



THE TRADE FAIR

An art in itself

Get more out of your trade fair participation!

DÉSIRÉE OUWENEEL

Motivate you,
Train you,
And enthuse you to put this into practice!
I wish you every success with your next fair!



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Désirée Ouweneel

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"Above all the practical tips in the training courses taught us to deal with issues such as bearing and communication with far greater awareness. The result was that instead of speaking to a large number of candidates, we now focused on the right ones. This was a clear difference from previous trade fairs."

Stork NV, Iris Eveleens

"The trade fair training course was for us, as exhibitor, a valuable supplement during the preparation as well as during the trade fair itself. The open questions provided the perfect aid in approaching and addressing the visitors in the appropriate manner. The result was clearly visible: a highly motivated stand crew and more conversations with the right people! Definitely worth repeating."

Unisys, Marielle Custers

"Highly recommended for our organisations, which are constantly working on the finer points to make their trade fair participation a success."

Geodan, Mijntje Spaapen

"*Désirée* always connects with her listeners in a direct manner. With her lively narrative style, she has the unerring ability to instil in all the standholders a sense of eagerness and enthusiasm to participate themselves. After one of *Desiree's* training session, beginners and old hands alike give a more original and better performance at the Company Contact Days for Friesland."

Bedrijven Contactdagen voor Friesland, Willem van Muylwijk

"*Désirée* delivers a highly inspiring, practical training course, during which she provides lively examples of how things should be done, and perhaps even more importantly, how they should not be done."

Wyeth, Marjan van Ziel

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Preface

My work as a trade fair trainer and adviser has led me to develop a high degree of passion for the marketing tool TRADE FAIR. What a magnificent medium this is, and what a bad job we often make of it!

When I walk round trade fairs—which of course I frequently do because of the nature of my work—I enjoy the myriads of people and attractive stands as well as the nice, new, unusual, specific and distinctive products being exhibited. When, however, I observe the stand crew and think what a marvellous opportunity they have for bringing an exceptional number of trade fair visitors face-to-face with their products or services in a short space of time, then sometimes I feel deeply ashamed.

Besides the absence of any passion, I notice an unwelcoming body language, a greater interest in chatting among themselves than in making contact with the visitors, a great deal of smoking and drinking going on, and above all lots of chitchat and lounging around. Rather a negative picture, you're no doubt thinking, but sad to say this tends to be what happens! Just think what a huge impact you could make and that there's no other medium where you'll have the same opportunity! There are of course exceptions, I hasten to add, but that is exactly what they are—exceptions.

This book originated from the feelings described above. It will guide you throughout the phases of your trade fair participation from start to finish in a clear and easy-to-read manner with situations you can closely identify with and assisted by illustrations and recognisable practical examples.

I realise only too well that there's a great deal more information that I could give than you'll find in this book. However, I wanted to restrict myself to the most important aspects, which you can put to work in your organisation and supplement with elements from your own corporate culture—together with your own creativeness and resourcefulness.

Désirée Ouweneel
Trainer/Adviser Business Desire

1

Fishing where the fish are!

Congratulations! You're thinking about taking part in a trade fair or maybe you've even decided to do so already. In either case, you have chosen a magnificent medium to make direct contact with your target group; to do this, however, you must have the will and the know-how to go angling!

More than ever, people feel the need for personal contact. This is the only way to build up a relationship based on trust—and that's not something you can achieve with a leaflet, an advertisement or a website. We keep coming back to face-to-face contact but we won't ever find a better alternative.

Unfortunately, a trade fair participation is still far too often an ad-hoc decision. This is why there are often no clear objectives, the costs and benefits are not transparent, schedules don't run smoothly, and the staffing of the stand tends to come bottom of the list and so isn't prepared adequately.

Optimum trade fair participation calls for thorough preparation. Only then can optimum returns be guaranteed.

This book aims to be a handbook to guide you through your preparation, the trade fair participation itself and—last but not least—the vital follow-up.

2

Why are trade fairs so important?

A trade fair is the very place to fish for new customers. In just a short time, you have the chance to meet a large target group of interested people. This target group has deliberately chosen to come to your trade fair, and so is investing time and energy in it. This gives you a magnificent opportunity to present the different sides of your organisation and your product or service in one fell swoop.

On average, one stand member can speak to approximately 40 to 50 people a day in person. Just imagine! This is way beyond what your salesman or woman can possibly achieve in weeks or months during the course of his day-to-day work.

Trade fairs provide the optimum support for your sales activities:

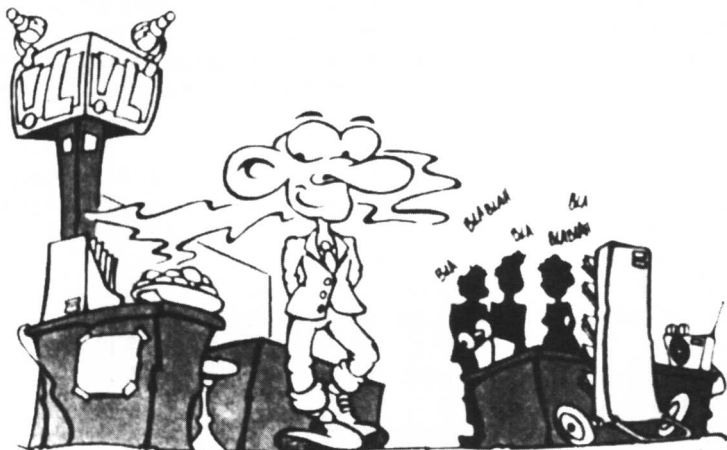
- results can be easily measured
- a ready-made target group
- considerable money savings (no travel expenses)
- considerable time savings (a large number of prospects in a short time)

If you link concrete objectives to the trade fair—and it is absolutely essential

that you do so—you can check straight after the fair whether you've achieved them. No other marketing tool gives you the potential of immediate measurement.

The benefits of a trade fair are the following:

- Direct contact and personal communication.
- A trade fair is in effect a live advertisement: a visitor has the chance to get to know several aspects of the company product or service.
- The communication operates via several different senses (eyes, ears, nose, etc.) which means the visitor receives extra stimulation, is more quickly persuaded and will remember everything much better afterwards.
- The visitor has the chance to meet a lot of vendors in the same place and in a short time.
- The exhibitor is dealing with a visitor who is already interested and has especially made time to visit this specific trade fair.
- You have the opportunity to make yourself visibly and noticeably stand out from your trade fair competitors. You have the opportunity to clearly display the unique characteristics of your product or service.



3

Your trade fair participation divided into three phases

For optimum participation in a trade fair, you must keep three phases (the 3 Ps) in mind:

- *Pre phase*
- *Performance phase*
- *Post phase*

These three phases are inextricably linked.

If any of these phases is not done properly, you might just as well not take part in the trade fair. It would be a waste of money, time and energy.

The Pre phase is the preparation phase.

- This is the phase in which you decide whether you're going to participate in the trade fair at all and if so, which one
- You contact the trade fair organiser for information on the fair in question
- You set up a working group in your company or organisation to supervise the internal organisation
- You draw up a plan: what has to be done and when

- Objectives are determined and it is decided which people are to man the stand

In this phase, you need to be already thinking about how you are going to tackle phase 3, the tremendously important follow-up phase. After the fair, what are you going to send out in the way of information and will you then have enough material available to do so?

The Performance phase is the actual participation on the trade fair floor itself in your own stand.

- Who will be manning the stand and with what objective?
- How will they have been prepared?
- Have they received specific training for this?

Still far too many companies think that if they have the sales people at the stand, then everything will be absolutely fine.

They are, however, forgetting one important aspect. In normal everyday practice, your sales adviser phones a customer or prospective customer and makes an appointment. A red carpet hasn't exactly been put out, but the coffee and tea have been made and your adviser has at least one hour to talk to the person on site on a one-to-one basis.

At a trade fair, this is not the case at all. We generally don't know the visitor personally, we have no idea of his or her background and we only have a short time to talk. On top of that, there's a lot of background noise at trade fairs and this considerably limits the ability of our visitor to take in what we're saying.

Not 30 metres away from your stand, the visitor has already forgotten 90% of what you've said. That's not because this wasn't interesting, but because someone else in the stand next to yours has something to announce and opposite, there's maybe an exhibitor who's hired a clown to entertain the visitors, and so on and so forth.

These are all things that influence the visitor and which the stand crew need to take into account. They must be specifically trained to cope with this, otherwise your trade fair participation will be a flop. However attractive your stand is, at the end of the day it's down to the people actually at the stand to get the job done.