

ADCOMMUNICATIONS

**Let's talk... maximising
exhibition ROI**



Despite the controversy that has surrounded some of the industry's leading exhibitions over the past few years, there are many show opportunities in a calendar year that are still on the budget plans for companies large and small. With so much budget and time committed to your presence at a show, don't overlook the critical role of communications in maximising your return on marketing investment.

There are three key communications phases to consider:

1) Pre-show

Building awareness of your brand is your biggest priority. You've established a visual theme for your stand and engaged a stand designer. You know which products or services you're going to major on. Now you need to think about shaping your story towards the visitor, and making sure they have you on their shopping list of 'must-sees'. Time is precious, and research shows that most visitors to business exhibitions will prioritise a handful of companies to spend time with. To get your message out, you need to use the whole marketing mix; PR, direct marketing, advertising, social media, all of which should drive people to exhibition-specific web content where you can capture their interest and start to develop a relationship that will come to fruition at the show. And you need to start planning to make sure that the marketing collateral you will have on site is consistent with that message, and that your stand personnel are well briefed.

10 ways AD Communications can help you pre-show

- Initial theme development
- Event specific messaging
- Brainstorming visual concepts and event straplines
- Planning and producing visitor content
- Devising or enhancing promotional collateral
- Executing multi-platform promotional campaigns
- Delivering preview press coverage
- Social media engagement with press and prospects
- Event planning and project management
- Media training and spokesperson briefings

2) At-show

Once you're on site you have three areas to focus on. First and foremost, connect with customers and prospects, fill your sales pipeline, gather leads and make sales. Secondly, use the trade show environment to meet journalists and analysts who can build your brand by reporting on your products in their market context (not overlooking the chance to give them better insights into your current and future strategy), and companies who could offer you complementary technologies or new channels to market. Lastly, use every opportunity to listen to what is going on in the market and to interpret the buzz from customers and competitors.

10 ways AD Communications can help you at show

- Bring management, media and influencers together
- Create and distribute press information on site
- Maximise opportunities to promote on-site successes
- Engage with the show daily
- Liaise with the press office
- Plan and support 121 editor interviews
- Sustain social media buzz during the show

- Deliver press conferences, briefings
- Plan and project manage networking events
- Collect and share industry intelligence

3) Post-show

All too often, companies lose momentum when the show is over, focusing on hot sales leads but failing to maximise the potential to keep a longer term dialogue going with all the leads they gathered. Think about how you can nurture their interest in you, keeping up a conversation via direct marketing and social media, sending them valuable or educational content, inviting them to live or web events that will keep your brand front of mind when investment in your technology becomes a priority.

What changed in the competitive landscape at the show, and how do you need to adapt your offering and message to the market? Did you recognise a USP you never knew you had, or identify a weakness in your proposition that needed addressing?

After the show, take time to make sense of what you learned, and adapt your marketing approach accordingly, as well as updating your content to reflect what's changed. Most importantly, set to work developing a long term communications strategy that will sustain interest in your business until the next landmark event, building on what you've achieved.

10 ways AD Communications can help you post-show

- Honest SWOT analysis of your show marketing
- Refresh or rethink overall communications strategy
- Follow up with editors and build long term relationships
- Conduct post event analysis of your media coverage and competitors'
- Publicise sales successes from the event
- Develop and sell in detailed follow-up case studies of major installations
- Ongoing stakeholder relations to maintain interest and awareness
- Drive direct marketing to sustain brand visibility
- Plan social media campaigns to engage with customers beyond the show
- Develop fresh content that will keep your story alive

About AD Communications

In graphic arts, packaging and visual communications, AD Communications has close to 30 years experience of helping clients to maximise their return on investment at trade shows. We also work at a strategic consultancy level with trade show organisers including FESPA, Informa Group and Messe Dusseldorf.

“Since Day One, AD Communications has worked seamlessly with us to develop a comprehensive, integrated marketing campaign, advising us on our web site, supporting us at international packaging, plastics and print trade shows, and implementing our commercial and public relations activities. They have played an integral role in the development of the Meech brand, and have worked hard to ensure that our brand is known across our key vertical markets. As a result, media coverage has increased substantially, and interest in our products has grown.” **Iain Cameron, Marketing Manager, Meech International**

“The professionalism, the excellent knowledge of the industry and the superb network of AD Communications form an outstanding basis for collaboration for me. That this collaboration, by the way, takes place in such a very pleasant and reliable atmosphere makes it all the more enjoyable.” **Monika Kissing, Manager, Press Department, Messe Düsseldorf**

To discuss how we could help you with your exhibition requirements in the future, contact Helen Tolino on htolino@adcomms.co.uk, or call her on + 44 (0) 1372 464470.

You can also visit our [web site](#) or connect with us on [Twitter](#), [Google +](#) or [LinkedIn](#).

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