



4. How to make the exhibition a success for your business

The **afpop expo** team wants you to make the most out of your time at the **afpop expo**, including opportunities after the **expo**. Many exhibitors at the **afpop expo** are seasoned in the art of attending such events, however whether you have many years of experience at exhibitions and fairs or are a first timer thinking about how to make the best use of your time at the **afpop expo**, there are some pointers and ideas that are worth considering.

It's all about catching people's eye at an exhibition - there's a lot of competition and not just in your particular field. Exhibitors are all vying for the attention of the same visitors, so being noticed is important.

Tips

Participating in an exhibition like the **afpop expo** can be a fantastic opportunity to showcase your business, network, and attract potential clients. Here are some valuable tips to maximise your success at the event:

1. Arrive Early and Prepare Your Stand:

- **Arrive early:** Set up your stand well in advance. Ensure that all literature, promotional materials, and technology are in place.
- **Dress appropriately:** Dress professionally and in line with your business image.
- **Check your stand:** Verify that everything is in working order, including any audiovisual equipment or interactive displays.
- **Have enough staff:** Make sure you have enough team members available to engage with visitors.

2. Familiarise Yourself with the Venue:

- **Explore the venue:** Before the exhibition opens, take a walk around. Familiarise yourself with the layout, locate other businesses, and identify potential connections.
- **Connect with others:** Seek out competitors, customers, and potential partners. Use this time to establish relationships.

3. Brief Your Team:

- **Pre-event briefing:** Ensure your team knows what to expect. They should be well-trained and knowledgeable about your offerings.
- **Key facts:** Make sure your team understands key facts about your products or services.

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- **Roles and responsibilities:** Assign roles within the team. Identify experts for specific topics so that visitors can be directed to the right person.
4. **Engage Visitors Effectively:**
- **Avoid aggressive approaches:** Don't pounce on visitors as they walk by. Instead, create an inviting atmosphere.
 - **Be approachable:** Smile, make eye contact, and be open to conversations.
 - **Qualify leads:** Ask questions to understand visitors' needs. Determine if they are potential clients or just curious.
 - **Hand off appropriately:** If a visitor has specific queries, direct them to the team member best suited to address their concerns.
5. **Body Language and Eye Contact:**
- **Smile and look approachable:** Maintain a friendly demeanour. Smile and make eye contact with individual visitors.
 - **Frontal approach:** When approaching visitors, do so from the front rather than from behind.
6. **Handling Difficult Visitors:**
- **Stay professional:** Some visitors may be awkward or rude. Remember that their behaviour is their issue, not yours. Don't let it affect your interactions with others.
 - **Brush it off:** If you encounter unpleasantness, move on swiftly and focus on the next person.
7. **Avoid Staff Huddles:**
- **Engage with visitors:** Conversations among staff can deter visitors. Be attentive and approachable.
 - **Keep the party open:** Ensure your stand remains inviting and accessible.
8. **Create Reasons for Interaction:**
- **Interactive elements:** Encourage visitors to try your apps or software.
 - **Hands-on experience:** Allow visitors to handle your products.
 - **Demonstrate equipment:** Discuss capabilities and benefits.
 - **Fun activities:** Consider games or other engaging elements (please note that tombola's or other games of chance are not allowed without a licence).

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- **Align with your message:** Ensure these participation props reinforce your company's value proposition.

9. Open Questions for Engaging Conversations:

- Avoid closed questions like "Can I help you?" Instead, use open questions:
 - "Hello, what brings you here today?"
 - "Hi, can I ask what you've seen today that's caught your interest?"
 - "Hello, how familiar are you with our organisation?"
 - "Hi, what are you looking for today?"
 - Even discussing the weather can be a gentle way to strike up a conversation: "Hi, what's the weather doing outside now?" or "We never know which is best for the **expo**, bad weather or good weather." They'll likely have an opinion, and you can follow up with a question about their reasons for attending the exhibition.

10. Avoid Assumptions:

- **Don't judge** a book by its cover: The young man who appears scruffy may hold significant buying power, while the smartly suited woman might be an expert in a different field. Ask questions to uncover their needs and interests.

11. Qualify Leads:

- **Ask questions** to determine if visitors are potential customers. Discuss these questions with your team beforehand to ensure meaningful conversations.
- For example, inquire if they are already familiar with your company or if they use a similar product.

12. Highlight Benefits:

- **Tailor your pitch:** Talk about the benefits of your offerings and how they align with what matters to each individual.
- **Understand their pain points** and demonstrate how your solution can address them effectively.

13. Engage with Many People:

- **Keep conversations brief** during busy times.
- **Identify common ground** for future interactions and then move on to the next person.

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14. Handling Timewasters:

- **Be polite but firm:** If you encounter someone who talks without any intention of taking action, politely cut the conversation short:
 - “It has been great to talk to you today. I hope you get what you need from the exhibition.”
 - “It’s been lovely to meet you, but now I must make myself available to answer other queries.”
 - “Thanks for taking the trouble to speak to me. Enjoy the rest of the exhibition.”
- **Recognise when visitors want to leave:** Be concise and gracious. Don’t keep people talking if they clearly want to move on.
- **Signal with team members:** Arrange a signal to call you away if they see you cornered by a timewaster.

15. Lead Management:

- **Take notes:** After conversations, jot down leads. Categorise their potential interest level, specific areas of interest, and next steps (such as urgent follow-up calls).

16. Brochures and Giveaways:

- **Stocks and accessibility:** Ensure you have enough brochures and giveaways. Keep extra stock accessible, perhaps in a cabinet or behind your stand.
- **Be discerning:** Offer expensive literature and giveaways selectively. Make sure hurried visitors can easily pick up a leaflet or brochure.

17. Business Cards:

- **Sufficient supply:** Make sure you have an ample supply of business cards to exchange with potential contacts.

18. Promote During the Event:

- **Use social media:** While at the exhibition, promote the event through your social media channels. Share updates, photos, and highlights. You can tag us on social media [HERE](#) (Facebook) and [HERE](#) (Instagram).

19. Professional Behaviour:

- **Avoid eating or drinking on the stand:** Maintain a professional appearance.
- **Take short breaks:** Several short breaks are better than one long break.
- **Be flexible:** Adapt to visitor arrival times.

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20. Stamina and Approachability:

- **Stay energised:** Standing and engaging with visitors all day requires stamina. Keep team spirits high.
- **Friendly appearance:** Visitors are more likely to approach you if you appear friendly and ready to help. Avoid looking exhausted.

21. Effective Lead Follow-Up:

- **General courtesy email:** Send a follow-up email to everyone who visited your stand. Remind them about your offerings and suggest next steps.
- **Sales or technical follow-up call:** Address specific queries raised by visitors and initiate the sales process.
- **Book appointments:** For promising leads, schedule meetings for further discussions.

22. Mobile Phone Etiquette:

- **Stay attentive:** Ensure team members aren't fixated on their mobile phones. Visitors may walk past if they perceive disinterest.
- **Use designated areas:** The coffee area and exhibitor lounge are suitable places to check messages and send emails.

Remember, maintaining enthusiasm, efficient follow-up, and professional behaviour contribute to a successful exhibition!

About your stand

When it comes to creating an eye-catching exhibition stand, there are several strategies you can employ to attract visitors and make a lasting impression.

1) Theme and Colour:

- Develop an eye-catching theme for your stand. Consider using vibrant colours that align with your brand identity. Avoid relying solely on A4 posters; instead, invest in creative visuals or interactive elements.
- Quirky or fun additions can pique curiosity. Think about incorporating unique props or displays that reflect your brand personality.

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2) Instant Recognition:

- Prioritise displaying your most recognisable product or business name. Visitors should immediately associate your stand with your brand.
- If your business name isn't well-known, focus on showcasing your popular products prominently.

3) Size Matters:

- Proportion is crucial. Ensure everything fits the stand dimensions. Just as you wouldn't put a king-sized bed in a small guest bedroom, avoid oversized elements.
- Large information counters can overwhelm staff. Consider using appropriately sized props or displays to draw attention.

4) Furniture and Finishes:

- Skip garden furniture and trestle tables with tablecloths unless they align with your brand aesthetic (e.g., homemade products or food-related themes).
- Opt for a more polished look by using a manufactured system. You can find furniture options in the **afpop expo** catalogue on our website <https://expo.afpop.com>.

5) Social Engagement:

- Leverage social media during the exhibition. Tweets from your stand, share pictures on Instagram and Facebook, and engage with the audience in real time.
- Being socially savvy will help drive traffic to both the **expo** and your stand.

Remember, confidence in your brand and a well-executed stand design can make all the difference. Best of luck with your exhibition!

Data Protection law (GDPR):

It is important to remember that the new data protection legislation means that you can no longer gather people's personal information to add to a general marketing database. You must specify why you are taking their details and only use them for that purpose. If you tell a visitor that you will send them details of your next offer or reply to their question that they raised at the **afpop expo**, then that is all you can use

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their personal information for. If you want to continue to hold it, you must get their permission to hold it after that.

Have a team debrief after the exhibition to identify good and bad points. Check you are happy with how leads have been prioritised. Follow-up all leads and continue the two-way post-exhibition communications to convert leads into customers and generate sales.

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