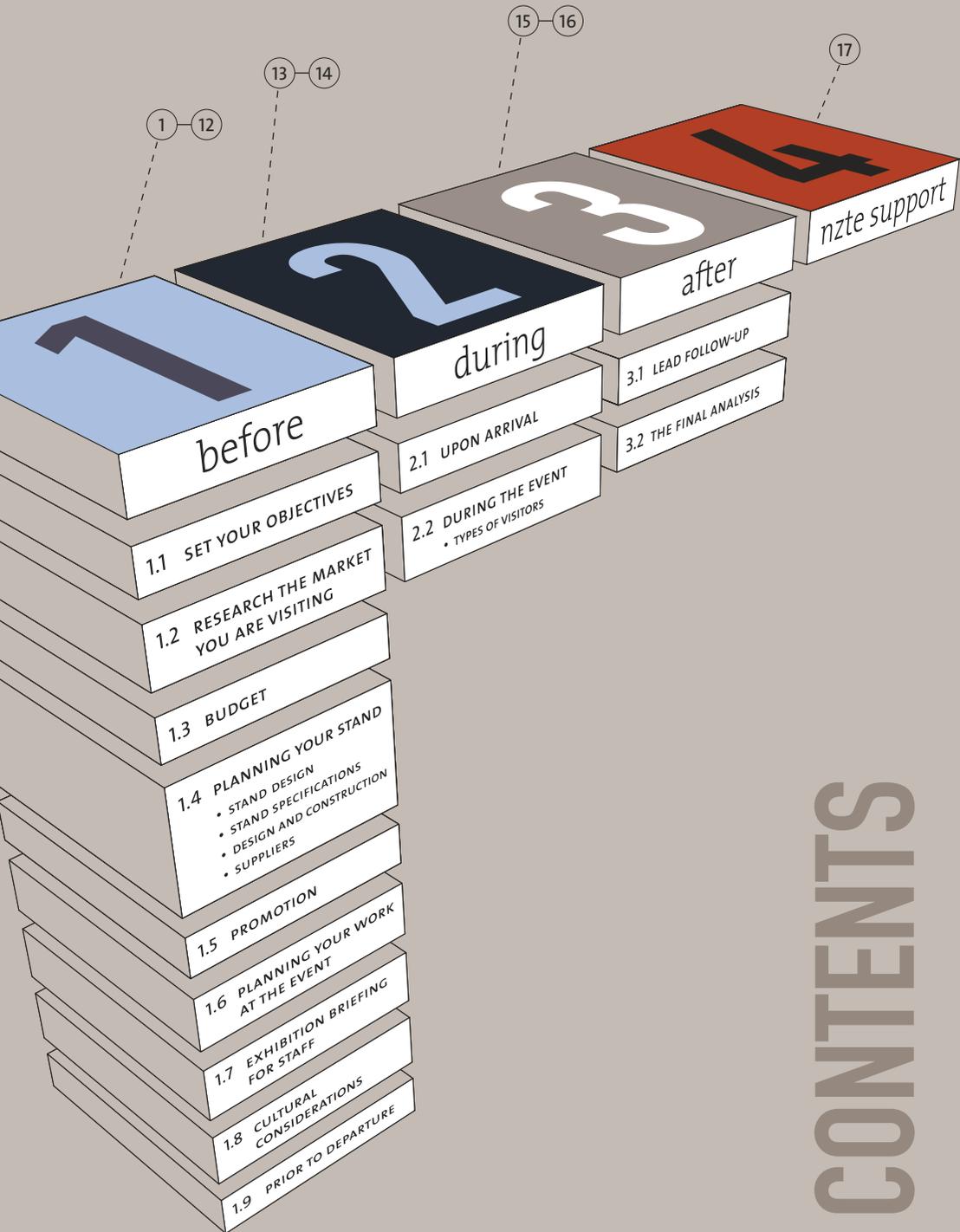


# ensuring success at Trade Shows

A step-by-step guide





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# INTRODUCTION

Our focus at New Zealand Trade and Enterprise is on growing the economy and improving the international competitiveness and sustained profitability of New Zealand businesses.

As part of that we work in partnership with the export community to help exporters improve their bottom line and increase the foreign exchange that flows into the country. We assist exporters through our integrated global network, providing market intelligence and hands-on support and opening doors to influential business and government contacts to help you succeed overseas.

When attending overseas trade events, we encourage exporters to exhibit as part of a group of New Zealand companies. Few New Zealand companies have the physical presence of a large multi-national or corporate, however, by participating as part of a group the 'presence' can be similar – a branded New Zealand pavilion or stand can be an impressive sight.

Trade fairs are an extremely effective marketing activity for selling to highly targeted audiences 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 set up a stand, pass out literature and hope for the best.

As part of our commitment to helping New Zealand exporters succeed we have developed this Trade Event Toolkit to help you maximise your return on investment from any trade event you attend.

Note: Remember trade events
are just the mid-point of an
integrated sales process!

# BEFORE THE EVENT

1

## 1.1 set your OBJECTIVES

Having clear and realistic objectives is a critical starting point, as you need to know and understand what you want to achieve; whether it's increasing market share or introducing new products/services into existing or new markets. The following points can help you to set some objectives to achieve maximum return.

### Objectives must be:

- specific
- measurable in quantity and quality
- achievable in a defined period of time
- consistent with your company's goals, policies and marketing plan.

### Considering the following points should help you to set some objectives and achieve maximum return on investment.

- how does this particular event fit into our current business plan?
- how does this particular event fit into our present marketing strategy?
- do we want to:
  - increase awareness of products/services in existing markets?
  - introduce new products/services into existing markets?
  - introduce existing products/services into new markets?
  - introduce new products/services into new markets?
  - introduce our company into new markets?
  - increase awareness of our company in existing markets?

Note: It is advisable to make hotel bookings well in advance as 'host' hotels book up first. If reception rooms are to be booked at host hotels this needs to be done several months in advance.

Note: Make sure you visit [www.marketnewzealand.com](http://www.marketnewzealand.com) and check out the Market Intelligence section for country briefs, city guides and global updates.

- what are our exhibiting objectives? (i.e. what is our minimum expectation for return on investment?)
- what products/product lines need to be displayed?
- who is our target audience at this event?
- do we have marketing collateral organised for the event?
- do extra literature/catalogues/price lists need to be printed and are they relevant to the market we will be exhibiting in?
- is our website appropriate for overseas audiences?
- do we have a written exhibition plan?
- has an exhibition budget been established? Is the budget sufficient to deliver our objectives?
- what booth design will meet our objectives?

## 1.2 research the market you are visiting

- it is strongly recommended that you conduct some basic research on the country (including culture, main economic indicators, business environment etc.) of the market you intend visiting
- do not underestimate the cultural aspect of the country where the trade show is taking place. Consider possible religious, historic or symbolic sensitivities and avoid costly and/or embarrassing mistakes
- investigate freighting and customs clearance for the country where the exhibition is taking place; are you permitted to take your product into the country for the purpose of the show?; how much time will need to be allowed for paperwork and processing?
- how prolific is the use of the English language in the market? Where English is not the main language, or not very commonly used, it is highly recommended that you provide translated material/brochures. Aside from the practical implications, this will also serve in demonstrating your company's commitment to the audience's market
- power/plugs and telecommunications often differ – make sure the equipment you intend to use will be compatible.

Do you have global roaming on your mobile? Note down country codes and establish how people will be able to contact you in market while you are at the show

- it is recommended that you visit the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade website, [www.mfat.govt.nz](http://www.mfat.govt.nz), for up to date security and travel advice.

## 1.3 BUDGET

Base your preliminary financial planning on rough estimates or, if available, empirical figures from your last trade fair participation.

### **Be sure to take the following cost items into account:**

- stand rental – in most cases stand rental will only account for 10-20% of total costs
- cost of stand structure and utility services – these costs depend mainly on whether you opt for a modular or custom-built stand structure
- exhibition costs – the main cost factors to consider are the costs of constructing demonstration models and transporting exhibition materials
- the cost and time involved in preparing appropriate brochures and support material, including language translations
- advertising, press work, sales promotion – don't forget to allocate sufficient funds to your own exhibition advertising to attract visitors to your stand. The organiser's advertising draws visitors to the trade fair as a whole. Your own advertising is what generates awareness of your company's presence
- personnel costs – in addition to the tangible costs of accommodation, meals, catering and transport, remember to consider the intangible costs of planning and follow-up work for yourself and your staff
- the cost of insurance policies to cover travel and on-site requirements.

### **After the exhibition:**

- compare the results with your original objectives
- draw financial conclusions for participating in future trade fairs.

Note: Create an exhibit that sells! Remember the maxim – ‘less is more’.

Note: Just think; you have less than 10 seconds to catch the attention of a visitor to your stand!

## 1.4 PLANNING YOUR STAND

Trade fairs offer a conducive business atmosphere only for those exhibitors who know how to do business at them. Your company is one of hundreds that is taking part in the exhibition. What will make potential customers visit your stand over your competitors?

Whatever promotional avenues you decide to use, make sure that you give visitors a reason to come to your stand. In a hall overflowing with products and services, combined with time constraints, people need a motivation to come and visit your stand.

Your stand makes a strong statement about your company, what you do and how you do it. The purpose of your exhibit is to attract visitors so you can achieve your objectives. And, as well as having an open, welcoming and friendly stand, you need to have a focal point and a strong key message that communicates significant benefit to your prospect.

### Exhibition objectives frequently consist of:

- launching new products
- making sales
- expanding existing foreign sales markets
- gaining a general overview of your industry
- making new contacts and strengthening existing business relationships with:
  - clients
  - resellers
  - product sales representatives
  - suppliers
  - industry specialists
  - trade and business press
  - radio, TV and other key media (depending on your product line)

- exchanging ideas with other exhibitors as well as with the exhibition organisers
- image building
- company mergers
- co-operative ventures etc.

**Consider the following points when you are designing your stand:**

- why are you exhibiting and what is the key message you would like to get across?
- who do you want to attract to your stand?
- what do you want visitors to learn immediately from looking at your stand?
- consider the amount of visual clutter in the trade event environment
- consider the size and impact of your stand relative to impact and expected outcomes
- have attention grabbing visuals that are big and bold
- use text sparingly – more like a billboard and less like a brochure
- have one primary idea as your focal point
- create a sense of space that is open and inviting
- consider options for conducting one-on-one private meetings
- can we refurbish/use our current exhibit?
- do we need a new exhibit?
- do we need new graphics?
- what event services/items need to be ordered: signage, electricity, lighting, floor covering, audio visual equipment, plumbing/air/water/drainage, booth cleaning services, plants/floral decorations, telephone, computer, rubbish bins, furniture, banner hanging?
- have you ordered a sales lead tool (usually a bar code reading machine) to capture all visitors' details?
- has booth installation/dismantling been organised?
- what freight arrangements need to be organised?

Note: A table with a locking cabinet is useful to ensure valuable items, i.e. purses, laptops, digital cameras, are not stolen.

Note: As a general rule, exhibitors who have booked 'space only' shop around for the best offer before commissioning a stand construction firm to construct their booth on site.

### 1.4.1 STAND DESIGN

The shell scheme – 'space only' booking has the following advantages:

- no storage costs
- no transport costs
- no maintenance costs
- no costs for personnel to assemble.

Normally, a modular stand design is used.

This offers the following advantages:

- cost-efficient, prefabricated and perfectly-fitting components
- easy transport and storage guaranteed
- fewer hands required in setting up and dismantling
- simple tools sufficient for setting up and dismantling
- high component stability
- versatile and adaptable.

### 1.4.2 STAND SPECIFICATIONS

The following need to be considered/specified:

- size; depth and height
- flooring
- walls and surrounds
- what lighting is supplied
- fascia boards
- traffic flow of show visitors
- furniture requirements.

### 1.4.3 DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION

What hardware options will you require?

- pop up stands or large digital drops?
- will they be easy to transport, assemble and disassemble?
- budget – how much do you want/need to spend?

#### 1.4.4 SUPPLIERS

**What can they supply and who are they? Professional stand construction firms offer consulting in key design areas such as:**

- presentation of exhibits
- essential furnishings
- the choice of lighting systems for the stand and products
- signboards, trademarks, company logos, graphic elements and general branding
- the use of photos and slides
- the use of audio-visual media.

## 1.5 PROMOTION

**The key to success is communicating what you have to offer, to as many people as possible, before the exhibition. Some of the benefits of pre-exhibition promotion and publicity include:**

- encouraging visitors to put you on their list of companies to see
- providing a reason for sales contact and a timeframe for response
- helping pre-sell prospects
- differentiating your company and products you'll be launching at the event, as well as new features, applications, etc.
- enhancing existing client relationships and loyalty
- generating free editorial coverage
- creating enthusiasm and anticipation for the event
- creating awareness of your company.

Note: Deadline  
for the Exhibition  
Catalogue is often  
two months prior  
to the event.

### Some things to consider when developing pre-show promotions are:

- what pre-event promotion needs to be organised, e.g. personal invitations, advertising, direct mail and public relations etc.?
- has our booth number been included on all pre-event promotional pieces?
- have press kits been prepared, have you booked space in the press box?
- has our event guide entry been completed and sent?
- will promotional giveaways enhance our message?
- what on-site promotion do we want to organise, e.g. event directory advertising?
- do we want to organise a visitor competition?
- is our competition or giveaway in line with the market's laws?
- how many tickets/passes need to be ordered?
- have hospitality functions been planned?
- if planning to serve food, do you meet local health guidelines/regulations for how food must be apportioned, handled etc., will you need fridges?
- check liquor laws before serving alcohol on your booth.

## 1.6 PLANNING YOUR WORK AT THE EVENT

To ensure your company is presented as both professional and efficient you will need to consider the following:

- how many people are needed to staff the booth?
- who are the best people to represent the organisation and are they available?
- has a booth manager been appointed?
- has staff training been organised?
- has a pre-event meeting been scheduled for those manning the booth?
- is the booth team familiar with all products/services being displayed?
- will a technical representative be available to answer questions?
- how will the booth team engage with key visitors?
- what information do you want to obtain from your key visitors and what information do you want to distribute to them?
- has a lead card been designed and printed?
- has a practice demonstration session been organised?
- has a suitable dress code/uniform been established which is appropriate for the country the event is being held in?
- have badges been ordered for all booth personnel?
- do the booth personnel have sufficient business cards?
- has a booth schedule been planned?
- who will oversee booth installation and dismantling?

**Prepare as much of your post-event activity as possible prior to the event.**

- has a lead taking system been organised for visitor requests?
- how will event leads be handled?
- has a daily debrief session been scheduled?
- will thank you letters be sent to every registered visitor?
- how will sales from the event be monitored?
- does a database need to be set up to capture new contacts?

Note: Manning a stand is tiring work; wear comfortable shoes, keep drink bottles on hand and get a good night's sleep each night.

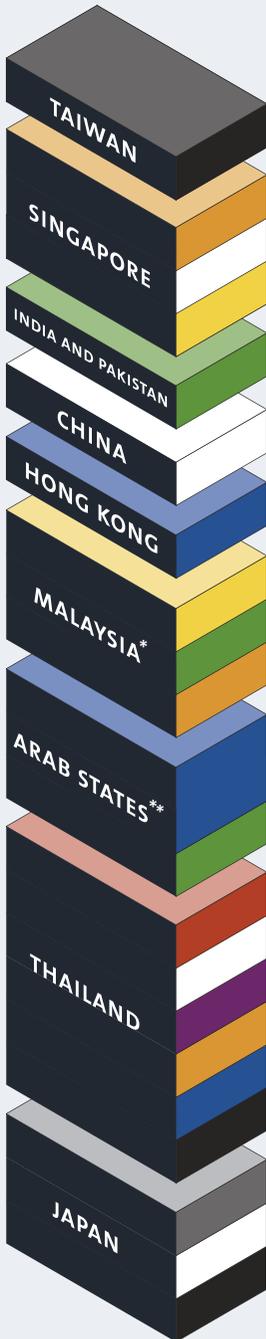
## 1.7 EXHIBITION BRIEFING

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 exhibition. The exhibition briefing should cover:

- exhibition objectives
- target audience
- personal responsibilities
- personal targets
- products/services on display
- equipment to be demonstrated
- enquiry handling procedures
- sales literature
- competition/incentives/giveaways
- dress
- list of other stand staff and their phone numbers
- duty schedule
- stand location
- event hours
- accommodation arrangements
- transport arrangements
- catering arrangements
- details of off-stand activities.

# 1.8 cultural considerations

The following is a simplified table of some reactions to colours and symbols by overseas markets.



COLOUR	CONNOTATION	SYMBOL	CONNOTATION
BLACK	Avoid if possible	ELEPHANTS	Strength (good symbol)
GOLD	Prosperity and happiness	TORTOISES AND SNAKES	Dirt, evil, poison (avoid)
WHITE	Prosperity and happiness	PIGS AND COWS	Sacred (avoid)
YELLOW	Communist influence (avoid if possible)		
GREEN	Good colour	PIGS AND COWS	Sacred (avoid)
WHITE	Mourning (avoid)	TIGERS, LIONS, DRAGONS	Strength (good symbol)
BLUE	Unpopular	TIGERS, LIONS, DRAGONS	Strength (good symbol)
YELLOW	Royalty (avoid)	PIGS AND COWS	Sacred (avoid)
GREEN	Longevity		
GOLD	Islamic religion (avoid)		
BLUE	Protection (Iran – mourning)	ANIMALS, ESPECIALLY PIGS ALCOHOL INCL. GRAPEVINES AND LEAVES	Religious (avoid) Religious (avoid)
GREEN	Colour of Islam (avoid writing in green)	STAR OF DAVID	Political (avoid)
RED	Nation and prosperity	ELEPHANTS	National emblem
WHITE	Purity and religion	BLACK CAT, KOMODO DRAGON	Bad luck (avoid)
PURPLE	Widow (avoid)	BUFFALO	Stupidity
GOLD	Prosperity	LOTUS, JASMINE	Religion, sacredness
BLUE	Monarchy		
BLACK	Grief and death (avoid)		
SILVER	Luxury	CHERRY BLOSSOM	Beauty
WHITE	Sophistication, innocence, purity	CHRYSANTHEMUM	Royalty (avoid)
BLACK	Employ for print only (Note: there is a preference for any bright colours)		

\* Mixed Malay, Indian and Chinese market.

\*\* References to Arab States are generic. We recommend that specific advice is obtained on individual countries to be visited, prior to travel.

## 1.9 PRIOR TO DEPARTURE

Make sure you've got the following before leaving for the event:

Note: A back-up plan is advisable in the event that materials don't arrive as planned.

Note: The day before the event hold a pre-event briefing and final training for staff.

- allow sufficient time to obtain appropriate visas for you and your staff
- credit cards
- copies of all orders and cheques for services paid in advance
- phone numbers and addresses of all suppliers
- phone numbers and accommodation details of other New Zealand exhibitors attending as part of your enterprise network
- consignment details for event material and return shipping labels
- mobile phone charger
- pocket digital camera and spare memory stick(s)
- 'essentials' box, e.g. BluTak, scissors, string, basic first aid kit etc.
- plugs/power adaptors (as necessary)
- check the show guide on the Internet to see if there are exhibitors you would like to meet – some associations list attendees from the previous years' show.

# 2 DURING THE EVENT

## 2.1 upon arrival

It is recommended that staff manning the stand arrive at the event location with an appropriate amount of time allowed to; recover from jet lag, set up the stand, address any last minute issues that may arise and cover off the following:

- confirm freight has arrived and that all contractors are on schedule
- check hotel reservations for staff, as well as confirming meeting room bookings and catering orders if appropriate
- get to know the venue and find the service areas. Meet the electrician and confirm date and time for electrical installation
- confirm telecommunication arrangements – phone/internet connection points
- supervise booth set-up
- take photos of completed exhibit.

## 2.2 during the event

A trade event is the perfect opportunity to find out what your competitors are doing; what is their unique selling point? what products are they offering? how are they positioning themselves? etc.

- observe competitors and see what works for them
- give staff time to visit the other exhibitors
- take photos of your and other exhibitors' stands
- have daily meetings with staff and unwind sessions at the end of each day
- check evening function arrangements (if appropriate).

Depending on your product and exhibition objectives, train staff to 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 qualified prospects also. Your primary purpose is to collect leads and information for later follow-up. Save the selling for after the event.

### 2.2.1 TYPES OF VISITORS

**Recognise 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 of what they want to achieve. They are happy to be approached, and keen to discuss their requirements, in the knowledge that the information they obtain will help them make an informed purchasing decision.
- **Reluctant Interviewee** – these visitors do not like being sold to. They are wary of giving away too much about themselves for fear that they are handing over control. These visitors require careful handling. They must not be pushed too hard for information, but gently encouraged to volunteer it.
- **Introvert** – many people who are introverts by nature feel self-conscious stepping on to an exhibition stand. Introverts will often hover on the edges of a stand, reluctant to commit themselves to stepping in, but when engaged in conversation will be only too happy to discuss their needs. The staff member, however, will need to be careful not to scare off the visitor with their initial approach.
- **Time-Waster** – time-wasters are more than willing to discuss just about anything, in long drawn-out detail. Unfortunately, they usually have no authority to buy and no money to spend. It is a good idea to pre-arrange with other staff members some methods of politely extracting yourselves or each other from the clutches of such visitors.
- **Free-Loader** – these visitors are more interested in your food and drink and free giveaways than your display, and take up valuable space that may be required for serious business discussions. You should have a firm policy on how to handle such visitors.
- **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. Socialising should be saved for the evening.

# 3

# AFTER THE EVENT

## 3.1 LEAD FOLLOW-UP

Follow-up all leads immediately. This should be done formally within a week after the exhibition, even if it's just a fax or a simple thank you letter to keep the lines of communication open. This makes your company look more responsive and professional. You can be sure your competitors will be doing the same thing.

### TWO WEEKS LATER

Within two weeks of your first round of letters, contact prospects personally. Say that you are calling to make sure they received the information; ask if they looked through the information; 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.

### LONGER TERM

Ensure continuous follow-up. Make sure sales people continue to follow-up leads, enquiries and requests for information for at least twenty-four months after the exhibition. According to industry research, sales within the first three to four weeks represent only one-third of the potential response from a trade fair. Many exhibitors lose the additional two-thirds of sales that can take place up to twenty-four months after the exhibition, due to lack of follow-up.

aFTER

## 3.2 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 should cover:

- what was achieved against set objectives
- a detailed breakdown of costs
- sales results to date
- a return on investment summary
- a recommendation on whether to attend this event again in the future.

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

- viability of set objectives
- choice of event
- choice of exhibits
- proficiency of stand designer/contractor
- effectiveness of event-linked promotions
- performance of stand personnel, as a group and individuals
- efficiency and follow-up of leads.

It should also contain samples of any promotions undertaken in connection with the event (direct mail, advertisement etc.) and photographs of the stand. This will help you to raise standards for the following year, should you choose to participate in the event again.

# 4

# NZTE SUPPORT

NZTE may provide additional practical support and advice relating to trade events, including:

- what international events exist for your products and how to choose the best ones for your business
- information about the events – timing, organisations etc.
- supplier lists – event managers, display equipment companies, freight forwarders
- Brand New Zealand promotional material for groups of companies attending a trade event, including banners and advice on branding the stand
- supply of Brand New Zealand merchandise material, including tee-shirts, lapel pins and caps etc.
- Exporter Education courses.

To find out whether your company may be eligible for any of these services, please contact your Client Manager or phone NZTE on 0800 555 888.

**Disclaimer:**

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VISIT [WWW.NZTE.GOVT.NZ](http://WWW.NZTE.GOVT.NZ) OR CALL 0800 555 888

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ISBN 0 478 25442 3

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June 2005

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