help you achieve that objective.

Our goal will be to help you deliver on whichever measures of success you choose.

To do this we need to know what you really want to achieve from event participation.

When we know that, we can present a proposal that's focused on what you need.

We have a briefing form designed to get a conversation started.

[You can access it here.](#)

Talk to us about making your event marketing a paying proposition

You have nothing to lose by having a conversation with us about your event programme.

In fact, you may get some great ideas that you can use whether to decide to work with us or not.

That's because we just can't help letting our enthusiasm for building sales through events burst out.

We love how they can transform the sales of a business.

That seems like a really good reason to start a conversation. To get things started;

Call 01702 662 111

Email: francesca.conners@gdisplay.co.uk

About Guardian Display

Guardian Exhibition and Display are specialists in delivering engaging exhibition stands, displays and event branding.

We understand that attracting and successfully engaging with your future clients and existing client base at an exhibition is the top priority.

So we always produce designs with this ultimate objective in mind.

Whether you require a portable display for a shell scheme space or a fully customised build project, we will help you find the correct solution.

Tel: 01702 662 111

Email: info@gdisplay.co.uk



guardian
exhibition & display

Guardian Display Ltd | Unit 2 & 3 | 50 Progress Road | Leigh on Sea | Essex | SS9 5PR

t: 01702 662111 | **w:** gdisplay.co.uk | **e:** info@gdisplay.co.uk