



Report of seminar on “Trade show participation, merchandising techniques & Buyer Seller Meet – Finding new buyers & Networking” at Kolkata was held on (Saturday) on 8th February, 2014 at the Conference hall of EPCH – ER office, at 53/1, Sambhunath Pandit Street, Kolkata – 700 025.

The EPCH organized an awareness seminar on “TRADE SHOW PARTICIPATION, MERCHANDISING TECHNIQUES & BUYER SELLER MEET – FINDING NEW BUYERS & NETWORKING” at Kolkata held on (Saturday) on 8th February, 2014. Following spokespersons were present and addressed the gathering on the subject, wherein total 59 participants including Members, aspiring entrepreneurs, Ladies Self Help Groups, artisans, and NGOs took part in the seminar.

1. Shri P. T. Srinath, Joint Director, FIEO, Kolkata.
2. Smt Rumela Roy, Manager, ITPO, Kolkata Office.
3. Shri Bikash Dey, Handicrafts Promotion Officer, RD&TDC, DC (Handicrafts)
4. Shri Ashwin Gosalia, Eminent Handicrafts Exporter, Member EPCH.

The Seminar was organized to create awareness on the following points:-

- Communicate effectively with the export market;
- Select the best exposition for your company and products;
- Prepare for and manage participation in a trade fair;
- Create or advise on an effective stand design and
- Conduct more effectively at the stand.

Shri Ashwin Gosalia, member exporter welcomed the dignitaries by bouquet Presentation to the faculty members. During the presentation, Smt Rumela Roy informed the participants about EPCH as the apex handicraft exporter’s body. She also briefed about the activities of ITPO.

Shri P. T. Srinath, Joint Director, FIEO, elaborated about the importance of Trade fairs in a company's marketing plan. According to surveys, participating in trade fairs is even more important than face-to-face sales discussions and company presentations.

Shri Bikash Dey from DC (Handicrafts) described Trade fairs, conferences, business events, economic forums and exhibitions can be defined in a unified manner as sophisticated platform for conducting business on a national and international scale. He informed that trade fairs are the marketing tool as the entire marketplace is at your fingertips. As a source of market information they fulfill your needs in a centralized way. They provide an excellent opportunity to assess opinions from clients and determine market potential, conduct research and evaluate competition, develop commercial structures by identifying new agents and distributors, and initiating joint ventures and project partnerships.

He explained the benefits of participating in a trade fair which includes the following:

1. Trade shows generally take place at a single location and bring together thousands of exhibitors and potential customers; they are a very cost-effective marketing medium.
2. Business-to-business shows typically do not allow selling on the show floor, generating sales leads is the most common reason exhibitors participate. At shows which allow selling, such as consumer shows, generating sales is what exhibitors want.
3. Trade shows can be used by SMEs to distinguish itself from competition in a market where products are viewed by consumers as commodities. A snazzy booth attracts potential customers, which differentiates a firm from its opposition.
4. Also, it's possible during the course of a fair to personally meet most of your important clients and suppliers, making shows a good way to establish and reinforce relationships.

5. Today, most of the leading manufacturers spend up to 10 percent of their total advertising budget on trade fairs, the figure reaching as high as 40 percent in case of companies operating in the B2B area.

While summarizing the awareness Shri Ashwin Gosalia, stated that Trade show participation is the important things to know about the market condition and latest trends of the products and services in the market. Tradeshow is the platform where we can find best and good products and services easily because there are many types of products and services of different brands and companies. It is good for consumers to make good decision for the business and know about market values of products and services.

In the exhibition, sellers and buyers meet face to face and they can choose best things in the market. Buyers can ask about the business's products or services and receive an immediate answer by sellers. Participating in trade shows demonstrates the presence of that business in that market, enhancing the brand and giving the customers in that market an idea of what the business is and what it can provide them.

Participating of the trade show is best idea to see all type of facilities and prices of products and services directly and also see demonstration of products and services for testing. Trade show participation is very important for local businesses that are seeking the most visibility within the market. This is the best opportunities to the business sector companies to show the best way of present there products and services to customers in the exhibition.

Before concluding, EPCH member – exporter Shri Ashwin Gosalia, on his vote of thanks, included all the dignitaries present in the dais and all the guests for their support and participation.

Conclusion

Trade fair is a formidable marketing option for any business - provided it is used most judiciously and after much deliberation. Careful planning and execution is essential for ensuring a healthy return from this sizable investment. No business can afford to rule out this marketing option, nor can it afford to adopt in haste. Furthermore, if you are interested in increasing productivity or boosting efficiency; finding solutions; reducing costs; seeking inspiration or new ideas; developing international contacts; improving industry knowledge and discovering the latest innovations; meeting experts or improving your carbon footprint, there are hardly any option without participating trade fair.

The Major Questions which were asked including the following:

Q. Are trade fairs still relevant? In this age of Internet and electronic commerce - how valid are trade fairs?

A. Trade fair is a rather expensive marketing channel. Besides, substantial monetary investment, one needs to sort out considerable logistics challenges. In case you are participating in overseas trade fairs, challenges are manifold such as visa clearance, sorting out language barrier, on-site trade promotion etc. Even after attending to all these troubles and spending considerable sum of money - you are still not sure what kind of return to expect on investment. Naturally, one would expect popularity of trade fairs to diminish with time.

However, it can be observed on ground is just opposite - trade fairs are getting increasingly popular all over the world. Trade fair is quite popular among Indian manufacturers and exporters also.

Q. Why trade fairs are so important?

A. The reason for such popularity of Trade Fairs is not far to seek. Ask any marketing guru what he/she considers the most important elements of any marketing drive and the answer will be

1. Ability to reach right target group
2. Ability to pitch right products to right buyers
3. Opportunity to interact with actual buyers one-to-one and get feedback

4. Opportunity for Brand Building and PR exercise
Trade Fair - with all its accompanying difficulties and expensive nature - fulfills all these marketing goals.

Q. What are the benefits of trade fair participation?

- A. In specific terms - a well organized trade show delivers following benefits
1. Business lead generation - from buyers, distributors, agents
 2. Market Intelligence - get competitor insights, market trends, innovation previews
 3. PR Exposure - media, speaking opportunities, in-show awards
 4. Opportunity to interact with various service providers, industry associations, logistics partners, marketing channels etc.

Knowing how a trade fair fits into company's overall market strategy is key to working out specific benefits your product/company needs and select matching trade shows and display media.

Q. Should one participate or just attend?

A. This is a very crucial question every business must address. If you are making initial forays in a target market and your main objective is to understand market dynamics, then simple attendance may be the right choice. In any case, it is most sensible to attend a trade fair several times before deciding to participate. There are several trade fairs directory to help you locate right fairs for your products.

However, if you already have some presence in a target market and plan to consolidate this market presence with more customers, agents, distributors, PR media etc. - then participation may yield rich dividend.

For example, if you have several customers in a target country, who are geographically dispersed - participation in a trade show may be a cost effective option as you are not only demonstrating commitment to the market, raising your profile and enjoying other benefits of exhibiting, but you are also potentially saving time and money from having to fly all over the country to meet your customers in their home territory.

Q. Why one must Attend IHGF?

A. Asia's largest Indian Handicrafts and Gifts Fair beginning next week is expected to attract more than 6,000 foreign buyers from over 30 countries. They will source their requirements from a wide range of eco-friendly products showcased by about 3,600 exhibitors from all over India under one-roof spread over 100,000 sq. mt., venue of India Expo Centre & Mart at Greater Noida Expressway in the NCR of Delhi. The four-day B2B mega event, being organized by the Export Promotion Council for Handicrafts (EPCH), will mainly focus on eco-friendly products made out of different raw material base like wood, metal, cane and bamboo, textiles made of natural fibers, wool, silk, jute, coir, stone, leather, terracotta, lacquer and using vegetable dyes. IHGF also plays a vital role in increasing the foreign exchange earnings. The IHGF is held twice a year in February and in October, known as Spring and Autumn Fairs respectively.

Exhibitors Benefits:

1. Sales – via a targeted audience of qualified buyers at specialised industry events who have come to see you.
2. The warmth of personal contact in face-to-face meetings.
3. Opportunities for your audience to see, touch, smell or try before buying.
4. A strong brand building environment via product demonstrations, seminars, conferences and sponsorship opportunities.
5. The chance to promote brand loyalty via hospitality and networking events.
6. An ideal platform to launch new products and find sales agents or distributors in new markets.
7. The ability to check and evaluate competition.
8. Media interaction and press conferences.
9. Quality market research opportunities.
10. The chance to overcome objections to purchasing decisions.
11. Conferencing opportunities to learn more about future industry trends.

Visitors Benefits:

1. Top quality international, business to business events serving specialized industry sectors.
2. A highly targeted audience of fellow industry professionals.
3. The most cost effective means of sourcing products, services and information in your industry.
4. Direct personal access to the suppliers of the leading technology.
5. The opportunity to question, examine and compare the performance of competitive suppliers from around the world.
6. New product launches with linked conferences, exhibitor seminars and networking events.
7. The most time efficient forum to keep up to date with state of the art products, innovations and developments in market.
8. New business opportunities by providing direct negotiation with exhibitor's senior decision makers.

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