

May 2024

# Trade show preparation

## Guide



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This guide will provide you with information and tips on what to expect when attending a trade show within Australia or overseas. It will assist you to determine if you are sufficiently prepared to exhibit at either a trade or consumer event.

## What is a trade show?

A trade show, also known as a trade fair, exhibition, or expo, is an event where companies from a specific industry gather to showcase and demonstrate their latest products and services. Trade shows offer a platform for businesses to network, meet potential customers, build relationships and learn about market trends and competitors. These events typically include booths or stands set up by exhibitors, as well as presentations, workshops, and seminars. Trade shows can be consumer or trade focussed allowing business-to business or business-to consumer interactions.

## Business-to-business versus business-to-consumer trade shows

At a business-to-business (B2B) trade show, you will interact with customers, industry professionals, and decision makers, retailers, wholesalers, agents and distributors. The purpose of attending a B2B trade show is to build business relationships, network and ultimately find customers and distribution partners. There is also an opportunity whilst attending a B2B trade show to learn from your competitors, see new products and innovations, as well as gain valuable market insights.

All aspects of the product/service, such as costs, freight and logistics, marketing and promotion, and projected return on investment may be discussed. The process of securing contracts is typically lengthy and often extends beyond the show as it is important to build a relationship first. You generally cannot make direct sales at these events.

Business-to-customer (B2C) events are open to the general public and end consumers. You can make direct contact with potential consumers, and potentially have the option to directly sell your product. B2C events are a great place to sell product, conduct market research, build brand awareness and seek direct feedback from end consumers.

B2C events and shows often have a higher level of foot traffic than B2B trade shows, helping to create and build brand awareness in the marketplace for your business. Your product and marketing can benefit greatly from direct feedback from consumers. If making sales is your lead objective, the sales process is quite speedy and takes place at the show.

## Attending a trade show

Consider the costs, and both the benefits and risks to your business when deciding to exhibit at a trade or consumer event. It's important to be prepared to take advantage of the different opportunities these types of events offer.

Attendance at trade shows does require considerable time and both physical and financial resources, pre-event, during the event, and after the event. Proper planning is critical to achieve success.

## Benefits of attending a Trade Tasmania supported trade show

Trade Tasmania hosts Tasmanian stands in partnership with industry at important national and international trade events. A united Tasmanian stand provides the opportunity to leverage the highly

respected Tasmanian brand and to benefit from organisational, promotional, and cost efficiencies gained through sharing a pavilion. It's also a great opportunity to connect with other Tasmanian businesses.

Through our Trade team and Trade Advocates located in Greater China, Republic of Korea, Japan and United States of America, we provide meaningful business engagements, facilitating connections, providing resources and creating a supportive environment for Tasmanian businesses.

## Benefits

Promoting your business in person in a different environment can have many advantages. Examples as below.

- Trade shows are typically targeted at a specific industry, and this can be a great way to build your brand and reach your ideal customers.
- As exhibitions often attract large and diverse audiences, they provide a great platform to market your business and attract new customers.

The primary advantage is person-to-person contact. This allows you to:

- demonstrate products
- explain your services
- ask and answer questions
- assess reactions
- make new business contacts
- test new concepts and markets.

## Risks and disadvantages

Promoting your business at an event might require a significant:

- time commitment from you and your staff – before, during and after the event
- investment – for example, for the cost of registering for the event, travel and transport, setting up a display and developing marketing materials.

Be aware that:

- there can be increased competition in the same environment
- choosing the wrong environment to exhibit your products and services can mean your effort and investment is wasted
- a poorly planned or delivered promotion can damage your brand
- the cost of taking part could be more than the extra income it delivers.

## Researching the event

Taking the time to research the ideal event for your business will help to ensure the greatest return on investment.

To find suitable events, contact Trade Tasmania, view State Growth's [Trade Missions and Event page](#), seek guidance from your industry association, or search the internet.

When you have identified an event, you need to consider:

- the event program – is it suitable for your needs and will it assist in you achieving success if you attend?
- reading the post-show report of the previous year's event – for information on attendees, objectives of attendees, exhibitors, past success stories, areas of attendee interest, etc.
- the date and location – can you commit the time and resources to attend?
- the cost of exhibiting – will you achieve a return on investment if you attend (this may not mean a financial return if you are attending for market research)
- are there any presentations or activities that you could participate in?

Review the event's attendee lists, where available, and identify new customer opportunities, consider how your product will sit within the selection of products on offer, review the layout of the event and consider where your exhibit may be placed.

In addition, find out what other trade support activities are planned by Trade Tasmania surrounding the event, and consider where you will gain most value for your business' involvement.

## Market research

Trade shows can be a great opportunity to conduct market research which can identify gaps and points of entry.

Use market research to:

- test the viability of the product. Can you sell it for a profit?
- evaluate before entering a new market, test the market and get feedback from potential customers
- provide evidence to prospective financiers that there is a gap in the market
- inform yourself. Knowledge is power but tread warily, be wise, use your intuition and industry knowledge to make informed decisions.

Be smart about how you use market research. To get the most out of it, you should:

- start early, determine the market size and how much of it you can target. This applies equally to local, interstate and global markets
- use existing research. Chances are someone may have already done the hard work and you could find this by searching online reports, magazines or industry reviews
- use social media and find out what customers are making comments on
- check out Google trends or Google consumer surveys.

## What do you want to achieve at the event?

Be very clear about what your business objectives are and how you intend to measure success. Your objectives may include:

- identifying a set number of buyers
- meeting a set number of existing customers
- gaining competitive information



- discovering market trends.

## What preparation needs to occur before the event?

After you have researched the event and set your objectives, you should carefully consider the costs.

### Prepare a budget

Make sure you prepare a detailed budget. Costs will vary based on a range of factors including where the event is being held, your location within the exhibit area, size of your booth, if you need additional storage, and if you are planning to serve food or beverages.

The costs associated with B2B versus B2C events may differ, but generally will include.

- Booth space – booths in a prime location will cost more, as will larger booths. You could consider partnering with another business to share costs.
- Booth build – the cost will vary according to the type, design and style. A standard sized booth varies from 3 metres x 2 metres to 3 metres x 3 metres. The event organiser might be able to suggest suitable companies to design and construct your stand. Be aware of any additional plumbing or electrical requirements you may have.
- Booth graphics – it is best to keep artwork and messaging clear and simple.
- Display stands and furniture – you can often rent from the venue or a third party, or bring your own.
- Supply of power - for using equipment, appliances and devices, some venues include as part of booth costs.
- Internet access – ensure you know the cost to access the venues internet connection. If you are making sales transactions at the event ensure you have good internet access.
- Equipment rentals and other items – items such as carpeting or fridges etc. You should check with venue organiser about what is available. If you are preparing food, ensure you have access to washing facilities.
- Freight costs – the event organiser will probably have a preferred freight forwarder, but it is recommended that you seek alternative quotes. Where possible it is a good idea to consider consolidating your freight with other exhibitors.
- Hotel stay or other accommodation – close and convenient to the venue is a good idea. Some trade shows also offer a shuttle service to selected hotels.
- Travel expenses including food – ensure you have budgeted travel and meals including any entertaining you may choose to do.
- Marketing and promotion – marketing materials, samples, give-aways and paid advertising.
- Staff costs – if you intend to take staff you may need to factor in meals, overtime and other costs.
- Clothing for the event – suitable clothing with logo so you are recognisable and look professional.
- Insurances – event organisers may require you to have your own insurances (e.g., public liability).
- Licences – check if there are registrations or licences you need. If you are serving food you may need a temporary food service licence or similar, depending on the country. Check these details with the event organiser. Consider seeking professional food safety advice to ensure you are compliant.

## Determine what to take

For a B2B trade show, make sure you prepare a record-book or enquiry-sheets of contacts you are going to meet with, to capture their contact details, their interest in your products and any action to take. Prioritise any leads in terms of their importance to your business, this will assist with post event follow up.

Consider invoices if you are selling goods from your stand. Other items include notepads, pens, sticky tape, scissors, cabling and power-point adapters, a first-aid kit for minor emergencies, product information, product samples, point-of-sale material and price lists, and a stack of business cards.

If you are preparing food samples or meals you will need kitchen utensils such as cutting boards, knives, toothpicks, glasses, plates and serving equipment, etc. You may be able to hire these from your stand builder at the event.

You may need up to two people on the stand particularly in the busy periods; pick staff who know your brand story, can stand and smile all day, and sell the message.

It's a good idea to prepare a list of items and activities required before the event, include the deadline, person responsible, budget and notes.

Identify marketing materials and collateral. If you are attending an international event, consider any translation requirements.

Determine what brochures or collateral you will take such as a business capability statement. You may wish to take a presentation or a short video on a laptop or iPad, these can be used at meetings and/or at the exhibit stand.

## Prepare your elevator pitch

This is your 60-second spiel which explains the goals and activities of the business and what is special or different about your business. The pitch is particularly important at a busy event where you have a relatively short period of time in which to create an impression with a potential customer. Good pitches are simple, clear and concise, have an element of good storytelling and are delivered with passion. It's useful to write down your pitch and rehearse it start to finish. If you take staff, make sure they have learnt the pitch too.

## Undertake pre-event marketing

Marketing is often considered the key to success at an event, and social media is a useful tool. However, pre-event marketing is often neglected or forgotten entirely. The aim of pre-event promotion is to generate interest and traffic at your stand and provide more opportunities to interact with potential purchasers. The following are some of the key things you should consider.

- If there are pre-event promotion activities being undertaken by the event organiser consider how you may participate in any marketing campaign.
- Create a landing page on your website – you could have a centralised location where attendees can view all the information about your tradeshow presence in one place, including booth location, any parties or functions your business is hosting, and the times and locations of any presentations. Structure the landing page like an invitation and tie in your tradeshow theme. Include information about the event itself and a link to the event website. You could also provide visitors with the opportunity to sign up for an appointment at your booth directly through the landing page.

- Create a special promotion – perhaps you could launch a new product or hold a raffle to win a prize. Use the promotion in pre-show marketing to create excitement, incentivise prospects to attend the show, and help attendees remember and seek out your booth.
- Advertise your presence at the event on social media, through both your social profiles and by taking advantage of any hashtags the event might be using. If you have the budget for it, you could also create an advertising campaign in an industry publication or with the show directory.

In addition, at a B2B show you could consider contacting:

- your existing list of contacts – let them know you are exhibiting and that they should consider attending the event.
- the trade show registration list – identify those attendees that you should target, (not everyone on the list is a potential customer). If you are not able to access the list, ask the event organiser if you can obtain a copy. Note that you may be required to purchase it.

If you receive some interest from your initial contacts, or you have customers you need to touch base with, set up appointments. This is a way of ensuring that your booth sees an influx of targeted customer traffic before the trade event begins.

## Messaging at the event

If you are attending a trade event you may need to prioritise your conversations, have your list of target customers, prepare the message and focus your time with them. Be clear as to which markets you want to sell into.

Know your product pricing in advance i.e., product price if selling to a distributor, retailer and customers (including for international markets if you are able to export). You need to be clear with potential customers if you are not in a position to export and if you are unable to meet market requirements.

## Undertake post event follow-up

Following up with all the leads you have made at the event is essential, prioritising the most critical first. One of the biggest mistakes that companies make when attending a trade show is not following up afterwards.

The purpose of attending a trade show is to convert your leads into sales. This must be done in a timely way otherwise you risk being beaten by your competitors. Have a specific, tailored follow up email ready for your leads - ensure you make it personal, refer to the event and conversation you had and include a call to action.

If you are attending a B2C event, review your product feedback afterwards and ensure any customer details are included in your database or as part of your loyalty program. Perhaps follow up with an email inviting them to make an online purchase or direct them to outlets where your product is sold.

## Finding a suitable event

If you need help finding a suitable event, consider the marketing events your competitors attend. To be sure the event is right for your business, consider going as an attendee first before exhibiting.

## Examples of events in Australia

[Fine Food Australia](#)



[Food Service](#) Australia

[Land Forces](#)

[Indo Pacific](#)

[Good Food and Wine Show](#) (B2C)

[Gin-uary](#) (B2C)

## Examples of international events

[FOODEX](#) Japan

[Food and Hospitality](#) China

[FHA-Food and Beverage](#) Singapore

[Gulfood](#)

[Sea Air Space](#)

[Asia Fruit Logistica](#)

[Gamescom](#)

[Innovation Leaders Summit](#)

[DramFest](#)

## Government supported Trade shows and events

[Upcoming Trade Shows](#) supported by Trade Tasmania

Upcoming events supported by Austrade <https://www.austrade.gov.au/en> and <https://export.business.gov.au/news-and-events/events-search-tool>

Austrade Agribusiness, Food & Consumer International [Trade Events Calendar](#)

## Testimonials

*“Fine Foods Sydney 2023 proved to be an extraordinary event, and we were genuinely grateful for our participation at the State Growth Tasmanian stand. It allowed us to connect with many remarkable individuals and businesses. As a result of our involvement, we secured numerous promising leads that will undoubtedly contribute to our future success.”*

### Three Friends Abalone

*“I would like to say that the team at Trade Tasmania have been integral in our export journey. Their expertise of commercial realities, their connections and the networking are exceptional. We could not have had such quick success in the export world at such a reasonable price point and as such without this we would not have entered the markets at this time as costs would have been prohibitive for our business.”*

### Diane Rae CEO – Hartshorn Distillery/ Grandvewe Cheeses

*“The South Korean advanced manufacturing mission organised by Tasmanian Department of State Growth was an amazing trip and very well planned. Penguin Composites have gained deeper understanding with current clients in South Korea and have also harnessed some great opportunities from the mission. Thanks to all involved.”*

### **Penguin Composites**

*“Being part of the Tasmanian Government contingent to Fine Food Australia in Sydney was a tremendous experience. The commitment and effort from the Tasmanian Government, and the work put in by the Government's representatives is first class. I am very humbled and honoured to be part of the Tasmanian brand, and highly value my involvement and the relationships I have built with the government and other Tasmanian businesses.”*

### **Island Coast Spirits**

*“The trade visit to Japan Foodex 2023 was an amazing and worth while investment for our business. The organisation and effort put in by Trade Tasmania, illustrates the commitment to advancing our great state and the products we have. We hope to be on many more trade delegations in the markets that suit our brand.”*

**John Mann National Sales and Business Manager Spreyton Cider Co.**

### **References**

[www.tourism.australia.com/en/resources/industry-resources/resources-for-industry/trade-show-tips/preparation.html](http://www.tourism.australia.com/en/resources/industry-resources/resources-for-industry/trade-show-tips/preparation.html)



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