

Dates for your Diary

June This month

5th: Club meeting - Public relations

20th: Copy deadline

Future Events

2nd July: Club meeting - Members displays

6th Aug: Club meeting - Quiz

3rd Sept: Club meeting - Customer care

Con'd...

Evaluation- Follow Up- Follow up all the contacts you made at the show. Make the most of the opportunities gained. It often happens that a full evaluation of the show is impossible until several months after as customers come to you that first saw you at the show or in the show catalogue.

Debrief Staff- A wash up meeting is important to get feedback from your staff. Get their feeling for the effectiveness of the stand & of the whole exercise. Discuss the targets that were set & whether they were met. I have often found that this meeting throws up good ideas to be incorporated into the next show. It needs to be done soon after the show while the show is fresh in the minds of your people.

Did You Meet Your Targets?- The targets were set before the show. Did you meet them or fall short? Were the targets realistic? Are there better ways of measuring?

Cost Effective?- Was the show cost effective against other forms of marketing? What will you do that is different next year?

Finally- I have some copies of an exhibition check list left over from the talk. If you would like one, give me a call.

Keith Ellison
Springboard Events Ltd

Welcome to our
New Members

new members
new members
Accounts & Book Keeping
Susan Ross

JUST for Laughs

A Dark and Stormy Night...



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A new Scam? - Christine Brown, Brown & Lonsdale

At the last meeting of the South Ribble Business Forum Julian Edwards, of Trading Standards, informed me of yet another scam that is doing the rounds, this time on the registration of web pages. Namely:
CENTRAL WEB PAGES REGISTER LTD.
788/790 FINCHLEY ROAD
LONDON
NW11 7TJ
Company No. :04378969
Date of Incorporation : 21/02/2002

The company is mail shotting companies who have web pages, offering registration. In reality the details of the web page will then be advertised on the Web page of Central Web Pages. The cost involved is £225.60. There is the impression given, that if payment is not made that the web page of the recipient will be disconnected from everywhere! This is not the case, as when read carefully, all that is being said is that Central Web Pages will no longer include it on their site. There is no obligation to register with this company.

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Impression

AD-OPTIONS!

Newsletter

June 2002

www.businessclub.uk.com

CHORLEY
& SOUTH
RIBBLE
BUSINESS
CLUB

Important Notice:

The meeting on the 5th of June is a Wednesday because of the Jubilee Bank Holidays

A word from our sponsor

More pens to write home about

The most universal promotional tool, the humble pen, is now available in many more varieties from Ad-Options. Business Club Chairman Steve Ward has now secured distribution rights for the Prodir and Pen Warehouse ranges, to greatly enhance the value and choice now available to his customers.

The Prodir range is elegant, colourful and prestigious, ideal for all clients looking to portray a distinctive and stylish image. The Pen Warehouse collection is a comprehensive range of value for money pens to suit all budgets. "We are delighted at the value offered by these new ranges" said Stephen "The basic stick and retractable

ball pens are particularly well priced when you consider the features offered". Ad-Options are always happy to provide samples and will even offer **MEMBER DISCOUNTS!** Call 01772 435010 or email steve@ad-options.co.uk for details.



"Steve Ward looking for the write pen"

Notices

July's meeting will be the members exhibition that we hold every year. We have booked the large room at Lancashire College so there is plenty of room. Anyone wishing to have a display should contact Keith at Springboard Events 01254 831149 or keith@springboardevents.co.uk to book their space. As usual it is a free event, open to everyone, just bring along your raffle prize as last year.

Notices

The Club Directory is due to be printed and will be sent out hopefully with next months newsletter. If you have any change of details that you have not already told us about, could you forward them on to Philip for inclusion in the directory. Call 01257 278392 or email philip@lancastr.freemove.co.uk

THE NEXT
MEETING
T U E S D A Y
5th june
7.45 for 8pm

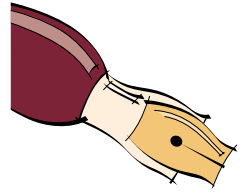
PR for my company? But I can't afford Max Clifford!

Dea Parkin of The Competitive Edge takes a tongue-in-cheek and hopefully slightly useful look at PR for businesses of all sizes and concerns. What exactly is PR? What value does it have? Can you do it yourself?

Using examples of press coverage from business club members as well as other companies in the region, Dea will explain how even the tiniest business can make PR work for them.

This will be an informal meeting with lots of opportunity for questions afterwards.

Dea has been working as a freelance PR consultant and copywriter for 11 years, trading as The Competitive Edge, and has been a Business Club member for most of that time. She says she's still learning more about PR and marketing every day, but is happy to pass on a summary of her knowledge and experience so far.



The Chairman writes...

The weather is warmer and cricket is getting rained off so holidays must be just around the corner. In business a holiday is vital to rest, recharge the batteries and get a fresh perspective on the day to day madness that can be self-employment. When cash flow is tight and you still have not got enough hours in the day, then a holiday can seem to be the last thing you need (or can afford).

A holiday break can also be just the tonic your business needs. There is nothing like an approaching break to focus your mind on what is important and what is not. It can also focus the minds of your customers. A couple of years ago when my company was forced to cut back staff and my wife and I were working all hours, we new needed a break but we had never "closed" for business before. After much deliberation we decided to shut for the old Leyland Holiday fortnight at the end of July. Two weeks before, we sent a mailing to clients letting them know we would be closed. Consequently the phones went crazy and we had the busiest month of the year so far, in just 11 working days!



Now we give customers more notice so that we are not too shattered as we set off. Similar things happen at other breaks like Christmas and Easter. The lesson hear is that if you want a customer to make a decision, give them the best offer you can, plus a deadline. By the way, Ad-Options Limited will be closed for holidays this year from 20th to July to 4th August so you had better call me now!

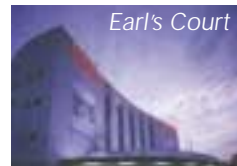
Just to Laughs

A Dark and Stormy Night

(read the story then see the photo on the back page)

They were together in the house. Just the two of them. It was a cold, dark, stormy night. The storm had come quickly and each time the thunder boomed he watched her jump.. She looked across the room and admired his strong appearance...and wished that he would take her in his arms, comfort her and protect her from the storm.. She wanted that...more than anything. Suddenly, with a pop, the power went out.. She screamed. He raced to the sofa where she was cowering. He didn't hesitate to pull her into his arms. He knew this was a forbidden union and expected her to pull back. He was surprised when she didn't resist but instead clung to him. The storm raged on...as did their growing passion. And there came a moment when each knew that they had to be together. They knew it was wrong. Their families would never understand. So consumed were they in their passion that they heard no opening of doors...just the faint click of a camera.....

Exhibiting your business



Earl's Court

I have been asked (my arm firmly twisted up my back) to put together some notes, from the talk I gave at the May meeting for those not present on the night (tch tch).

Aims- Exhibiting can be an expensive business. It makes sense to have clear aims & objectives before the show. Develop a list of quantifiable aims & a list of performance measures. Remember people buy people. Look at ways of making your exhibition at least interesting, at best a fun packed experience.

Which Exhibition? - There may be only 1 major show in the year for your industry or there may be several. Get the information on the show, number of exhibitors, number of visitors & check out if your competitors are going to be there. Any demographic information or visitor profiles should be available from previous shows. Cost is important of course; stands can run from £50 per sq metre to £400. Multiply that by the standard 3M x 3M shell stand & you have your stand price. Do your research thoroughly and make your decision. There may be cost implications of staffing, accommodation, graphics, services, printing etc.

Cross exhibiting may be a useful alternative to the mainstream show for your industry. A firm of office furniture suppliers struggled to make headway with all their competitors at the Office Furniture show so decided to go to the Lawyers show. Why? Because Lawyers have smart offices & need office furniture but are unlikely to go to the furniture show. They were the only furniture suppliers at the Lawyers show & exceeded their expectations. The firm now targets other shows for professional groups.

The Stand - Position in Show - There is no 'best' position for your stand. There are pitfalls to remember. The majority of visitors stride into a show, then slow down to an amble, look around & wonder where they need to go. If you are near the main entrance they may pass you by. It follows, that unless you are a large well known company, don't ask for the 'prime' sites near the entrance. Another theory goes that 70% of visitors turn left into the hall so if you are trading morning fare go to the left and if evening, to the right. Yet another theory says that all visitors tour the perimeter of the show. Look out for areas that are out of line with the others, they can often be quiet backwaters. Try not to get too close to stands that are going to be noisy or very busy, you may get lost in the crowd. Do you want to be near your competitors?

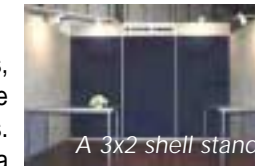
Size / Cost- The more area you take, the more it will cost. Sounds simple but what are your competitors doing? What were their stands like last year? What is your budget for the show against what you hope to get back?

Services- Your shell stand will usually come with basic lighting installed. You will have to assess the requirements for electricity, water, drainage, phones, furniture, cleaning etc. The Exhibitor Manual will tell you the preferred contractors to supply the services. Woe betide any exhibitor that touches anything electrical at the major Exhibition sites! Indeed, your own electrical equipment will need to be tested & certificated before you can use it.

Open Space or Shell Scheme- Open space is what it says. You will have to hire carpet, lights, arrange services, design & build your stand. Advantages: you can personalise your stand, it is cheaper per unit area (balanced against the cost of providing the stand). Shell scheme is a ready built stand it tends to be boxy & difficult to personalise, in a row with several other boxes. The most common type is pole & panel. Your graphics can be mounted on the walls but with a 3 metre frontage it is difficult to make your stand punchy. A corner stand will give you twice the frontage & appear much more open. The advantage to a shell stand is that it takes less planning & may be less expensive in the long run.

- Exhibiting your business - Exhibiting your business

Keith Ellison-Springboard Events



A 3x2 shell stand

Other Stand Options - At smaller shows, especially out door, you will be able to use easily erected panels or 'pop up' stands. Several stands may be grouped together in a marquee. Outdoor open space is usually a patch of grass (or mud) where a tent of some description could be useful. Mobile display units can be hired & can be totally personalised to your needs. They range from 40ft artic trailers that unfold to be fully equipped hospitality units, to trailers that can be pulled by a car (just).

Design- Careful thought needs to be given to the message you are trying to get across. You have about 3 seconds to attract the eye of the visitor as he ambles by. Lots of text, however interesting you think it is, will not do it, your graphics need to be clear and punchy, make good use of plain space & good quality photos. If you have a logo, make good use of it. The idea is to get your potential customer onto the stand, once captured, give them the information they need. Your stand should be open and inviting, counters & other physical barriers should be avoided. Beware videos playing on a loop, they may be attractive to the visitor but the sound will interfere when you have a customer, after a couple of hours you & your staff will go slowly mad.

Neighbours / Competitors- Find out what your neighbours are doing with their stands. Nothing looks worse than a metre of chip-board from your neighbour's stand back showing over the top of your stand. You may well be able to work with your neighbour to reduce costs for both of you. If you can, find out what your competitors are doing on their stand, then do the same or entirely different. Just remember to get your message across as you would like it.

Booking- Book early if you have a burning desire for a particular position. Some shows may even have a waiting list; the London Boat Show did for years. There is a case, for hanging on & negotiating a better rate for late booking. If there is space, the organisers will want to sell as much as possible & the price will fall as the show date gets closer. It may be a case of 'never mind the quality, feel the price' but you could get a good deal.



Pop up display

Show Time! - Aim to be the most professional outfit at the show. Arrive at the hall early for build up & do not leave until the stand is perfect & totally ready for opening. Parking & unloading can be a bun fight that takes a lot of time you hadn't calculated for. Try to make friends with the show organisers, security, electricians etc, I always find I get better service from people than those that shout. During the show, arrive early at your stand, brief your staff for the day, clean, polish & restock, all before the visitors are admitted. Be ready for that first visitor of the day. Get the staff to check each other that buttons and flies are done up and that badges are straight. At the end of the day, don't move off the stand until after the show closes, that late visitor to your stand might be the one that makes the show worth coming to. On the last day, wait until the show closes before beginning your breakdown. You will look more professional than the others. There is always a rush to be the first to get away. If you sit and wait for half an hour, the rush will have died down & all will be easier.

Staff- Training- It is important that your staff are thoroughly briefed. They need to know your aims & targets & what is expected of them. Some people think of their time at a show as a bit of a jolly, a day

out of the office. It needs to be impressed on them that there is a very serious intent to being at the show & that you expect hard work from them.

Accommodation- Another cost, unavoidable if the show is a long way from home. Check out hotels, B&Bs etc in the area early as a lot of accommodation in exhibition hall areas tends to be expensive at show time & booked up early. There are other options; I have stayed with friends, relations & volunteers at various times. Some people camp or have caravans, but remember that exhibiting is tiring work & you need somewhere to relax after a hard day. Try to avoid the party scene that happens at all shows. Too much alcohol makes for a miserable next day at the show & a hung over staff will not produce the results you want.

Badges- Most business shows supply exhibitor passes in the form of badges. How much better to produce badges for your staff with your logo & a name? All staff should wear a name badge while at the show.

Uniforms- Suits & ties or something more casual? The world seems to be going more casual so I guess it is up to you and the industry you operate in. I would prefer to be smart casual for a long tiring day in a hot dry environment. Casual gives you the option of personalising your staff with an embroidered logo. A smart coloured shirt and trousers is unisex & can look smart & business like.

Breaks- You need your staff to be bright & alert while on the stand. Any more than about two hours at a time & you see your staff fading, especially if they are not used to being on their feet all day. Breaks should be on a rota system so that staff know when their next break is coming & will look forward to it. Even small businesses cannot do a whole day single handed on the stand. You must think of a way of keeping your stand manned at all times. I have asked my suppliers to lend a hand at times & have also used my family to man the stand while I have had a break. As the proprietor you need to also find time to look around the show, to suss out what your competitors are up to and to glean ideas for the next show you attend.

Water- Exhibition halls can be hot, dry, dusty places. Dehydration is an ever-constant threat, producing headaches & listlessness. It is important that you & your staff are encouraged to drink plenty of water during the day, 2 litres per person has been recommended to me. Water is the only fluid allowed on my stands out of sight of the customers. Little & often are the bywords to remember.

Security- Exhibition halls can be dens of thieves. Encourage your staff to be constantly security conscious. Handbags, mobile phones, wallets should be kept well out of sight. Times of particular danger are build up & breakdown times when personal belongings are often left unattended. A laptop once vanished from a stand I was running that was put down just long enough for the visitor to get a card from his pocket....10 seconds?

Food and Drink- Unless it is what you are selling, NO FOOD, NO DRINK, NO SMOKING, NO KNITTING, NO NEWSPAPERS on the stand...NEVER. Even if you are selling it, not the staff! (With the possible exception of water). Look at stands that don't heed this rule and see how professional they look.

con't...