

# TIPS FOR SUCCESS

MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR EXHIBITION PARTICIPATION



**“My team has adopted the Reed Exhibitions’ Tips For Success guidelines in terms of how we’ve gone about marketing ourselves prior to the show, and managing inquiries on the stand. These have worked very well for us.”**

*Bob Muirhead - Remote Control Technologies*



## **Don’t leave visitor attendance at your stand to chance!**

Exhibitions are an extremely effective marketing activity for selling to a highly targeted audience with purchasing power. But, like any other marketing activity, they require skilful planning and execution in order to produce the desired results. It is no longer enough to just set up a stand and pass out literature and hope for the best.

This booklet is broken into 4 sections for easy navigation and to assist you to plan and organise activities at our exhibitions:

### **Check List**

**Pre-show**

**At the show**

**After the show**

Let us know if there is anything we can do to further assist you in making your exhibition experience as uncomplicated and profitable as possible.

# Introduction

## **Making the most of your exhibition participation**

Year after year, the number of companies around the world participating in exhibitions continues to increase. Companies are finding trade shows a viable and cost-effective sales and marketing tool to:

- Introduce new products
- Target a select group of buyers
- Perform informal market research
- Enhance a company’s image to the trade
- Generate sales



# Checklist



# PRE-SHOW PLANNING CHECKLIST

As with any kind of promotional activity, it's not what you do that is important so much as how well you do it!

ACTIVITY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	ALLOCATED TO	DATE STARTED	DUE DATE	DATE COMPLETED
Set exhibition objectives					
Decide on promotional strategy					
Brief your PR agency					
Prepare and submit Exhibition Directory listing by due date					
Complete compulsory forms in the exhibitor manual					
Prepare press release(s) and photograph(s)					
Distribute press release(s) to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reed Exhibitions' PR contact</li> <li>• Trade, business, regional press</li> </ul>					
Prepare press pack and send					
Prepare artwork for trade press advertising – mentioning exhibition and stand number					
Order giveaways and competition prizes (check with state legislation regarding permit requirements)					
Organise VIP invitations					
Book promotional staff (celebrities, comperes, magicians)					
Book sponsorship (banners, street signs, social functions, carrier bags)					
Prepare mailout/letter/email for customers and prospects					
Prepare staff exhibition briefing session					
Mailout or email visitor invitations to customers and prospects					
Prepare post-show promotional activity plan					
Call top clients to arrange appointments					
Mailout or email press invitations					
Contact clients & prospects for confirmation of attendance before the show					



# Pre-show



## Pre-Show Planning

### Setting Objectives

Objectives are necessary to give direction to the effort, establish budget requirements, stimulate sales performance, measure results and establish value.

#### They must be:

- Measurable in quantity and quality
- Achievable in a defined period of time
- Consistent with your company's goals, policies and marketing plan.

### Consider What You Want to Achieve

- Generate leads
- Close sales
- Introduce or test a new product or product features
- Solicit new distribution channels
- Gather competitive intelligence
- Enhance existing customer relationships
- Demonstrate a technically complex product
- Enhance corporate image
- Develop product awareness
- Penetrate a new market or industry
- Outshine the competition
- Perform market research
- Gain media coverage and exposure
- Establish staff expertise in the industry
- Increase market share

### Set Specific Objectives

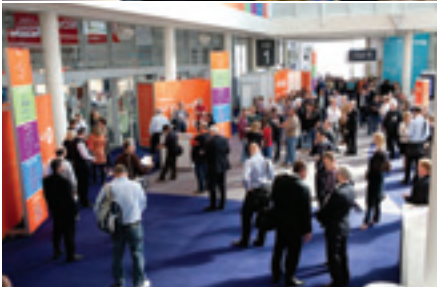
- Why are you participating?
- What products/services will you feature?
- What features and benefits are key?
- What results do you want to get?
- What will you do to achieve the results?
- What is the message you want to give about your company and products?

## 8 Steps to Exhibition Success

- 1 Set realistic objectives
- 2 Plan a strategy and a budget
- 3 Determine resources necessary to achieve objectives
- 4 Establish methods for evaluating results
- 5 Train staff
- 6 Integrate publicity and promotion plans
- 7 Use the Reed Exhibitions team and their resources effectively
- 8 Prepare post show strategy and follow up leads after the show

Each component works together to create synergy and success!





**A carefully thought out campaign, dovetailed with existing advertising, PR and direct mail campaigns can reap great rewards!**

## The Value of Pre-Selling Your Exhibit

You've invested time and resources to develop an effective stand, don't leave visitor attendance at your stand up to chance. By pre-selling your presence, promoting special incentives, and setting up at-show sales appointments in advance, you could guarantee success before the show even starts! The walk-in traffic will be a bonus!

## Complimentary Trade Invitations

One of the most effective tools in your campaign are the complimentary trade visitor invitations, including a sample direct mail letter we provide for you.

We will also provide an electronic version of the trade invitation for you to email to your customers. Make sure you include your stand number in the email and use this opportunity to announce any new products, demonstrations or promotions that you might be offering at the exhibition.

### Ways to use the trade invitations:

- Send trade invitations to customers and prospects with a personal letter highlighting why they should come to the show, what they'll see at your stand, where you'll be located and where to call for more information.
- Deliver the invitations in person. They can be good door-openers with new prospects.
- Offer technical advice on one of your products when distributing the invitations.
- Provide extra invitations to distributors, regional offices and suppliers to hand out to prospects on your behalf.
- Offer invitations during phone conversations.
- Insert into invoices, order fulfillment and other business correspondence.
- Email the electronic version to your database inviting them to your stand.

## Personal Phone Invitations and Appointments

Telemarketing is an essential part of an effective campaign. Don't be satisfied with a mere confirmation that they'll visit your stand. Go the extra step and ask for an appointment for a specific day and time during the show – they are more likely to show up and spend extra time with you.

## Direct Mail & Email

Plan a campaign of phased mailings or emails, spaced about three weeks apart.

### Examples:

- A letter of invitation from your MD
- A letter with a floor plan indicating your stand location
- A trade visitor invitation
- A copy of your trade journal advertisement
- An article on your company
- A formal invitation to your company's special event, product launch, demonstration or seminar.

## Incentives and Contests

Use contests and giveaways only to motivate qualified prospects to visit your stand. To do this, promote incentives in all advance publicity and promotional materials, and make prospects come to your stand for fulfilment.

Try to make incentives specific to your business to reinforce your message. Consider price discounts, or a gift/premium for orders placed at the show.

*Please note: The rules and regulations for running competitions differ from state to state, in some instances permits may be required.*

## Logos

Show logos are available electronically. The logo can be used to enhance your participation by including the show logo in conjunction with your company logo on your website, ads, T-shirts, stickers, flyers, customer newsletters or your email signature.



## Advertising and Promotional Opportunities

Consistent advertising builds awareness, generates stand traffic and pre-disposes your audience to your sales pitch.

Link in your existing advertising with your participation in the show. Simply incorporate into your existing artwork "see us on stand X" and the exhibition logo.

Advertising in the Exhibition Directory has an added advantage due to the Directory's extra long shelf life as a reference guide.

Reed Exhibitions has a variety of promotional opportunities available to assist you in creating maximum exposure for your stand leading up to and during the exhibition.

**To find out more about the promotional opportunities available, please contact Reed Exhibitions.**

It is not expected that you take up each and every available promotional opportunity – few companies have the time or budget for that. As long as you are aware of what opportunities are available and how to make the most of them, you can pick those that best enable you to meet your objectives.



## If your time and resources are limited, concentrate on these activities:

- 1 PRESS RELEASES**  
 Preparing your press releases and submitting them in good time to the press.
- 2 EXHIBITION DIRECTORY LISTING**  
 Preparing your listing in the printed Exhibition Directory and exhibition website.
- 3 DIRECT MAIL & EMAIL**  
 Mail or email your customers in advance to notify them of your participation.
- 4 WEBSITE**  
 Highlight your participation at the exhibition via your company website and link it to the show website and encourage your customers to pre-register.

## Pre-Show Public Relations

The goal of public relations is to gain free editorial coverage for your company, products or services in the appropriate media. Editorial coverage is noticed and read with more frequency than display advertising and it has more credibility. It is a cost-effective way to reach your target audience, and it works.

As part of our publicity campaign for the exhibition, Reed Exhibitions will be preparing regular press releases for the media. You can benefit by promoting your participation at the exhibition for FREE.

At previous events organised by Reed Exhibitions, we've had some great successes and we encourage you to use this opportunity to get some free publicity of your involvement in the exhibition and for your products and services.

**Contact Reed Exhibitions to take advantage of this complimentary opportunity.**

**You can benefit by promoting your participation at the exhibition for FREE.**



## Attract Visitors to Your Stand

Listed below are eight tried and tested ideas for attracting visitors to an exhibition stand. The key to success is communicating what you have to offer to as many people as possible before the show.

- 1 PERSONAL INVITATIONS** – most visitors attend trade exhibitions to see what's new. If you are launching a new product or service, personally invite your customers and prospects to your stand for refreshments and a presentation on the new technology. For key prospects, encourage them to make an appointment at a specific date and time.
- 2 HOLD DEMONSTRATIONS** – or seminars on your new product or service at set times throughout the show. Send out the schedule with your trade invitations, which we will provide to you, and encourage the recipients to book in advance.
- 3 HOLD A RECEPTION** – trade exhibitions are an extremely time-efficient way of keeping in touch with existing customers. Why not hold a reception at your stand, as a way of thanking them for their continued custom?
- 4 COMPETITIONS** – hold a prize draw on your stand to win a magnum of champagne, a weekend break or one of your products. Not only will it attract the attention of passing visitors, but if you notify key customers and prospects in advance, it will give them an incentive to head for your stand when they arrive. *Please note: The rules and regulations for running competitions differ from state to state, in some instances permits may be required.*
- 5 INCENTIVES** – invite customers and prospects to claim a free gift when they visit your stand.
- 6 DISCOUNTS** – offer a discount on goods or services ordered at the exhibition.
- 7 CELEBRITIES** – hire an entertainer or a celebrity to attract attention. The best acts are the ones that re-enforce your message.
- 8 EMAIL** – have your marketing team issue a broadcast to your clients by email advising them of your exhibit, stand number and inviting them along.



At  
the  
Show

## At-Show Exposure Opportunities

### At-Show Press Coverage

Make sure you have a press kit available at your stand.

A typical press kit folder contains:

- News and feature articles about your company and products
- Fact sheets about your products
- Background information on the company, patented processes, current CEO or other important issues
- Photographs of your product in use with a caption
- Case studies or testimonials from clients

Include only information which would be helpful to writing an article. Try not to include too much information – a press kit is not a sales kit. At your stand, arrange for one person to act as media spokesperson to greet editors, answer questions and provide information.

Visit trade journal stands and invite writers to come to your stand for a demonstration. Also invite them to any special events you may be running.

## Select the Right Staff

The more visible your presence is at the show, the more visitors you attract to your stand, but, your success depends largely on the collective talent, product knowledge and energy level of the sales staff at your stand. Take the time to select the right team, and train them to achieve company objectives.

### Staff Selection Factors

1. Personality
2. Attitude towards exhibitions
3. Previous performance and experience
4. Product/industry knowledge
- 5 Territory: national vs. regional

Once you've selected your team, you must plan how to schedule and motivate them for peak performance and to obtain excellent results.

## Staff Briefing

In addition to general sales training, all stand staff should be fully briefed before the event on what they'll be required to sell or communicate and to whom at the show.

The briefing should cover your exhibition objectives:

1. Target audience
2. Personal responsibilities
3. Personal targets
4. Products/services on display
5. Equipment to be demonstrated
6. Inquiry handling procedures
7. Sales literature
8. Competitions/incentives/giveaways
9. Dress code
10. List of other stand staff
11. Duty schedule
12. Stand location
13. Show Hours
14. Accommodation & Transport arrangements
15. Catering arrangements
16. Details of off-stand activities

The more visible your presence is at the show, the more visitors you attract to your stand, but, your success depends largely on the collective talent, product knowledge and energy level of the sales staff at your stand.

## Manage & Motivate Staff for Positive Results

### Plan Staff Utilisation & Avoid Burnout

- Prepare a stand duty roster to avoid fatigue. Allow staff to take short breaks. Shifts should be a maximum of two or three hours followed by an hour break.
- Consider after-show entertaining responsibilities – don't schedule a rep for evening hospitality and first shift on the stand the next morning.
- Plan to split staff time into 50% stand prospecting and 50% working with current customers in attendance. Personnel should schedule advance appointments with customers around this duty schedule. Other break times can be used to check out the competition and generate future exhibition ideas.
- Consider some specific assignments – demonstrations, maintenance, media.
- Have beverages on hand and encourage your staff to drink plenty of fluids to avoid dehydration.

### Enhance Staff Motivation

- Instil a belief in the product, the company, the effectiveness of exhibitions, and staff sales ability. This will translate to pride, sincerity, enthusiasm and ultimately sales.
- Correlate company show objectives with specific goals for each stand staff member. Consider your staff's personal goals – increasing sales, corporate visibility, financial rewards, etc.
- Design incentives to motivate staff. This could include a sales competition and awards for the most leads or biggest purchase order, bonuses or commissions based on individual or group performance.
- Provide staff with the environment, tools, promotional vehicles and training needed to motivate customers, and achieve personal and show objectives.
- Schedule staff meetings daily at the show to give and receive feedback on what's working and to share their experiences.

### Consider a Team Approach to Staffing

With a variety of professionals and expertise represented, you'll be able to accommodate a diversity of questions asked by prospects.

#### Stand members can include:

- Sales Force
- Customer Service Reps
- Technical Personnel
- Management
- A Financial Expert
- Your Key Customers
- New Employees

## Ensure Show Success with Stand Sales Techniques

### Effective stand skills include how to:

- Approach strangers
  - Qualify prospects
  - Give just enough information to entice action
  - Gain commitment all in a time-efficient manner
- By using a team selling approach, staff can be assigned to intercept, qualify and demonstrate; managers can assist in overcoming resistance and closing.

### The exhibition objectives should dictate what you want your staff to do:

- If you are concerned with gathering leads, train on welcoming skills and how to qualify potential decision-makers.
- If you want to cement existing relationships, have staff sit down with clients.
- If you want to educate or enhance corporate image, have technical people demonstrating products.



### Critically evaluate leads

Agree in advance on what constitutes a qualified lead. This is typically a contact that could generate a significant purchase within 24 months of the show. Set specific criteria for warm and hot leads.

### Maximise time

Depending on your product and objectives, train staff to only spend a limited amount of time with each prospect. Quickly qualify prospects – a lot of time can be wasted talking to someone who has no budget or no plans to buy. Limit the time spent with even qualified prospects. Your primary purpose is to collect leads and information for later follow-up – save the selling for after the show.



## Recognising the Needs and Motivations of Visitors

Visitors are likely to fall into one of the following categories:

### THE GO-GETTER

- These visitors have a clear agenda. They are happy to be approached, keen to discuss their requirements to obtain information to help them make an informed purchasing decision.

### THE RELUCTANT INTERVIEWEE

- Don't like being sold to
- Are wary of giving away too much about themselves for fear that they are handing over control.
- They require careful handling.
- They mustn't be pushed too hard for information, but gently encouraged to volunteer it.

### THE INTROVERT

- Introverts will often hover on the edges of a stand, but when engaged in conversation will be only too happy to discuss their needs.
- Be careful not to scare off the visitor with your initial approach.

### THE TIME-WASTER

- Time-wasters are more than willing to discuss just about anything – in long, drawn out detail.
- They usually have no authority to buy or no money to spend.
- Pre-arrange with other staff members some methods of extracting yourselves, or each other, from the clutches of such visitors – politely!

### THE FREE-LOADER

- They are more interested in your free giveaways than your displays, and take up valuable space that may be required for serious business discussions.
- Have a firm policy on how to handle such visitors.

### THE OLD FRIEND

- Exhibitions are great places for bumping into old friends and acquaintances. As a result, precious sales time that should be spent forging and developing new business is all too easily frittered away catching up on old times.

## Your Key to Successful At-Show Sales

### Attitude

- Be inviting – make sure visitors know they're welcome
- Be enthusiastic about your product and company

### Professionalism

- Dress professionally with comfortable shoes
- Use breath fresheners
- Keep the stand clean
- Remember, you represent the company
- Be professional even after hours – if you are near the exhibition area

### Non-Verbal Skills

- Have approachable body language – good posture, hands out of pockets, a smile
- Keep moving on the stand
- Don't sit in the stand
- Don't cluster around with other staff
- Don't pounce immediately – give visitors time to focus on a particular item and yourself time to plan a suitable opening question
- Don't look bored or uninterested
- Don't "stand guard" on the edge of your stand with your arms folded, passers-by will be reluctant to step into your stand if they feel they have to "get past" someone to do so
- Don't read, eat, drink, smoke or talk on the phone in the stand. Take breaks elsewhere

### Knowledge

- Know your product – applications, specs, features, benefits, availability, price
- Know how it compares to the competition
- Keep a reduced, pocket-sized product price list for easy reference
- Know the locations of restrooms, lounges and eating areas



### Ability to Engage Visitors

- Use keen observation skills
- Welcome visitors in the aisle who make eye contact, look intensely at your product or exhibit, or watch your demonstration
- Be quick with engaging comments and don't say "can I help you?" ask open ended questions that demand an informed response and which will enable you to pursue the conversation further
- Call prospects by name
- Invite attendees to watch a demonstration, or meet with them after a demonstration

### Ability to Qualify

- Use the lead management/tracker system
- Qualify quickly and efficiently
- Ask informational questions and keep notes

**Remember to observe the visitor's badge colour as it distinguishes their job function.**

### Good Customer Relations

- Match the speech rate, volume and body language of the prospect
- Adjust vocabulary for level of technical expertise
- Be a good listener
- Never say "I don't know". Instead say, "That's a good question. Let me see if I can find out for you."
- State things in a positive way
- Use literature, samples, contents, selling tools and audio visuals correctly

**Always go the extra mile to satisfy customers**

### Ability to Present Solutions

- Qualify first before doing the demo
- Keep the presentation benefits-orientated
- Review the product applications
- Overcome resistances; isolate and handle objections
- Monitor and limit the time spent on the interaction
- Talk to two or three visitors at once if necessary
- Don't get distracted



### Ability to Close and Capture

- Lead prospect to an action step
- Use trial closes
- Get commitment for action or follow-up
- Obtain names of other decision-makers and referrals
- Take the time to write down as much information as possible after the interaction for follow-up efforts. Don't trust your memory.



# After the Show

Industry Statistics report that less than 20% of all of show leads are ever followed up, over 80% wasted!\*\*. Don't fall into this trap. Make a point of calling back each one of your qualified leads, or the entire effort could have been worthless.

## Steps to Effective Follow-up

If sales leads are to be followed up efficiently and converted successfully you will need to take the following four steps:

1. Prioritise leads according to urgency
2. Follow up leads immediately
3. Pursue leads on an on-going basis
4. Track leads to provide a measure of return on investment

## Convert Leads to Sales After the Show

Research shows that leads from exhibitions are more likely to be converted into sales than from any other media, but, remarkably, many exhibitors never follow-up with prospects, according to Centre for Exhibition Industry Research (CEIR). In addition, often qualified leads are followed up on too late - This defeats the primary purpose of participating in the event, and ruins potential results.

Don't allow those leads to grow cold and stale. Your after-show efforts will cement sales and maximise your return-on-investment.

### Separate "HOT" & "WARM" Leads

Don't sabotage your efforts by giving unqualified leads to the sales force. Give your sales people only the qualified "hot" leads right away! Get someone from your staff to call your "warm" leads right away for further qualification and evaluation.

Remember to thank them for visiting your stand, and offer to send further information.



\* Published Statistics from Best of Show – Australia & New Zealand trade show exhibiting training seminar provider

### **Follow Up All Leads Immediately!**

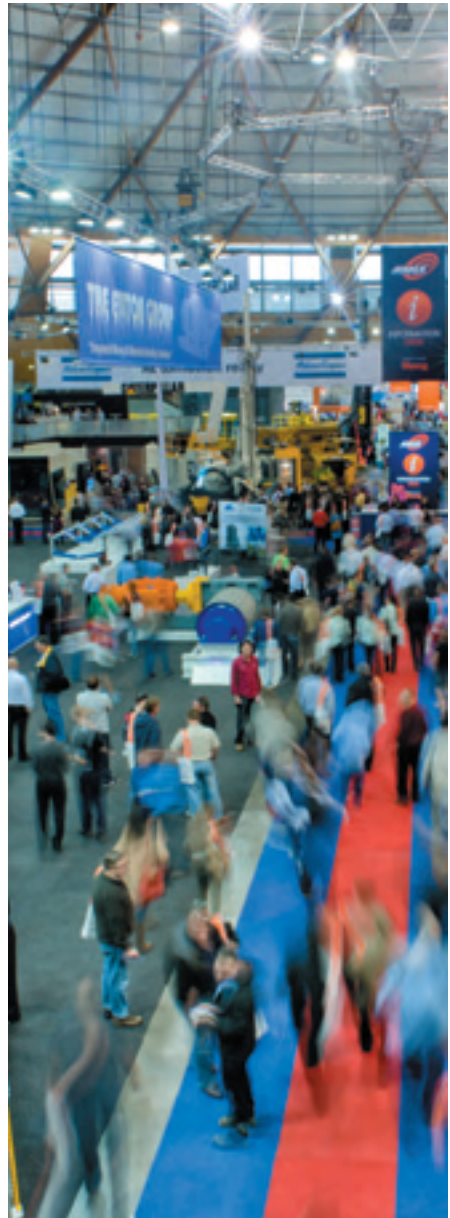
- Follow up leads formally within a week after the exhibition.
- Can be an email or a simple thank you letter to keep the lines of communication open.
- This makes your company look more responsive and professional.
- Within two weeks of your first round of letters or emails contact prospects personally.
- Say you are calling to make sure they received your information, ask if they looked through it; answer any questions; try to set up an appointment or close a sale.
- This is when the sales will be made and the investment in the exhibition justified.

### **Ensure Continuous Follow-Up**

- Make sure sales people continue to follow up on leads, inquiries and requests for information for at least 12 months after the show.
- Sales within the first three to four weeks represent only one-third of the potential response from a trade show, according to CEIR (Centre for Exhibition Industry Research US).
- Most exhibition leads take anything between three and eight months to come to fruition – those involving the purchase of capital equipment, high tech or other high cost items can take much longer.
- It is not enough just to follow up immediately. You have to follow through until such time as a sale is concluded or the lead dries up.

### **Keep Your Prospects LIVE**

- While “warm” prospects may have no immediate need for your product or service, many of them will have indicated a specific time later in the year, or the following year, when a purchasing budget will become available.
- It is important to keep these prospects live, contacting them on a regular basis with details of new products that may be of interest, or tickets to next years event – that way you can keep their interest until such time as they are ready to buy.



### The Value of Post-Show Promotions

- While you cannot rely on prospects to call you, you can increase the chances by remaining visible within the market place after the event.
- Advertising in trade magazines will remind prospects of your products and services and help to ensure that when they are in a position to purchase, they purchase from you.
- This will include all prospects who visited your stand but failed to leave their details – no matter how efficient your stand staff are, there will always be some visitors who slip through the net.

### Track Sales to Evaluate Show Effectiveness

Build deadlines into your lead tracking system. Set a date for final review, and issue a report with results and analysis. You can do everything else perfectly but without this, your efforts will fall far short of your objectives and return on investment.



### The Final Analysis

When you have time to analyse results, and allow for sales follow-up, you should prepare a final exhibition report or audit.

This document should include:

- What was achieved, against set objectives
- Detailed breakdown of costs

#### It should draw conclusions and make recommendations on:

- Viability of set objectives
- Choice of event
- Choice of exhibits
- Proficiency of planning and budgeting procedures
- Effectiveness of stand brief and resulting design/layout
- Proficiency of stand designer/contractor
- Effectiveness of show-linked promotions
- Performance of stand personnel, as a group and individually
- Efficiency and follow-up of leads

It should contain samples of any promotions undertaken in connection with the event (direct mail, email, advertisement, etc.) and photographs of the stand. This will help you to raise standards for the next show.





## Thank you

Thank you for taking the time to read our 'Tips for Success' brochure. We have endeavoured to document relevant information to assist you in achieving return on your exhibition investment.

Please call 02 9422 2955 if you require additional copies of the brochure or if you have feedback regarding the document or any aspect of your exhibition experience.

We wish you success at your exhibition and we look forward to working with you.

**The Reed Exhibitions Team**



**PLATINUM MEMBER**



## **The world's leading organiser of trade and consumer events**

Reed Exhibitions excels in creating high profile, highly targeted business and consumer exhibitions and events to establish and maintain business relations, and generate new business.

We have a growing portfolio of more than 460 events in 36 countries, including trade and consumer exhibitions, conferences and meetings, ranging across 44 industry sectors – from aerospace and aviation to beauty and cosmetics to sports and recreation.

Reed Exhibitions delivers contacts, content and communities with the power to transform your business.

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