

Saimaa University of Applied Sciences
Faculty of Business Administration, Lappeenranta
Degree Programme in International Business

Margarita Petrova

**Participation in Trade Shows as a Method of Improving
Marketing Performance: Passenger Port Saint Petersburg
Marine Façade Case.**

Thesis 2014

Abstract

Margarita Petrova

Participation in Trade Shows as a Method of Improving Marketing Performance:
Passenger Port Saint Petersburg Marine Façade Case, 60 pages, 3 appendices

Saimaa University of Applied Sciences

Faculty of Business Administration, Lappeenranta

Degree Programme in International Business

Bachelor's Thesis 2014

Instructor: Mr. Riku Hytönen, Senior Lecturer, Saimaa University of Applied Sciences

The objective of the thesis was to explain how the participation in trade shows can be planned and how the invented plan can be implemented. The thesis provides the elements of successful planning that facilitates the achievement of such marketing aims as generating sales leads and increasing brand awareness. The project was done for Passenger Port Saint Petersburg Marine Façade, the single and relatively new passenger port in Saint Petersburg, which continuously increases its revenues. The company's final aim of the project was to obtain a brand-new model of participating in trade shows, which was worked out on the basis of the study.

The qualitative research method was chosen because of the descriptive basis of the project that required multiple discussions and process descriptions. The secondary data was gathered from books, articles, other studies and the Internet. The primary data was acquired in interviews with the case company managers, discussions with the company's staff who were responsible for trade show planning, conversations with stand visitors at a trade show and personal observations by the author.

The results of the study show that planning is a unique undertaking, which facilitates maximizing the achieved results and reaching the desired goals. The developed trade show planning model created a firm foundation for further planning and performance improvement. Project results demonstrated the importance of such marketing communication tools as trade shows for B2B sector. They provide opportunities for reaching numerous aims in a single call that is undoubtedly efficient.

Key words: trade show, planning process, marketing communication, port

Table of Contents

1	Introduction.....	5
1.1	Objectives and delimitations.....	6
1.2	Research question.....	6
1.3	Theoretical framework.....	7
1.4	Research method.....	7
1.5	Thesis structure.....	8
2	Types of exhibitions.....	9
3	Benefits of trade shows.....	11
4	Exhibition industry in the world.....	12
5	Trade shows as part of marketing communication mix.....	14
6	Planning process.....	16
6.1	Decision-making process.....	18
6.2	Trade show objectives.....	20
6.3	Selection criteria.....	22
7	Project scheduling.....	24
8	Stand planning.....	25
9	Staffing.....	29
10	Pre-show marketing and promotion materials.....	30
11	Trade show intelligence.....	32
12	Post-show follow up.....	33
12.1	Evaluation of trade show results.....	33
12.2	Follow up action.....	35
13	Passenger Port Saint Petersburg Marine Façade: a brief introduction.....	35
14	Trade show planning process.....	37
14.1	Model of trade show planning and decision-making process.....	37
14.2	Seatrade Europe Cruise & River Cruise Convention.....	40
14.3	Schedule planning.....	41
15	Pre-show planning phase.....	43
15.1	Information collection.....	43
15.2	Visitor profiles.....	44
15.3	Stand design and construction.....	44
15.4	Pre-show marketing campaign.....	46
15.5	Transportation and accommodation.....	47
15.6	Planning of the trade show scenario.....	48
16	Trade show phase.....	49
17	Post-show phase.....	51
17.1	Assessment of objectives' achievement.....	52
17.2	Post-show discussion.....	53
17.3	Recommendations for further trade show planning.....	55
18	Conclusion.....	56
	Figures.....	58

Charts.....	58
References.....	59

Appendices

Appendix 1	Interview questions for the Marine Façade managers
Appendix 2	Questions for stand visitors
Appendix 3	Questions for post-show discussion session

1 Introduction

Nowadays there is an abundance of methods to promote a product or service among customers, to create a certain company image and generate more sales. Especially this relates to B2C market, where the competition is tough and forces firms to invent more and more sophisticated ways to differentiate themselves. However, not all those marketing methods may suit the B2B market due to the specificity of establishing and maintaining business connections. As a result, B2B companies use their own set of marketing communication tools in order to succeed in a certain business sector. One of those tools is a trade show, which has already earned a great reputation as an effective marketing method for B2B companies.

Basically trade shows are organized for the purpose of information exchange, promotion and selling. In order to reach these targets it is “*extremely important to understand how to exploit the full potential of a trade show for making a worthwhile return on marketing investments*”. Although participation in trade shows is rather expensive, the results promise to be fruitful, for instance, establishing valuable connections, gathering new information, increasing sales and earning greater profits afterwards. (Solberg 2013, p. 1.)

The title of the thesis is Participation in trade shows as a method of improving marketing performance: Passenger Port Saint Petersburg Marine Façade case. The author of the thesis is employed in the company and has been appointed to work under a certain project. The main point of the project is planning the participation in trade shows and, on this basis, writing a clear manual for efficient planning. The topic is worth being researched for the case company due to the necessity to create a brand-new model of participation in various trade shows and use that model as the basis for further trade show planning.

This thesis is dedicated to provide specific information about trade shows, describe the process of preparing for a trade show and evaluate the obtained results in order to form the necessary recommendations for the future. The empirical part is based on Passenger Port Saint Petersburg Marine Façade and its participation in the particular trade show in September 2013. Due to the business sector the company operates in,

the trade show has its own special features that are going to be described in the thesis.

1.1 Objectives and delimitations

The objectives of the thesis are to explain what factors determine successful participation in trade shows, to describe the phases of the planning process and the company's marketing activity throughout the whole project, and to propose possible improvements, which might influence not only the case company performance but also facilitate the development of the national economy and the business sector in general.

The chosen topic does not include a detailed explanation of negotiating styles or the strategies the company's representatives apply during the trade shows. Also there is no emphasis on companies which organize such events and their organizational methods. On the contrary, the research is concentrated on the methodology of organizing the exposition work by a company-exhibitor in order to reach the particular goals. Besides, budgeting issues are not discussed in the thesis due to the company's policy of information confidentiality.

1.2 Research question

The main research question is: How to plan the participation in an international trade show in order to generate sales leads and increase brand awareness?

There are a few sub-questions that aim to illustrate the issue in detail. The sub-questions help to concentrate on the topic and look for the precise answers avoiding unnecessary explanations.

- Which phases of planning and steps/actions are required?
- Which marketing aspects are necessary to take into account in connection with trade shows?
- How is the project managed?
- What improvements may be proposed to optimize the planning process and company's performance in the nearest future?

1.3 Theoretical framework

The theory framework is divided into several chapters. The first three ones consist of presenting a trade show as a part of marketing communication mix and classifying exhibitions, enumerating the benefits trade shows bring to the exhibiting companies and defining how the exhibition activities are spread all over the world. From that point of view the thesis is focused on general information in order to introduce the topic and explain its importance.

Furthermore, there is a planning process chapter, which provides more specific information about the researched issue. It includes a description of the planning process stages, a definition of a sound plan, and an explanation of the methodology of decision-making. Moreover, this chapter introduces the GANTT chart as a tool which is used for planning, scheduling and managing project activities.

The methodology of setting objectives and indicating the criteria for selecting the particular trade shows is explained in more detail. Moreover, significant emphasis is put on stand planning and the marketing tools used during the whole implementation of a project.

Participation in trade shows produces new knowledge, experience and trends. Therefore, the chapter about trade show intelligence is included in this thesis as it explains how trade shows can facilitate better practices and corporate improvements, and which steps should be taken in order to gather valuable information.

For the follow-up process and making conclusions, suggestions for the evaluation methodology and indicators of successful plan implementation are given. The offered methods are intended to be utilized in practice by the case company in order to measure the performance and determine the recommendations for further planning and marketing activities.

1.4 Research method

The research is done for the chosen company in its current situation and aims to define and describe the process of preparation and execution of a project. The

process can be better explained via observations and discussions because of the descriptive basis. Therefore, the case study method has been chosen as the main research method for this thesis. The case study method is quite flexible and perfectly suits the type of research where descriptions and explanations are the dominant means of presenting information, illustrating activities and results.

The primary data will be acquired via interviews with case company managers, discussion with other responsible employees after the trade show, conversations with exhibition visitors and observations made throughout the project. The majority of the questions are in an open format. That choice can be explained by the specificity of the topic and the descriptive basis.

1.5 Thesis structure

The thesis consists of introduction chapter, theory and empirical parts, and conclusion. The introduction chapter includes thesis background information, the research questions, the limitations and objectives of the thesis and the main research methods used when analysing information. The chapter explains the importance of the research topic and the way the topic is to be researched.

As it was explained above, the theory part includes information about trade shows as a significant marketing communication tool for B2B companies, illustrates the planning process and its components, explains possible participation goals and selection criteria, focuses on including supportive marketing tools in project execution, demonstrates the importance of the trade show intelligence concept, and offers evaluation methods and indicators for further performance measurement. The theory part provides the basis for project description.

The empirical part starts from introducing the case company. Then, the chapter about trade show planning presents the model for trade show planning and decision process produced especially for the case company. The description of project planning and execution is totally based on this model. Each step of the model is described in detail. Firstly, the trade show objectives are specified. Alternative courses of action are described and analysed with the help of selection criteria. The next chapter describes the trade show in which the company plans to participate.

Organizational activities chapter includes details about schedule planning, pre-show marketing activities, stand design and other organisational aspects, such as organisation of logistics for the particular event, training the staff and estimation of the event budget. Those activities together influence the performance success during the trade show.

In the project execution chapter the work of the case company staff during the trade show is illustrated. Besides, new trends, innovations and improvements are observed by the case company's staff and described later in the post-show review.

The last chapters of the empirical part are dedicated to evaluating the company's performance and achieved results using the chosen assessment method. Every valuable observation is analysed and evaluated for the purpose of future utilization in the case company operations. Furthermore, recommendations for improving the planning process and the case company performance on the international stage are provided. In the conclusion chapter the above mentioned information above is shortly reviewed and the results of the project are described.

2 Types of exhibitions

It is essential to realize the difference between various types of exhibitions. Therefore, some classifications exist to clarify which events are created for which purposes.

According to Morrow (2002) *exhibitions* are events related to displaying goods. The primary purpose of any exhibition is not to sell the displayed product, but to form a general image of a company-participant. Afterwards, the formed image facilitates future sales.

World EXPO is a universal exposition, which may last for up to six months and addresses a specific and troubling theme in the society, for instance, sustainable development and ecological problems. A World EXPO is always a large-scale event, which requires thorough preparation and execution. (UFI 2010, p.14.)

Trade fairs represent business-to-customer events. Taking part in fairs, companies are concentrated not only on creation of a positive image but also on selling the displayed goods to visitors. They are usually open to every interested person and take place for three to five days. One of the best examples is the Canton Fair, taking place in China twice a year. This is the largest trade fair in the country which gathers together a variety of goods, offerings, participants and business turnover. Trade fairs may be also combined with seminars, releases or fashion shows. Often such a combination provokes a higher interest in the event and increases the number of visitors. Besides, exhibitors use such shows not only for the commercial purpose but also for meeting other experts from a certain market segment. (UFI 2010, p. 6.)

Consumer shows are events organised for great masses of population. The exhibitors are retailers, service providers or similar companies, which look for the end users of their product/service. Such an event is held during one to ten days and serves multiple industries and interests. For instance, a single show can be dedicated to demonstrate sport products, home products, apparel and shoes, computer, technologies and many others. Many consumers enjoy such events due to the diverse range of goods, professional advice, real-time demonstration of a product, the abundance of new information and entertainment. (UFI 2010, p. 10.)

Trade shows are business-to-business type of events, which are organised to present new products/services in a specific industry. Basically they are open to business visitors more than to the general public due to the specific character the trade show may have. The exhibitors and visitors at a trade show belong to a particular target group of the market segment. Usually associations which represent the particular market segment organize such events or they are invited to be a partner or, to some extent, a sponsor of a planned trade show. Depending on the industry which the trade show serves, the attendance may be restricted. In order to gain the access the visitor needs to do a pre-registration and pay a registration fee. Some trade shows may last for a day or so, others require more time to showcase. Most of the trade shows are organised annually. The Hong Kong Electronics Fair is a good example of trade shows in a certain business sector electronics. (UFI 2010, pp. 7-8.)

The general attendees at the trade show are company representatives, industry officials and members of the press. Trade shows tend to be the perfect networking platforms for professionals: company representatives may gather not only valuable information, but also establish business relations that can become mutually beneficial in future (UFI 2010, pp. 7-8). In practice, these types of exhibitions may be blended. For example, a certain event may have the features of trade and consumer shows, allowing both trade visitors and the general public to visit. (Sanders 2013.)

3 Benefits of trade shows

Undoubtedly trade shows bring many benefits to stakeholders who directly or indirectly relate to the trade show sector. Trade shows bring prospect customers to a seller and initiate money flow, which is an advantageous factor for organisers, authorities, trade venues, exhibitors, visitors and the economy in general. All benefits to exhibiting enterprises can be divided into two groups: qualitative and quantitative. Qualitative benefits include introduction of a new product/new catalogue/new service to a mass audience, retention of customers and attracting new ones, finding reliable partners and distributors, recruiting new staff, benchmarking and observing new trends, promoting company image and enhancing general goodwill. (Lilien & Grewal 2012, p. 226.)

Introducing a new product at a trade show gives a good advantage for a company because of additional advertising and showing the new product to potential customers. As a result, the company gets more publicity and makes trade show visitors talk about the brand-new invention. (Sternkopf 2005, p.108.)

One of the most essential benefits of participating in trade shows is managing customer relationships. This relates to the retention of existing customers as well as to the generating sales from new customers, influencing their buying decision by researching their needs and building the image of a reliable partner. Trade shows are the platforms for establishing communication with customers, business partners and the press. What is more important is that the communication is face-to-face as this brings more advantage to B2B companies, which need to use personal selling techniques in order to achieve the target. Trade shows provide an opportunity to

analyze competitors, notice new trends and attract attention to a company's brand. (Sternkopf 2005, p.108.)

As for the quantitative benefits, companies have a true chance to obtain a number of closing deals, new contracts and sales as well as establish beneficial contacts. Furthermore, marketing information collected in numbers and percentages may be useful for planning future business activities. Obtaining some of these benefits can be considered as a significant indicator of a successful participation in trade shows. (Sternkopf 2005, p.108.)

4 Exhibition industry in the world

As UFI (2010) stated, trade shows are important for conducting business on national and international scale. Due to the fact that trade shows provide multiple advantages for their participants, the number of those, who want to become a part of these events, is increasing each year. No wonder that the exhibition business acquires more popularity nowadays. Organisers of trade shows try to attract as many participants as possible, arranging exhibitions in various industries and business sectors all over the world.

Figure 1 illustrates which continents have the highest venue capacities in the world.

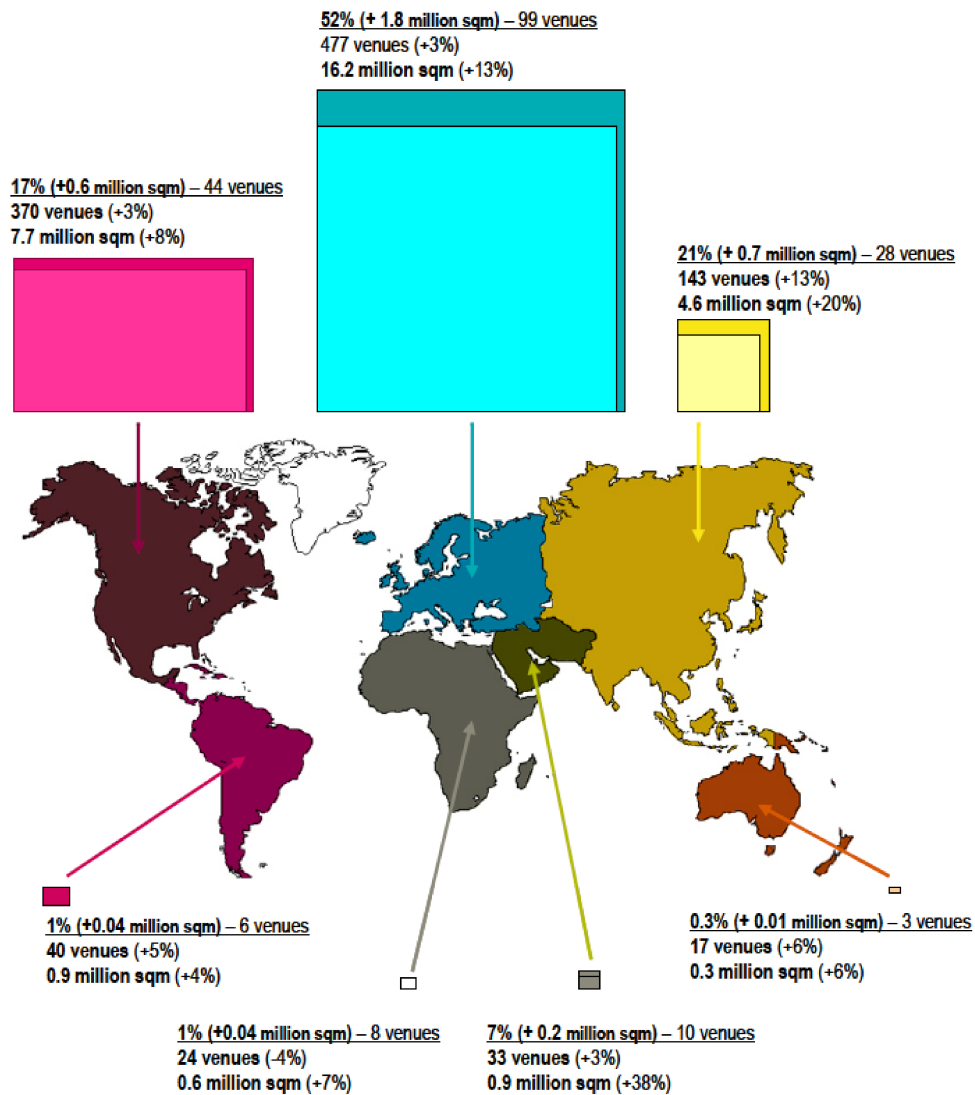


Figure 1. Venues and Indoor Exhibition Space in 2010. (UFI 2010)

As shown in Figure 1 more than 50% of exhibition space is utilized in Europe. In 2010, 477 venues offered a space of 16.2 million square meters. The leading European country which offers the best exhibition utilities in terms of organizational preparation and business themes is Germany. Italy and France share the second and the third place in this rating. According to a study done at Bocconi University, there were 10800 exhibitions organized in 2008 and 800 of them were international ones. Almost 1.5 million exhibitors presented their products/services and 150 million visitors took part in the events. The key figures certainly prove the importance of the European exhibition market. (UFI 2010, p. 38.)

In 2010, the North American trade show organizers sold 370 venues, which is 17% of the total number of venues. The remarkable fact here is that the US brings almost 25% to the World's GDP, whereas Canada contributes only 2.5%. In the US there

are more trade shows organized at the national level than the international one. In 2010 the 370 venues took a total of 7.7 million square meters. *Tradeshow Week* annually publishes the results of 200 most significant shows in the US. In 2008, 200 trade shows gathered more than 200 000 exhibitors and 4.5 million visitors. (UFI 2010, p. 39.)

In Asia the most significant countries are China, Singapore, Japan, Korea and India. The development in these countries is not identical. For example, China, Singapore and Korea demonstrate a visible progress while India is developing slowly. In 2010, a total of 4.6 million square meters were offered to exhibitors. Approximately half of that space was rented in China. The Chinese market is growing rapidly and generates huge revenues. For instance, in 2008 the trade show industry received a direct profit of USD 2 billion and the revenues of the related industries (hotels, restaurants, transport companies and others) were about 18 billion USD. This shows the remarkable economic growth and beneficial influence on social sector. (UFI 2010, p. 40.)

5 Trade shows as part of marketing communication mix

Marketing communication mix represents an important mechanism for any company as it is seen as a “bridge” between a company and customers. Building and maintaining relations with customers require creating and implementing a sound communication strategy, which should be integrated into the marketing mix and correspond to the company’s mission and objectives. (Pelsmacker et al. 2007, p. 3.)

Obviously, trade shows have a special place in a communication mix. The communication is managed by exhibitors who provide the necessary information via various means of communication such as a stand or staff. Customers, in their turn, are information receivers and evaluators. Later on, some customers become active participants in the communication process spreading the received information around the venue and even further. It is fair to mention that trade shows facilitate the creation or maintenance of an intensive contact between exhibitors and visitors. Certainly the established dialogue between trade show participants helps to develop productive business relationships.

Marketing practitioners consider trade shows play a much more important role than any other marketing tool for the B2B sector. Recently AUMA, the German association of the exhibition industry, has carried out a survey, the aim of which was to find out the place trade shows occupy in the marketing mix of German industrial enterprises. The 502 respondents were invited to answer the questions about various communication tools and their importance in the marketing mix (UFI 2010, p. 54). Chart 1 below presents the results of the survey.

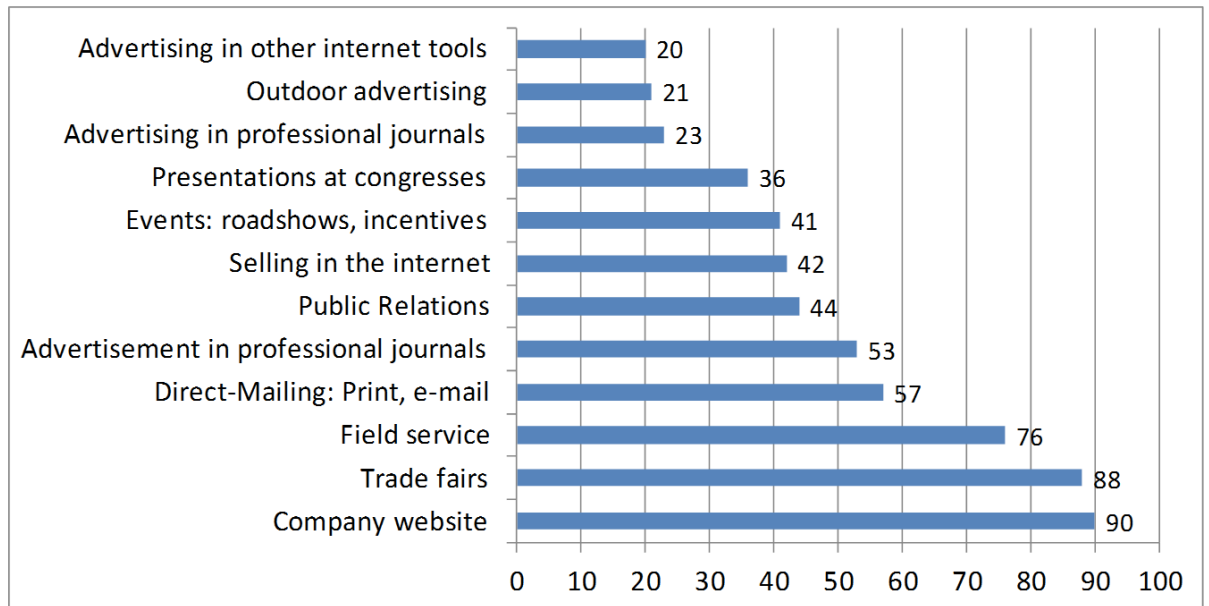


Chart 1. The importance of specific communication tools and media. (Neven & Kanitz 2011)

A company's presence in cyber space was considered the most vital media for communication with other stakeholders: 90% of the respondents approved that fact. However, trade shows did not fall far behind. German managers considered this marketing tool as one of the most important ones in establishing and maintaining relations with customers and partners. Field service was also considered as an essential marketing instrument for managing customer relationships due to the fact that field service plays the role of a communication channel between a company and its customers, providing necessary advice and support for clients. Outdoors advertising and advertising in the Internet were considered less efficient than the other ways of promotion and building communication. (UFI 2010, p. 54.)

Hardly, any other marketing tool can represent such a unique opportunity for combining companies' presentation of brands, demonstration of products and personal customer contacts as trade shows. Participation in trade shows should be seen in conjunction with other marketing tools and methods. Marketing communication mix includes various marketing tools such as public relations, advertising, personal selling, sales promotion, direct marketing, sponsorship and exhibitions as well. These elements of marketing communication mix can be integrated into a trade show strategy due to its multifunctional character. The main idea of that integration is a creation of a common message and spreading it via various channels. For instance, in order to reach more clients or create the better impression about the company at a trade show, managers should put a great effort towards additional promotion and ongoing market research, such as keeping in touch with partners and creating a firm reputation in the press. (Neven & Kanitz 2011, pp. 11-14.)

6 Planning process

Apparently, participation in trade shows provides great opportunities for their participants, helping to generate sales leads, attract more customers, adjust the marketing strategy, carry out marketing research and promote the company's brand name. Because of the complex nature of trade shows, enough time and effort should be devoted on planning the trade show activities (Saget 2006, pp. 49-54). Planning can be described as a strategic part of the trade show management process, which provides the framework for organising and controlling functions and determines the course of future actions in order to achieve the desired results. (Mahajan 2010, p.201.)

Planning generates multiple benefits. Firstly, it facilitates the consistency of actions and makes tasks meaningful for employees, who are involved in project execution. Secondly, the planning process facilitates better coordination and integration of efforts from various company departments, which is essential for effective decision-making and successful project implementation. Thirdly, it assumes avoiding wasteful activities, reducing possible risks and using the available resources wisely. Definitely, this facilitates economy and efficiency of operations. Moreover, it facilitates control of

planned actions by setting certain rules and standards that the company follows. Finally, the planning process promotes creativity through generating new ideas and improving performance by looking into the future and forecasting industry trends. (Mahajan 2010, pp.204-205.)

A sound plan needs to be flexible in order to leave maneuver for changes. As plans are conducted to predict the future and maximize results, it may be a good idea to consider various situations and leave a gap for making changes if necessary. A well done plan should be reasonably economical, meaning that finally the benefits should exceed expenditure. What is important is that any plan should serve the appropriate purposes. A short-term plan is a supportive tool, which contributes to realization of long-term objectives. (Mahajan 2010, p.215.)

Planning processes for any industry are very similar. The process can differ by including additional steps or excluding some of them, but the main idea stays the same. First, the starting point of the planning process is setting the objectives. Those objectives represent the desired results for the organisation in future. The objectives are defined in accordance with the company capabilities and opportunities for realisation. Therefore, relevance and a realistic approach are vital to make the goals achievable and understandable for the employees. Second, because plans are concerned with future anticipation, planning premises or, in other words, assumptions may be established. This step facilitates facing uncertainties with a ready-made action plan. The third step is connected to choosing alternatives. Alternatives represent various courses of action a company may take. Forming the alternatives is always based on some data, and therefore, the knowledgeable managers firstly collect and analyse the relevant information in order to form the alternatives and to present them to final deciders. (Mahajan 2010, p.206.)

When the course of action becomes clear, formulation of derivative plans begins. Derivative plans are formulated for different company departments involved in specific activities in order to distinguish tasks and in detail specify responsibilities and time schedules. Following the logic, the next step in the planning process is to communicate plans to those who are responsible for their execution. The cooperation among employees should be ensured from the very beginning in order to prevent work delays and promote clarity and effective interaction of employees while working

on the project. Moreover, the ideas and suggestions, presented by employees, may positively influence the project and make planning more realistic. The final step of the planning procedure is called follow up, which means continuous review of plans made earlier, comparing results and making improvements to the newly established ones. (Mahajan 2010, pp.206-207.)

The company involved in the planning process should determine its current position and anticipate the future status. In the case of planning a trade show activity, this involves recognizing the problem and researching the offers of various trade show organizers, determining which event supports the company's interest and objectives, choosing the employees responsible for the preparation and execution of planned actions, and approving the budget and presuming the possible outcomes. (Saget 2006, pp. 49-54.)

6.1 Decision-making process

The decision-making process is an integral part of the planning process. Decisions are made at each planning step and require close cooperation between the decision-making units – people who have certain roles and take certain responsibility for making decisions. Decision-making means defining the alternative courses of action and choosing the best one, which facilitates fulfilling the objectives better. (Mahajan 2010, p.216.)

As B2B companies are more risk averse, they try to be careful with decision-making because a serious mistake can bring many negative consequences such as financial losses, loss of face and self-esteem, loss of resources and finally unachieved aims (Zimmerman & Blythe 2013, p. 19). Therefore, the decision-making process extends throughout the planning process and is done very thoroughly. The first decision is made at the stage of identifying a problem or a certain need within the organisation. The problems may vary from changes in the competitive performance to deviations in earlier plans. The problem or need should correlate with the strategic objectives and the mission that the company has. (Mahajan 2010, p.218.)

When the problem is identified, the next step is to develop alternatives or simply define those actions which help to solve the problem. During this step, the real

planning process begins. When the courses of action are determined, the analysis and evaluation of those alternatives start. This step is important in the sense that the analysis and evaluation of alternatives provide an understanding whether the chosen alternatives can facilitate the problem solving or not. During this stage the management team can switch from one alternative to another or reject them and pick up new ones. (Mahajan 2010, p.218.)

When the set of alternatives is established, the selection of the most suitable alternative begins. While making the decision managers take into account various factors such as possible risks, necessary contributions, financial implications, the company's image, public relations and many other criteria. When the alternative is chosen, the decision needs to be communicated to each employee who is responsible for the plan implementation. In order to control the plan implementation, a decision should be made for the control function and deviation analysis. In a changing environment it helps to modify decisions easily. (Mahajan 2010, p.219.)

There are various types of decisions. Firstly, programmed decisions address solving routine problems with the help of predetermined techniques, whereas non-programmed decisions are made for solving unique and new problems with the help of managerial creativity and knowledge. (Mahajan 2010, p.217.)

Secondly, decisions are divided into strategic and operational ones. Strategic decisions are made by top managers and determine the company's course. They require appropriate knowledge and experience in a certain industry in order to produce an effective strategy. In order to implement those strategic decisions, the operational decisions are made as supportive elements for execution of strategic steps. Operational decisions are usually implemented by department managers. Operational decisions are practical and short-term by nature, whereas strategic ones serve long-term objectives. For example, introduction of a new product is a strategic decision supported by operational ones with applying of marketing and organisational methods. (Mahajan 2010, p.217.)

Thirdly, each decision can be made individually or in a team. As it was mentioned previously, those decisions which require a certain level of expertise and authority,

are finally made individually. However, it is a proven fact that joint decisions are more balanced and resourceful, and finally bring more benefits. (Mahajan 2010, p.217.)

Each employee involved in the planning process has their own role and responsibilities and is a member of decision-making unit (DMU). Six types of DMU members can be defined. The first one is initiators, who recognize the problem first. The second one is gatekeepers, who collect, filter information and inform the responsible employees. The third type is buyers. They deal with suppliers and negotiate about price and terms. The fourth type of DMU is deciders. They are usually represented by top managers or department supervisors, who make the most important and weighty decisions, which are based on their expertise and information provided by department managers. The fifth type is users. These employees will be using the product, service or information in order to reach new goals. Therefore, their opinion might be essential for the final decision. The sixth type is influencers. These people are trusted advisors, especially for deciders, due to their expert opinion, sense of trend or other unique qualities, which may be weighty in the decision-making process. An influencer can be a person from a consulting agency or even a boss's wife. The above mentioned types are not mutually exclusive. For instance, a user may also be an initiator and a gatekeeper. Finally, encouragement to make decisions in collaboration with concerned departments is essential for gaining a valuable contribution to plan implementation and, as a result, achieving the established goals. (Zimmerman 2013, p. 19.)

6.2 Trade show objectives

The important phase of the planning process refers to setting trade show objectives. On their basis managers choose the certain trade shows which suit the company's specific needs. Company-exhibitors participate in trade shows in order to find solutions to specific problems (Miller 1999, p. 36). The experts consider the necessity of correlating trade show objectives with marketing mix. Besides, the majority of trade shows facilitate realizing a variety of marketing goals. Those aims can be divided into communication, price and condition, distribution and product aims. Communication aims are the most extensive, because many B2B companies are limited in their opportunities to promote themselves via various channels. The communication aims include developing personal contacts with visitors, attracting potential customers and

completing customer profiles. They also involve consolidating press relations and increasing the efficiency of advertising, researching the market through discussing customer requirements and exchanging experiences with partners. (Neven & Kanitz 2011, p. 20.)

Price and condition aims involve presenting a wide range of products/services with justified prices or test a new pricing policy in a certain market. Those aims usually become sub-objectives. Distribution aims include expanding the distribution network by finding new cooperation prospects or testing the effectiveness of eliminating the trading level from the supply chain. Product aims include testing the acceptance and need for a certain product range in the market, presenting new products/services or product innovation. (Neven & Kanitz 2011, p. 21.)

There are also primary participation aims, which regard to discovering new prospects in a certain industry such as new niches in the market place or the latest trends in marketing, promotion and technology, benchmarking to measure the competitiveness, profit increase by concluding contracts and combining the participation in trade shows with conferences or seminars. (Neven & Kanitz 2011, p. 20.)

In 1992 the Trade Show Bureau conducted a research among 1500 exhibitors asking them which objectives are more and less important. This research showed the following: 40% of the respondents considered the development of new prospects as one of the most important objectives; 15% of the respondents emphasized the trade shows as an instrument of brand promotion; 14.7% of the interviewees indicated that the development of a new product or market segment was quite essential. Among other aims were supporting selling activities (13.9%) and enhancing relationships with customers (13.1%). Surprisingly, testing a new product was considered less worthy. (Kijewski et al. 1992, p. 9.)

In 2002 a German analytical agency conducted a similar research. According to the obtained results, more than 80% of the exhibitors try to enhance the company image by participating in trade shows. 70% of the respondents pointed out that the primary purpose for exhibiting was to meet new customers. 60% of the respondents answered that they tried to stay visible on the market or offer new products and

launch a new production process. Half of the interviewees said that they participate in trade fairs in order to exchange information and experiences while 30% of the exhibitors just wanted to conclude a contract with new clients. (UFI 2010, p. 82.)

In practice companies try to achieve multiple aims during the exhibition: one or two objectives, which have a higher priority, and sub-objectives, the achievement of which positively influences the development of the company. For example, the main aim can be to present a company and increase image awareness. The sub aims may be to collect information from competitors and visitors and to analyze new market trends. (UFI 2010, p. 82.)

As a matter of fact, companies which set particular goals before a trade show do not check the achievement of those objectives, which does not demonstrate if participation in the particular event has been beneficial and has justified the investments (Neven & Kanitz 2011, p. 23). The participation objectives should be operational meaning that the chosen aims have to be measurable. For example, the acquisition of new customers can be measured by the total number of clients, who have made contracts with the company. An increased number of visitors at the company's webpage apparently demonstrates an increase of brand awareness. The expansion of sales is measured by the number of orders, made during and after the show by those customers who have visited the company's stand. Moreover, the number of stand visitors during the trade show is as important as the amount and quality of gathered information from them. Due to the fact that participation targets are assigned to the particular employees, who are responsible for their achievement, the targets need to be realistic and relate to a specific period of time. In this case it can be easier for employees to accomplish tasks and manage the achievement of particular results with the help of measurable indicators. (UFI 2010, pp. 83-84.)

6.3 Selection criteria

Selection of a right trade show is based not only on specific objectives but also on a number of other criteria, which facilitate defining whether the chosen event suits the company's needs and presents a potential for success.

Firstly, the most essential criterion is the presence of a target audience at the chosen trade show. Besides, it is necessary to take into consideration both the quality and the quantity of the audience, meaning both the number of potential customers and partners and their direct connection to the industry in which the case company is interested in or belongs to. Therefore, rapid attention needs to be paid to the information a company-organizer provides for the exhibitors, such as the total net attendance in the past three years and audience demographics, the information about the companies' industry, size and the audience's interest in specific services or products. (Stevens 2005, p. 5.)

Secondly, the company managers have to elaborate a certain vision of the types of exhibitions they are interested in: whether they are interested in general exhibitions open to the public or looking for the trade show oriented on a narrow market sector. Thirdly, it is important to bear in mind where the trade show will be held and whether the location of the trade show reflects the company's objectives and expectations. For example, development of a new market sector may require concentrating on customer relationship management with international clients. Therefore, the location should be chosen accordingly in order to reach the goal. Fourthly, the date of the trade show should be convenient in order to have enough time for preparation for the trade show. Ideally, the preparation process should start about eight months before the appointed time. (Rodríguez 2008, p. 12.)

Then, it is important to know the number of exhibitors participating in the particular trade show to be able to determine if this trade show provides enough opportunities, such as successful presentation of the company's brand, earning exceptional reputation, making new contact and exchanging experience. It is important to find out the number of nationalities if the aim is to penetrate new markets or promote the brand abroad. Knowing beforehand the type of exhibitors such as producers, distributors, retailers and competitors can be helpful for defining a specific strategy. The chosen trade show should be well-known and, to some extent, prestigious in the sector the company operates in. The productivity of the event is demonstrated by its annual organization, gathering thousands of visitors and exhibitors. (Rodríguez 2008, p. 13.)

Besides, the trade show organizers need to be accessible for the participants and provide comprehensive data before the trade show. The data includes the available space to be rent for the stand, functionality and convenience of the stands the organizers provide, including the internet access, power and water supply, kitchen appliances and furniture hiring, the usual size of the stand other companies order, the audience profile, the statistics of attendances, including the number of exhibitors and visitors. Also the organizers should be recognizable internationally and organize a solid promotional campaign in order to get enough publicity and attract a sufficient number of participants. (Rodríguez 2008, p.13.)

Miller (1999) deems that another essential aspect is participation costs. They include various expenditure such as the entrance ticket, the transportation costs, hotel and food expenditure, all the arrangements relating to stand construction and design, staffing capability and other organizational costs

Apparently, a company needs to take into account not only the present information about the show but also the historical records. This information will help to analyze the show in more detail and track the statistics of previous attendees. Moreover, research on the same trade show should be done every time this trade shows is going to be attended to due to the fact that trends and markets change and the same event may no longer bring any value. Finally, the collected information should help to compare various show offers and clarify whether the company is able to achieve its objectives during the particular show and to what extent it is advantageous. (Miller 1999, pp. 21-28.)

7 Project scheduling

As it was mentioned in the previous chapters, thorough preparation is a key to success. The starting point of that enormous process is creating a programme of events with a fixed timetable for each action from setting the objectives and collecting information for evaluating and choosing the right trade show to sending thank notes to visitors and reviewing results to the top managers. Even during the trade show it is important to follow a precise timetable in order to implement the plan correctly.

When scheduling the project it is necessary to determine critical actions and those activities which are more time flexible in their execution. Setting the dates for early start and late finish allows to have possible floats or delays of non-critical actions in the time table, which may be crucial if there is not enough time for correcting an error. It is important to assign calendar dates for the beginning and the end of every action, especially if the trade show date is known. When the activities and dates are established, they can be represented graphically with a GANTT chart, which is the most simple way of presenting the plan visually and demonstrating the relations between planned activities and time. This bar chart represents a horizontal axis showing time and a vertical axis showing activities. There is a possibility to set milestones in the chart for monitoring what has been done so far. (Richman 2002, pp. 108-117.)

8 Stand planning

The organisation of a stand is one of the most important things in the preparation process because the efficiency of work during the trade show and final results depend on stand design, size, convenient location and the informative value it brings. Working on the stand concept is important in a sense of attracting visitors' attention, establishing right communication and correct evaluation of necessary expenses. This concept includes not only design and architecture but also such aspects as materials and exhibit transportation, technical installations and exhibit program.

There are four criteria to take to consideration for a stand assembly: a stand type, design and construction, cost, technical facilities and areas (UFI 2010, p.87). Basically there are four types of stands: row, corner, end and block stands. Figure 2 below illustrates the stand types and their location. The choice of a particular type depends on rented space and its location. The row stand is designed to stand back-to-back with the opposite stand and only one side of a construction faces the aisle. A corner stand is usually situated at the end of a row and accessible for visitors from two sides, which gives more benefits for the company than a stand somewhere in the middle of a long row. The end stand is even more beneficial due to the fact that it is accessible from three sides and thus a qualitatively superior variant. The block stand is the most expensive one and requires a more elaborate design. To this type visitors

can come from any side, which is certainly a big advantage. Due to the special location in a hall, it is very outstanding and attracts a great number of visitors. (Neven & Kanitz 2011, p.57.)

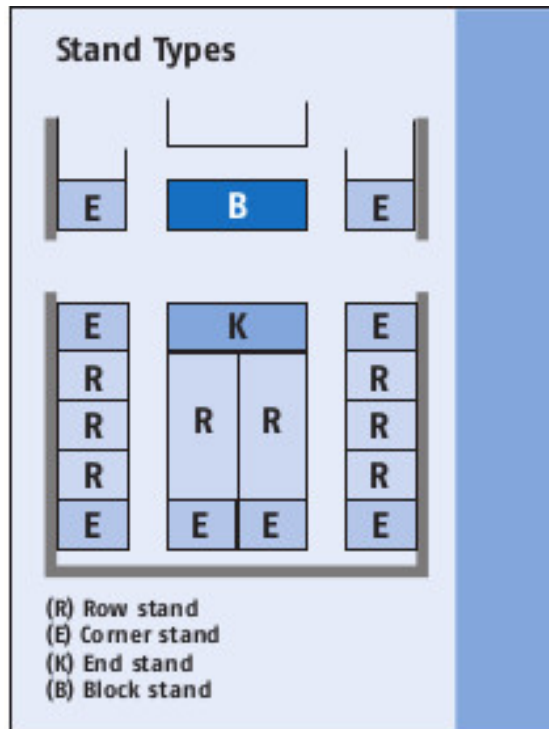


Figure 2. Stand types. (UFI 2010)

While choosing the location for a stand it is vital to take into account the direction of visitor flow. This information can be provided by trade show organizers, who obtain the statistical data and analyze the trends in past events. After the location is chosen the next step is to determine the stand function areas. Figure 3 demonstrates the usual separation of stand zones and their functions.

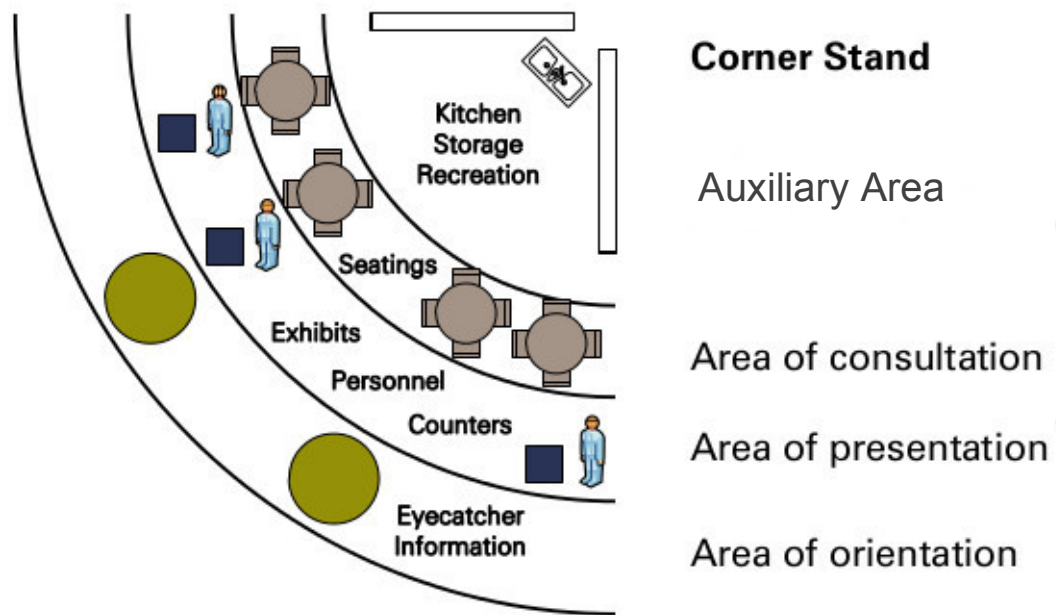


Figure 4. Stand areas. (UFI 2010)

The overall size of a stand is determined by such factors as space required for orientation and presentation areas, consultation area and auxiliary space. The orientation area's purpose is to make people stop, therefore, this area must be eye-catching. The area of presentation is a special place for information boards and video screens, marketing materials and gifts, product demonstrations and entertainment. In this area the interaction between a visitor and the exhibitor is originated, therefore, it has the special function to show all the advantages the company and its product have. In this section the work of the personnel is very important because their brief introduction and attentiveness to visitors must make attendees to go further to the discussion zone. (UFI 2010, p. 96.)

The discussion area is usually separated from the presentation zone, which is dedicated to collect the crowd. The discussion or consultation area is a quiet place, where visitors can obtain more detailed information, ask questions and negotiate sales terms. On an average, any visitor stays at the stand for 11.8 minutes, therefore, there should be an exact action plan directed to achievement of a particular aim. (UFI 2010, p. 96.)

In addition, many stands have a space for an additional room, which is dedicated to store brochures, gifts, goods, food, drinks and other equipment necessary for the

exhibitor. This area is hidden from visitors' eyes and has a technical function to support the exhibitor's activity during a show. Its size depends on the overall size of the stand and very small stands may not have it at all. (UFI 2010, p. 96.)

The stand design and construction is truly a challenge because of several factors. Firstly the stand has to be appealing to the public and more attractive than the competitors' ones. The design should correspond to the exhibition theme and be aimed to make people remember the company's exhibit. It is recommendable to hire a professional designer to embody all ideas in the right light. The stand should act as a visual means of presenting the company and creating the first impression on visitors. The company's logo, subject titles, graphics and colours are the main means of creating an initial impression and attracting visitors to the stand. The titles and pictures need to be clear and bright, create a strong appeal and motivate visitors to stop at the stand for a while. Photographs are highly recommended, as well as computer presentations and films. However, animation at the stand should be used sparingly, otherwise it may create the wrong impression. The golden rule is that the design should be integrated into the company's overall image, maintain the trade show theme and send a particular message to visitors. (UFI 2010, pp.64-68.)

As for the stand assembly, there are three basic methods any company may think through. An open assembly supposes to make the stand visible at a first glance. The construction may be partially open to hide from visitors the negotiation room, for instance. The stand can be totally closed with windows or external screens, which initiates a visitor to enter the stand in order to get a consultation or watch a presentation. (UFI 2010, p.91.)

There are a few variants to organize the stand. The first one is to hire a stand building company. Although the costs will be much higher than in the case of constructing the stand by the company's own staff, the assembler has the expertise and know-how. Secondly, in addition to space rent, many organizers offer a simple variant of a stand, which is assembled before the exhibitor's arrival. This solution is relatively cheap and does not require from the exhibitor any additional effort except filling the order form. (UFI 2010, p.91.)

After the assembly method is chosen, a discussion phase takes place during which an architect and the company's management discuss the realization of the project, available information, time schedule and other organizational nuances such as the location of the stand, the functionality, and the facilities that are going to be arranged. (UFI 2010, p.91.)

9 Staffing

Usually the company's sales department and exhibit management are involved in the planning, execution and evaluating of a trade show. Both departments are responsible for cooperating with each other, allocating tasks, sharing information and making routine decisions. Each team should have a clear idea which tasks it is responsible for, what the best way for their execution is and what the deadlines are. There is always a project manager, who controls the project flow and gives recommendations. (Kijewski et al. 1992, p. 7.)

A trade show stand should attract attention and create a comfortable atmosphere for visitors. However, an outstanding design and convenient facilities are not enough to make visitors stay and listen to a presentation. Experienced staff at the stand, valuable information provided and additional marketing materials stimulate attendees for further actions. Firstly, the staff should have the appropriate qualifications in order to meet the requirements. They have to be prepared well enough to answer different questions the visitor may ask. Those employees who participate in the trade show must have a broad knowledge about the sector a company operates in and the market they are trading in. They need to know the visitors' profiles, competitors and their offerings, target groups and interested parties. (Neven & Kanitz 2011, p. 74.)

Secondly, the staff should understand the objectives the company has set before the trade show and keep them in mind in order to concentrate on the actions which bring the company closer to reaching the objectives. Thirdly, for an international trade show, the staff chosen to represent the company should be fluent in foreign languages and deal with various cultures in a free and friendly manner. (Neven & Kanitz 2011, p. 74.)

The stand personnel is a key to success for many companies, and therefore, continuous training and motivation of the company's personnel facilitates improving their performance and becoming more experienced for managing the following trade shows. The stand personnel need to know all the benefits of the offered product or service and be capable of presenting those benefits in a better way. Especially, this is important for those companies which sell intangible products such as services (Neven & Kanitz 2011, pp. 75-76). When a company sells only services which cannot be demonstrated more emphasis should be put on promotion materials and pre-show marketing which are illustrated in the next chapter.

10 Pre-show marketing and promotion materials

Promoting a company before the trade show is extremely important because the efforts made before the trade show stimulate potential customers to come to the stand. The first step in marketing preparation is to make a list of possible customers and partners as well as current ones. As B2B trade shows in a narrow business sector are closed events, the list of attendees is provided only by the trade show organizer. When the list of names is collected, short and informative invitations should be sent to each party personally. It is important to receive an answer from potential buyers and even try to set an appointment time. This act obliges the invited guest to come and motivates stand personnel to prepare harder. (Miller 1999, p.61-67.)

Secondly, direct mailing can be used a couple of months before the event in order to encourage prospecting clients to visit the stand. There are multiple variants from basic e-mail to video appeal. Thirdly, it is important to focus on the preparation of promotional materials and encouraging incentives or simply saying something that can double the stand attraction effect (Miller 1999, p.61-67). The promotional materials include brochures, business cards, advertisement in trade publications, digital presentations, gifts and press releases. All the printed materials, including brochures and business cards, should be informative and written in simple language. The brochure has to appeal to the target audience, presenting the benefit of the product or service from buyers' point of view and proving the company's reputation

and capabilities. The brochure should contain good-quality photographs and contact information. (Rodríguez 2008, pp. 20-22.)

Before the trade show many organizers publish a trade show magazine, which includes extensive information about the forthcoming event. As these magazines are usually sent to all the participants, this is a good chance to place an invitation or press release there and attract more prospects. Even though this method seems effective, it is also quite expensive. It is worth pointing out that press releases create public awareness efficiently and are written by many companies before the trade show. The main method of creating a good company image and supporting public relations requires an irreproachable company performance and remarkable achievements. Therefore, any press release should definitely contain new information in order to raise public interest. (Miller 1999, p.73-74.)

Gifts and raffles are elements which create the certain mood at the stand and facilitate visitors to remember the exhibitor. Uncommon gifts are more popular and attract more attention. Therefore, a creative approach should be applied when choosing suitable and stunning gifts. (Neven & Kanitz 2011, p.87.)

A digital presentation can better show the quality and achievements the company has. Therefore, it should be concise, informative and eye-catching. This method is not only an attractive way of presenting information but also a helping tool for the stand personnel when giving consultations. Besides, this method is the most cost-effective. The presentation can be shown on a screen installed at the stand or during the special sessions made by the company which organizes the trade show. During those sessions company representatives can introduce their firms, products, services, achievements and share the experience within the particular industry. Obviously, in order to take a word and make presentation, it is important to register beforehand. Participation in such an event increases public interest in company-exhibitors and certainly facilitates the achievement of aims. (Rodríguez 2008, p.21.)

11 Trade show intelligence

Trade shows have changed in the past decades. Now they are not only the places for meeting with existing and prospect clients, establishing relations and trying to make sales but also a unique platform for collecting specific information, analyzing competitors' performance and market trends. Trade shows are unique because they provide an opportunity to talk to competitors openly and see the inventions which have been hidden from others for some time. (Kahaner 1998, p.86.)

Such a phenomenon as trade show intelligence can be determined as a process of collecting valuable information and building new knowledge on this basis. Intelligence is determined as something which companies need to know in order to support and improve their business activities. (Kahaner 1998, p.86.)

Undoubtedly, a trade show intelligence program should be planned ahead. The roles and tasks need to be divided before the trade show begins. There should be an exact timetable for each action in order to avoid time wasted on unnecessary actions and to optimize the process of information collection. The trade intelligence planning starts from specific issues the company needs to know about the market and competitors. The process is always more efficient if the company knows what is going to be found; however, any additional information is a huge plus. (Kahaner 1998, pp.87-92.)

Someone from the stand personnel, following the established timetable and action plan, may visit the appropriate competitors' stands, take from them brochures and other material available at the stand tables. Often, while wandering around the trade show hall, it is possible to listen to the dialogue of competitors and visitors, find out about their offerings and visitors' preferences. Afterwards, the observations should be written down and communicated to other team members. (Kahaner 1998, pp.87-92.)

As a result, the company-exhibitor should bring from the trade show an exact list of attendees and exhibitors, which can be collected from the trade show organizer, and the other materials such as the basic idea of conferences organized during the trade show, brochures, business cards, price lists and other printed materials from

competitors, photographs of stands and product samples. (Kahaner 1998, pp.86-89.)

Trade show intelligence does not only comprise information collected from competitors but also the data received from the stand visitors. In order to gather the primary data and use the trade show time wisely, a company-participant may conduct some interviews with visitors. During the discussion the stand personnel should make notes about visitors' contact information, the business sector they operate in, discussion topics and the impressions of the company-exhibitor. The purposes of doing the interviews could be various from determining the target group needs and participation objectives to finding out the frequency of trade show visits and testing their perception of the company's stand and promotion materials. (Solberg 2013, p.134.)

The obtained information should be analysed, evaluated as regards its benefits and communicated to other company departments and used for improving the performance in future. The golden rule is to provide other departments with the received information. Otherwise the spent time and undertaken steps are wasted. (Kahaner 1998, p.92.)

12 Post-show follow up

Post-show follow up is the last step in a project, which comprises the results assessment, making particular conclusions and giving recommendations. At this stage the company understands whether the participation in a trade show was successful and which further actions should be taken.

12.1 Evaluation of trade show results

The evaluation of the company's activities is an essential and integral part of project management. After the trade show is finished, it is an important step to fix the results and determine if the participation was successful or not. Composing an evaluation program facilitates defining those elements which should be measured and the methodology of their assessment. Thus, success monitoring includes such elements as costs deviation, visitor profile, trade show stand, the degree of stand personnel

preparation, pre-show marketing campaign, stand personnel observations, competitors' performance and press response about the company's participation in the trade show. (Neven & Kanitz 2011, p.96.)

The analysis of any deviation between actual costs and planned ones is aimed to figure out the reasons for their occurrence and helps to define which planning process steps require more attention (UFI 2010, p.117). An analysis of visitor records done during the trade show is an important point due to several reasons. First of all, the efficiency of pre-marketing efforts can be measured, for example, by calculating the number of visitors who came to the show after receiving the invitation letter and comparing that figure to the number of actually invited companies (Neven & Kanitz 2011, p.96). Secondly, the target audience profile can be updated, which provides additional advantages for the sales department. Thirdly, evaluation of visitors' interview results provides information about visitors perception of the exhibitor, and their interest in particular services or products. If the acquired information is unique and useful, participation in the certain trade show can be considered as a valuable communication tool for the exhibitor. (UFI 2010, p.113.)

Observation is the most cost-effective way of evaluating trade show results. Stand personnel and other employees involved in the planning process may provide significant feedback. Their opinions about the stand design and its appropriate size, pre-show promotions and materials, visitors' feedback and requests, competitors' actions and interesting ideas are essential for the company. Thus, they can suggest what should be repeated or totally excluded from the plan next time, and how some planning stages can be improved. (Creative Training Solutions 2013, pp. 2-3.)

Measuring the success is inseparably connected to trade show objectives. It is suggested to link the trade show objectives with appropriate metrics for results measurement. For example, the increase of brand awareness can be measured by the number of stand visitors, the time stand personnel spent on discussions, the number of flyers or brochures distributed and efficient pre-show advertising (Stevens 2005, p.54-55). In order to simplify the evaluation process, it is logical to specify the objectives, making them measurable.

Measuring return on investment (ROI) on sales leads in the case of trade shows does not provide immediate results. It usually requires setting a particular period of time for more precise evaluation. In order to calculate ROI, it is necessary to acquire such information as profit earned from new prospects and existing clients and the total costs of the trade show which has facilitated doing business with the customers. (Creative Training Solutions 2013, p. 7.)

12.2 Follow up action

Managing relationships with stakeholders means permanent maintaining and contact with those companies which facilitate the exhibitor's profitability. Therefore the follow up work should be done after the trade show in order to maximize the results. This action comprises sending thank you notes to those customers and partners who came to the trade show. This action is especially vital in the case of establishing relationships with new prospect customers, as it demonstrates the exhibitor's enthusiasm to do business. Also, the company-exhibitor may provide stand visitors with promised documents or other detailed information and arrange further appointments. In order to enforce the promotion effect, the trade show results can be published on the exhibitor's webpage and communicated to a business magazine. The final results are reported to the company's top management for the further planning of marketing communication activity. (Neven & Kanitz 2011, p. 95.)

13 Passenger Port Saint Petersburg Marine Façade: a brief introduction

Until recently, the city of Saint Petersburg, one of the most famous and desired Russian destinations for tourists, did not have any passenger port. A decision was made to build a brand new port, which could meet the technical requirements necessary for accepting passengers and has a location convenient for reaching the city center with its places of interest. In less than five years the Marine Façade company, with support from the Federal Government and City of Saint Petersburg, constructed a port on the Vasiljevskiy island close to the city centre. Building such an well equipped port required considerable efforts from engineers, constructors, land-surveyors, ecologists and other technical specialists mostly because the port stands

on artificially built lands. In 2008 the port opened its doors to the first cruise ships. In 2009 it was declared as the transit port of the year and in 2010 it was awarded as the most improved port facilities. Truly the port has quite a developed infrastructure nowadays. There are seven berths and four terminals, one of which accepts ferries and the three others accept cruise ships. In each terminal there are a café, vending machines, waiting areas, souvenir and duty-free shops, taxi, a post office and ATMs. (Passenger Port Saint Peterburg Marine Façade 2013.)

The majority of port customers, which bring a significant profit, are cruise lines. At this moment the port has contracts with such cruise lines as AIDA Cruises, Carnival Cruises, MSC Cruises, Pullmantur, Viking Cruises, TUI Cruises, Royal Caribbean and other minor lines. (Passenger Port Saint Peterburg Marine Façade 2013.)

In 2008 the port accepted less than 20000 passengers. In 2013 the number of passengers had grown 20 times bigger. According to the latest forecasts this number will grow by approximately 5-10% in 2014. In order to justify this forecast, the department of external relations and the sales and marketing department are taking significant steps towards attracting new cruise agents and staying visible for them on the market. Due to the fact that Passenger Port Saint Petersburg Marine Façade is a B2B company, there is a specific marketing communication strategy used for promoting the services offered to its contractors and potential clients. The marketing communication mix consists of two basic methods, including personal selling and trade shows. Other communication tools in the mix, such as advertising and public relations are supportive ones that support the basic methods. For instance, the case company makes a considerable effort towards the creation of a positive image in the press by organizing, sponsoring and taking part in socially and economically important events such as conferences for the executives of Baltic Sea ports, Summit G20 and a sport event for Saint Petersburg students. Those activities help to stay visible on the market and make business contacts easier. (Passenger Port Saint Peterburg Marine Façade 2013.)

14 Trade show planning process

Trade shows take a special place in the Marine Façade marketing strategy because of the numerous benefits they provide. One of the most important advantages is the opportunity to reach multiple goals with the help of a single event. However, participation in any trade show entails significant expenses and thus requires thorough planning, which in its turn can cover the costs and warrant the efforts. Therefore, Marine Façade managers undertook to make a detailed plan of participation in a trade show. Before the planning started, the author had conducted the interview with the head of the sales and marketing department and the head of external relations department in order to analyze the current situation and anticipate the future situation. The interview was done in the form of a discussion and consisted of a number of specific questions in an open format (Appendix 1). During the interview the aim was to find out the reason for participation in a trade show and the participation objectives, define an appropriate show mix for the company, divide the responsibilities among the employees, concretize the budget and project schedule. During the discussion a model for trade show planning was invented and taken as the basis for future planning. The managers declared their expectations on each phase of the project. The results of the interview are reviewed in the next chapters.

14.1 Model of trade show planning and decision-making process

In order to launch a consistent plan, it was decided to create and apply the specified model of trade show planning and decision-making. The model fully reflects the preparation process, including the different phases from recognizing the problem and setting objectives to plan execution and evaluating the final results. Chart 2 below illustrates the model which was applied.

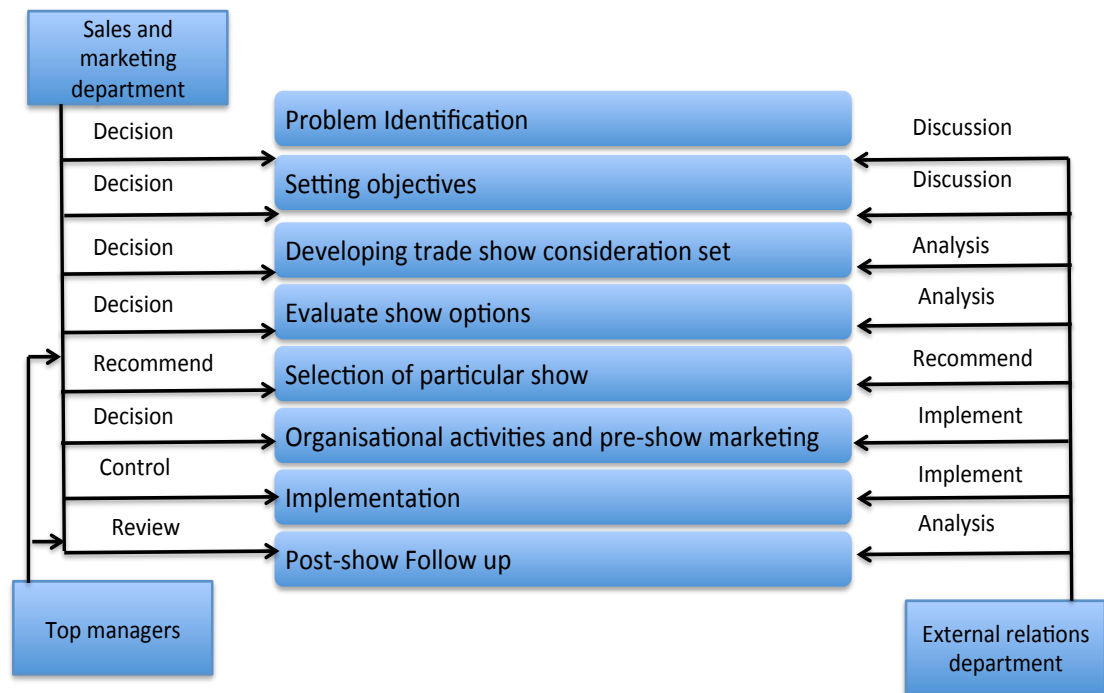


Chart 2. Model of trade show planning and decision-making process

Firstly, a necessity arose to stimulate customers to purchase services during the next navigation period in an amount that corresponded to or exceeded the previous year's figures. In order to satisfy the company's need the effective marketing communication strategy should be determined. Beside the variety of marketing communication tools which the strategy includes, a participation in a trade show has the greatest potential. The trade show was chosen due to the multiple benefits and considerable effect this method has in the whole marketing communication mix.

Secondly, the model included establishing the trade show objectives. Trade shows facilitate achieving multiple aims and many companies choose to set a few objectives in order to gather the most out of the event. Obviously, Marine Facade is interested in generating more profit in the coming years, and therefore, the specific trade show objectives should be assigned to contribute to the corporate goals. The main goal was to generate sales leads for the navigation period 2014. In order to reach that aim, it is important to attract the attention of new cruise lines and current customers and form a certain image. For that purpose a couple of sub-aims were determined. The first one was to increase brand awareness and keep the position on the market. The second one was to research the market, look for the new trends, marketing and technical innovations. Apparently, the sub-aims facilitate reaching the main goal. In

order to keep customers coming back to the port, their interest in Marine Façade's services should be permanently sustained. It is necessary to investigate the market constantly, develop services and port facilities, improve the communication strategy and make the company's presence on the market more significant. Those are the prerequisites for increasing sales, which can be promoted during a trade show.

Thirdly, after setting the objectives, the time had come to collect and analyze information on various trade shows in order to develop a consideration set or, in other words, choose those trade shows, which best correspond to the established objectives better. It was clear that top managers focused only on the most large-scaled events, which are usually visited by a great number of customers from different destinations.

Fourthly, the chosen trade shows were compared and the potentially most valuable event was identified. In order to concentrate the available resources only on the potentially profitable events it was important to filter trade shows via certain criteria. The first and the most vital criterion was the presence of cruise lines at the trade show as the key port customers. The second criterion was the reputation of a trade show and positive feedback. This information was collected from the cruise line websites, press releases and Marine Façade partners (ports on the Baltic Sea), who were also interested in presenting their services. Besides, newsletters with offers to participate in some events were taken into account while choosing the right trade show. The third criterion was the type of the trade show. It had to be international one because the Marine Façade's customers have operations in different countries and even continents. Also it should be operated in a universal language – English.

After analyzing the available trade shows the top management chose the Seatrade Europe trade show. The reason for that choice was the availability of exhaustive information about the event, the intention of numerous current and prospective customers to participate in that event, its popularity on the market and internationality.

Fifthly, the phase of pre-show preparation included various organizational and marketing activities such as stand planning and design, pre-show marketing program execution, planning the scenario of a stand work and other organizational

practicalities. The interviewed managers brought forth their expectations, which were taken to consideration.

Sixthly, the trade show scenario was planned and executed during the trade show. Basically, the scenario included the case company presentation, delivery of printed materials and gifts and market research. All those activities were operational ones and were done in departments under the control of the project manager.

The final stage of the project included the evaluation of the results with the help of measurable indicators, estimation of the trade show performance and giving recommendations for further improvements.

Besides, the model comprised the cooperation between the exhibition management team and the sales and marketing department under the control of the top management. The external relations department was responsible for analyzing information about certain trade shows and suggesting recommendations to the sales and marketing department, which made the final decision at each step of the planning process.

14.2 Seatrade Europe Cruise & River Cruise Convention

Seatrade Europe is one of the many events, organized by an organization called Seatrade. Seatrade is a well-established brand in international cruise and maritime communities. The company's publications, conferences, training, award schemes and website news reflect every aspect of the maritime business. The company was established more than 40 years ago and by this time has become recognizable and respected worldwide. Its main principles are to gather key people together, encourage innovations and facilitate better communications and networks within the maritime industry. Since the beginning of the 1970s many events have been organized by Seatrade. (Seatrade 2013.)

Seatrade Europe is one of the trade shows organized for the B2B sector in the cruise industry in order to present services and products. For the first time this event was organized in 1997. Since that the event has become bigger and more significant for representatives of the maritime business. In addition, the economic impact of the

cruising business on the European economy is significant. According to the latest prospects, the European cruise industry will continue to grow. For example, the number of participants and exhibitors at Seatrade Europe has increased up to 4000 attendees and 250 exhibitors respectively from over 50 countries. The exhibitors as well as purchasers are senior buyers and key decision makers from sea ports, cruise lines, and cruise associations as well as suppliers of various products (beverages, food, onboard supplies, hotel and maritime equipment and others), ship agents and constructors, tourism authorities, tour operators and many others (Seatrade 2013).

The Marine Facade managers see many advantages in taking part in Seatrade Europe. First of all, it is a great opportunity to find new clients and retain current ones. The majority of cruise lines are interested in taking part in the trade show, which is highly valuable for the port in order to establish new contacts and to present the port facilities and the Saint Petersburg destination as an attractive place of interest for tourists. According to the figures from 2012, cruise lines spent 6.6 billion euros with European business for supporting their operations (CLIN 2013, p.6). This is the incentive for widening the network of contracts and earning more profit. Seatrade Europe creates an ideal platform for networking directly with decision-makers, making it possible to save time and finally pay back the investments in rather a short period of time. Secondly, Passenger Port partners participate in this event, and therefore, it is important to stay visible in the cruise market for partners, competitors and other stakeholders. Thirdly, supporting the enduring communication with customers, partners and press is essential for promoting the brand and it calls positive emotions about the company in the stakeholders' minds.

14.3 Schedule planning

The first steps in the preparation for the exhibition activities were taken 12 months before the actual trade show when the budget for the next fiscal year was approved. At this time managers evaluated the market situation and the company's profitability, thought over the objectives and expectations the company's CEO had this year. Thus the decision to take part in a trade show had been approved 12 months before the trade show and an approximate budget had been allocated for participation purposes. For some reasons the project was left behind and resumed only in July 2013.

At first, a detailed schedule was prepared in order to keep the employees focused on important issues and tasks. Every task and action was included in the timetable and presented graphically in order to control their timely execution. Thus, the timetable was divided into three phases: pre-show, show and post-show time. Each activity is illustrated with Chart 3.

The active preparation process began in July 2013, and the trade show date was already fixed: 24 September 2013. As a result, the schedule was very tight. The horizontal axis of Chart 3 represents the time divided into four months, whereas each month is divided into weeks. The vertical axis represents the particular actions. The small diamonds on the chart are the milestones, i.e. the periods of time when important decisions were made or the necessity to report on results arose.

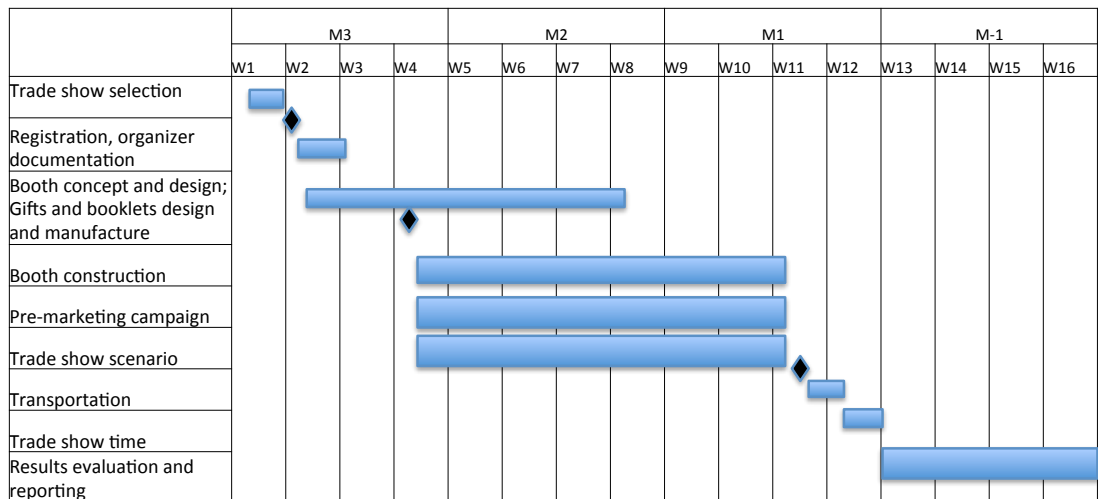


Chart 3. Trade show schedule

As some information about the exhibition sector and the trade shows that deserved attention had been collected previously, the pre-show phase started from analyzing the available data. The plan was to dedicate two weeks for show selection, registration and documentation collection. The design of the stand, printed materials and gifts should be accomplished within five to six weeks. Seven weeks were allocated for stand construction, writing the working scenario and the pre-marketing program. The week before the trade show was reserved for transporting the materials and discussing the planned and accomplished actions with the top managers. Results evaluation should be done within four weeks.

The stand construction was a critical action which could not be delayed, whereas its design had some time deviations. In fact, the stand concept was done on time, but however, the design required an additional week for doing minor redesign and corrections, which caused additional expenses. But on the whole, every planned activity was executed according to the schedule.

15 Pre-show planning phase

After scheduling the project, the next stage was to start the pre-show preparation process. The activities done before the show required a considerable amount of time in comparison to other project phases. The pre-show phase involved multiple operations. Those operations were defined and exact tasks were divided among employees in the external relations department. Basically, those operations could be divided into five parts: collecting and analyzing information about the trade show, planning a stand, preparing a marketing program, writing the scenario of stand work, and organizing transportation and accommodation.

15.1 Information collection

Firstly, it was necessary to contact the trade show organizer and find out details about the upcoming event. The details included information about trade show halls, different space areas and stand types, the regulations and conditions of the trade show, the number of attendees coming to the show and their profiles, some statistical data such as the results of the surveys with exhibitors and visitors conducted by the organizer. From the visitors' perspective, the statistical data included information on their profiles and the aims of participation, whereas the exhibitors' statistics dealt with their overall impression about the show, the percentage of achieved objectives, the estimation of organizational aspects and the effect the trade show had caused afterwards. The organizer also provided information on the costs such as stand rent and power supply, stand assembly and decoration, waste disposal and other costs. Generally speaking, the trade show organizer helped not only on a theoretical but also on a practical level by providing necessary assistance and additional service. The above mentioned details played a key role in choosing the stand area and type, and facilitated choosing the appropriate course in the pre-show marketing campaign.

The next step was to fill in the participation form on the trade show webpage. Afterwards the trade show manager approved the application and contacted the Marine Facade office for further organizational details.

The second step was to plan and design the stand and to prepare the pre-show marketing program, the aim of which was to inform about the port participation in the trade show, attract as many visitors as possible to the stand and obtain new knowledge and information.

Thirdly, the scenario of stand work and the case company presentation were created. This included planning a digital presentation about the port, preparing the program of presenting the company's brand and services to the stand visitors, planning and ordering gifts and printed materials. Fourthly, it was decided on transportation and accommodation of the personnel who took part in the trade show.

15.2 Visitor profiles

It was found out that around 3000 visitors were going to come to the trade show, and 87% of whom were from European countries. There were also representatives from Middle-East countries and North American countries. Among the major attendees were sea and river port representatives, cruise line managers and directors and tour operators. Most of the above mentioned representatives were company directors, senior managers, heads of departments and vice presidents, whose role in the final decision-making process is crucial.

15.3 Stand design and construction

There were four phases in the stand planning: to choose a stand type, decide on a construction and functional areas, make a certain design and supply the stand with necessary amenities. There were four types of stands offered: row, corner, end and block ones. The decision was made to choose the row type because of its lowest price. The other types were extremely expensive. Besides, the overall exhibition space was organized in a way that there was enough space between the stands of any type. Therefore, the corner and the end types did not have any major advantage comparing to the row types.

Due to the limited experience of the case company in exhibiting and the limited budget, it was decided to use the construction service of the trade show organizer. The trade show manager offered two variants of a stand construction. The first one consisted of a ready-made stand. It included a stand and a back wall, both of standard sizes and shapes. This variant was the cheapest and the easiest to construct. The costs for that kind of a stand included a rental space of 12 square meters, assembly and disassembly service and power supply. Any additional construction as well as design application, some furniture, a stand for printed materials, video displays and other necessary facilities entailed additional costs.

The second variant was to build a stand according to the exhibitor's sketches. The cost depended on the stand type and construction complexity. The rental space and facilities listed above should be paid separately. This variant was quite expensive. However, the benefit of that kind of a stand could be seen in an opportunity to make a unique construction, eye-catching and functional.

Due to the limited budget it was decided to order a ready-made construction with some modifications. The order comprised a small room within the given space. That room was necessary for negotiating with prospective customers in a quiet and convenient atmosphere. Figure 4 illustrates the areas the Marine Façade stand had.

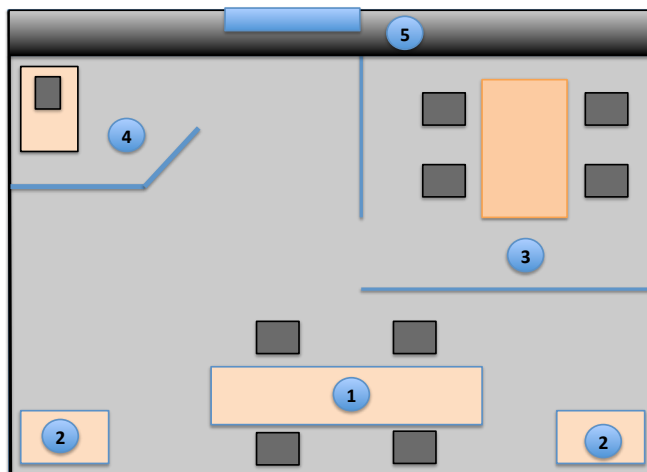


Figure 4. Marine Façade stand areas

The stand had four function areas. The orientation area had screens with bright printed pictures, the Marine Façade logo and short slogans about the company (5). The presentation area was equipped with a few chairs near the front stand (1), tables

with printed flyers and brochures (2), and a video display for the demonstration of a digital presentation (5). The consultation area (3) had a table with some chairs. There was also a place enclosed with a screen where the coffee machine, water and other necessary things were kept (4). Each area had its own functional task. The presentation zone was planned in a way that visitors could receive the maximum of valuable information. The consultation area was aimed to convince continuing the dialogue in a more detailed manner.

The stand design was ordered from a design company in Saint Petersburg due to the considerably low prices in comparison to the design service offered by the trade show organizer in Germany. It was done in minimalistic style with some printed banners applied on a transportable screen and walls. The main colors used for decoration were black and blue with aluminum elements and wooden panels. The design perfectly correlated with the case company's image and presented it in the right light. The final design was sent to the organizer, who was responsible for applying it on the construction.

15.4 Pre-show marketing campaign

Before the trade show, a marketing campaign had been initiated. The aim of that undertaking was to attract as many visitors as possible to the trade show and at least create additional publicity. The campaign was concentrated on arousing interest in Marine Façade and the city of Saint Petersburg as a unique tourist destination. First of all, a month before the trade show the invitations to visit the Marine Façade stand during the Seatrade show were sent to current customers, prospective clients and partners. The letters were official ones signed by the President of the port and included a presentation of the port, its services and achievements as well as the information about Saint Petersburg. A couple of weeks before the trade show email messages were sent to remind about the coming event and kindly welcome the interested people to come. A big advantage was that the trade show organizer advertised via its website, direct mail and booklets delivered to exhibitors and attendees.

It was important to make the stand informative and attractive. For that purpose the stand was decorated with printed posters and pictures put on a transportable screen.

Printed flyers, business cards and booklets were placed at the stand. They were ordered from a Russian printing house due to the relatively low prices for printing. As the design had been made earlier, it appeared cost-efficient for the case company to order enough materials and save some money for gifts' production. The printed materials were aimed to attract attention, provide appropriate information to the stand visitors and also encourage visitors to become interested in receiving more detailed information.

Moreover, a digital presentation in English about the port and the city of Saint Petersburg had been made and displayed on a monitor during the trade show hours. It facilitated creating additional activity around the stand.

Presenting gifts to the stand visitors is an essential attribute of a memorable performance during the trade show. The plan was to offer as gifts pens, notebooks, USB cards and horseshoes as the main symbol of Marine Façade. All the gifts were made in blue colour with the company logo. The basic function of the gifts was to make the company memorable and create positive impressions.

15.5 Transportation and accommodation

Careful planning of transportation is essential for preventing unnecessary losses of materials and avoiding additional delivery expenses. It is advisable to think over the transportation means in relation to costs, safety and speed, packaging of materials before transportation, dispatch instructions and international customs pass, and storage of materials after the delivery on the trade show grounds. Especially in the case of an international trade fair, knowing of the regulations and customs formalities is vital, therefore, many exhibitors use the services of delivery agents, who guarantee all regulations will be complied with and the delivery of goods will be organized punctually and reliably. (Neven & Kanitz 2011. p. 52.)

The printed materials and gifts were delivered with the help of a transportation agent. Despite the service being costly, it was a reliable and fast method of handling the materials. Besides, the transportation company provided the insurance. The materials were transported to the trade show venue in advance in order to avoid possible delays. As they had come to the venue two days before the beginning of the

event, the parcel was kept at a special storage the trade show organizer had provided earlier.

The transportation of the key element at the exhibition stand – the personnel – was also organized. Because Marine Façade is a legal entity that has to provide a tax return each quarter, the services of flight ticket providers were used. Also, the accommodation was organized for five days in Hamburg. It is important to mention that all the receipts for any service and products bought were collected from the very beginning of the preparation process. In the end this facilitated comparing the planned budget with the actual one.

15.6 Planning of the trade show scenario

The trade show scenario comprises a sequence of important actions which should be implemented during the event. They include working at the stand, negotiating, conducting research and taking part in a conference arranged by the organizer. There are certain prerequisites for successful scenario execution, such as training of the personnel and permanent monitoring. It all began from appointing the employees who would be responsible for plan execution and adjusting coordination between those departments which were engaged to work on the project. The sales and marketing department calculated the budget, prepared the documentation for negotiations and organized the marketing campaign before the trade show. The external relations department in their turn was involved in dealing with the trade show organizer, ordered the stand space and construction, engaged in design and printed material issues, accomplished some small duties and planned the trade show scenario as the employees from this department worked at the company's stand.

The scenario of working at the stand was simple and clear. There were two people at the stand the main task of whom was to attract visitors to the stand and provide them with relevant information about Marine Façade and Saint Petersburg. In case a visitor wanted to continue the dialogue and receive specific information, he would have been invited to the negotiation room. The top manager and the head of the sales and marketing department were to take the floor and discuss the issues.

Because of the fact that the employees from the external relation department were newcomers in the company, they had to take intensive training and learn about the organization in detail in order to be able to answer any questions or make a valuable comment and thereby to interest visitors. Besides, the digital presentation on the screen and printed materials were not only the information source for the attendees but also were supportive elements for the personnel at the stand.

The project manager was to control the work at the stand, provide assistance in challenging situations, as well as monitor the progress on the trade show research conducted by the sales department employee. Based on the timetable of the event during the three trade show days, the personnel's timetable was arranged accordingly.

16 Trade show phase

The trade show phase started from arriving to the trade show a couple of days before the event. The personnel received the passes for the show and investigated the trade show hall to check the readiness of the stand.

As it was mentioned previously, the employees from the external relations department worked at the stand, whereas an employee from the marketing department was supposed to conduct the research during the event. During the three exhibition days the stand personnel met company representatives and tried to raise their interest in the Marine Façade company. Within those days almost five hundred trade show attendees visited the stand and had conversations with the stand personnel, who delivered flyers and booklets and presented gifts.

A few meetings had been appointed with the cruise line representatives before the trade show. Especially interesting was the Disney cruise line, the representatives of which visited the Marine Façade stand for receiving detailed information and personally greet the President of Marine Façade. The representatives of other cruise lines, which previously had made a contract with the port, visited the stand for eye-to-eye conversations. During conversations the stand personnel asked to name the source of information about the Marine Façade stand and the trade show in general.

Visitors were also asked to indicate other important shows, to evaluate the Marine Façade stand (design and amenities), to name their participation objectives and some impressive moments during the trade show. The received information facilitated the assessment of the pre-show marketing campaign and implied what new marketing methods were used by other companies. Other focus points included evaluation of the stand design and graphics, specification of attendees' aims and impressions.

All in all, the questions were addressed to 47 cruise line representatives. Among the participation aims the visitors listed the possibility to know about the market situation and perspectives, to exchange experience, to examine competition, to cultivate the existing contracts and to find new ones. The visitors pointed out that the stand staff assistance and the placement of materials were brilliant. However, the graphical design was dark and not well distinguished at the first sight. Also there were no convenient zones within the stand space for private dialogue. Out of the 47 respondents 6 found the stand by accident, 25 had seen Marine Façade in the list of participants on the organizer's webpage, 18 remembered that they had received an invitation and only 2 had noticed the advertisement in the trade show journal.

Meanwhile, the employee from the sales department (the researcher) was conducting the research. Because the maritime sector is developing the case company should keep abreast and correspond to modern standards. It is important to offer good service at affordable prices for cruise lines as well as think about passengers, the final clients, offering them convenient and useful facilities. Therefore, researching the market is extremely important and trade shows represent the unique opportunity to accomplish this task and look at various aspects from different perspectives. The researcher took part in the conference where important details and some new ideas were fixed. For example, ecology issues and new technology were presented. Many cruise lines jointly with ports elaborate onshore power supply systems, the main advantage of which is a power supply for ships instead of oil as a fuel.

Besides, the researcher visited numerous stands of other ports. Special interest was taken towards the Mediterranean Sea ports as the major competitors. The observer looked at the stand designs and main appeals that were used to encourage visitors

to have a conversation. For example, the UAE stand was made of white blocks with colourful lighting on the edges of Arabic arched panels. The chosen design corresponded to the Arabic culture and attracted much attention. The areas for conversation were designed in a white and beige spectrum with cozy soft chairs. The majority of visitors preferred to continue the dialogue sitting in the chairs and drinking a cup of coffee. The ports of France attracted visitors by offering them a glass of good wine, the ports of Scotland offered whiskey and every single port offered unique gifts and souvenirs to the attendees. For instance, the port of Copenhagen presented rubber ducks and the ports of Spain offered straw hats. Among other memorable gifts were toy ships, bags, plush toys, candies, cups, pillows and key chains. Rubber toys were the most popular among visitors.

Also booklets and brochures about other ports were collected for the purpose of their further analysis and detection of new ideas together with other facts such as companies' last year revenues, number of passengers, new port equipment and recycling methods.

17 Post-show phase

The post-show phase consists of evaluating the performance and executing the actions supportin the achieved results. The performance was evaluated by the Marine Façade employees who took part in the planning and the actual trade show. Measurable indicators were established before the event in order to estimate the efficiency of pre-show marketing efforts and achievement of the trade show objectives. The received results were carefully analyzed and reported to the top managers. Finally, the most noteworthy results and ideas were synthesized in the form of recommendations for further planning and participation in trade shows.

Within a week after the trade show, thank you notes were sent to those visitors who had left their contact information at the stand and also to the port's current clients who had visited the stand. It was crucial to share the achievements and express the appreciation for the visitors coming to the Marine Façade stand. Those notes were a considerable support of all the efforts done for the success achievement.

17.1 Assessment of objectives' achievement

At the beginning of the planning process, particular participation aims had been established. Each aim could be measured with indicators of success. Firstly, realisation of the aim to generate sales was to be measured by the number of ship callings in the next navigation period and return on investment (ROI) indexes. The latter one can be precisely estimated and used as an index only at the end of a navigation period. Therefore, the information from the cruise lines about their intention to call at Saint Petersburg in 2014 and rough figures for ROI were used to find out whether the sales figures increased. In August 2013 the number of reported calls were about 160 from 8 cruise lines. In November 2013 the number of calls doubled and the number of customers rose to 18. Besides, the head of sales and marketing department declared that a contract with a new customer named Disney Cruise Line had been signed at the trade show. This signaled that participation in the Seatrade show facilitated the growth of calls and finally generated sales leads. In this case, the trade show also had the role of reminding for current clients about Marine Façade advantages and promising perspectives.

Secondly, the indicator for the market research was the quality of information collected. The information received at the trade show was tested and the most relevant data was selected. At the trade show the researcher collected varied information about competitors, partners and market trends. As a result, the sales and marketing department started scrutinizing competitors' booklets and webpages in order to investigate new services and changes in prices. Besides, the trend of using an onshore power supply for the ships was presented to the top management with precise financial figures, technical characteristics and a forecast for the tendency growth of this technology.

Thirdly, it was important to obtain more publicity and enhance brand awareness. That was measured via the overall number of visitors who came to the stand to have a conversation with the stand personnel. Besides, the number of those who received a thank you note after the trade show and initiated an interest in Marine Façade also was used as a valuable index when evaluating success. The company obtained 65 business cards, 47 of which were received from cruise lines representatives. In total, 74% of answers to the thank you notes were responded to, which indicated interest

in the port not only from the cruise lines and partner ports but also from providers of technical equipment for ports. Also the interest in the company was measured by the number of the left booklets and flyers that were calculated and compared to the initial number. It occurred that quite a lot of printed materials were left behind after the event – almost 300 flyers and 190 booklets. Thus the employees supposed that changing the stand location in the hall might have influenced positively the company's presentation and material delivery.

17.2 Post-show discussion

In order to assess how the objectives were reached, the planning process and the trade show in general were evaluated. The best evaluation method is to ask for the comments those employees who were responsible for the plan execution. For that purpose a special meeting with the personnel was organized. The evaluation was done in the form of free discussion. Firstly, the participants were invited to evaluate the management practicalities such as the time given for preparation, the level of training organized for the new staff, availability of information and assistance in difficult situations from more experienced staff. Most of the employees expressed that the additional training facilitated their understanding of the company's structure and broadened the knowledge of the company's internal and external processes. The training facilitated presenting information to the stand visitors efficiently. However, a lack of time during the preparation phase was mentioned. Especially it concerned the stand design and construction phase, which required a considerable amount of time, efforts and correction.

Secondly, the employees evaluated the stand design and the efficiency of the pre-show marketing campaign. A common opinion was that the stand was somewhat conservative and not impressive. However, the visitors appraised the way the materials were placed at the stand, their descriptiveness and brilliance. Because numerous visitors were looking for signs of a particular location, for instance France or Greece, they did not mention a city name written in quite small letters. Nevertheless, the staff gathered some interesting ideas while looking at the competitors' stands.

It was mentioned that visitors appreciated to taste some national cuisine and a national drink. The presence of delicious treats was the prerequisite of increased attention. Besides, the employee who did the research, noticed that the provided gifts should be more unusual because visitors paid attention to a uniqueness and outstanding manner of presenting the company and destination.

The efficiency of the created marketing program was measured by certain indicators. Firstly, the number of visitors who came to the stand after having received the invitation was counted. Secondly, the number of visitors who came to the stand after having seen the advertisement in the trade show magazine was considered. As a result, the personal invitation worked better than the advertisement which was a waste of money. In addition, the invitations were free of charge. The visitors perceived them as an initiative to start a dialogue and possible profitable relationships. At the meeting the sales and marketing managers offered to place an article in the magazine which tells about Marine Façade's recent achievements and improvements. It can influence positively on the company's image. Also, it was noticed that many attendees visited the trade show free of charge. Some exhibitors bought a number of tickets in advance and asked the organizer to let in the visitors who showed a voucher. Those vouchers were sent to visitors beforehand by the company-exhibitor. It was offered to use that method for inviting the key clients.

Thirdly, the staff were asked to evaluate the trade show organizer, their assistance and support, the created atmosphere during the trade show and provided facilities. The organizer, together with the German association of trade shows, created a unique environment and convenient terms for both exhibitors and attendees. The stand was ready on time and the necessary instructions before the event were provided. Marine Façade managers appreciated the possibility to make a considerably cheap construction and disassemble it easily. For companies such as Marine Façade which take part in international trade shows only two to three times a year, this variant is the most acceptable.

In spite of the occurred problems and misunderstandings, the personnel expressed a positive opinion about the Seatrade organization and its events, and considered them as an efficient investment in the company's development.

17.3 Recommendations for further trade show planning

Based on the discussion above and personal observations made throughout the project, the author suggests a few recommendations for the future trade show planning and participation.

Firstly, starting the pre-show phase at least six months before the event date can be advantageous, permit more floats in the timetable for making changes without considerable risks.

Secondly, maximum attention should be paid to design. It has to be brighter and more visible. The posters on the walls must include the city and the country names written in a big font and a slogan invented specially for the trade show. The idea is to put more emphasis on location rather than the company itself. This can be justified by the fact that the customers, final users, are the passengers who use the services of cruise lines to make their journey unforgettable. Therefore, it is not a secret that key customers have a top priority interest in places for tourism.

Thirdly, the location and the stand type can be changed in order to compare the result and find out the optimal and most cost-efficient way of exhibiting. Fourthly, a coffee machine in the negotiation room is not enough to satisfy visitors' wishes. Therefore, the stand should be supplied with some snacks and beverages such as kvass or mead.

Fifthly, more attention should be paid to the gifts presented at the trade show. It was found out that the non-typical gifts are more valuable by the exhibition visitors. However, the author considered putting an emphasis on national heritage. For example, hand-made dolls in a dress from the Palace Revolution time, matreshka, or bast shoes in miniature. Other gifts can be handkerchiefs with the Saint Petersburg map and the Marine Façade location on them. These gifts will definitely attract the attention of foreign partners and customers.

18 Conclusion

Trade show is a unique marketing tool that provides companies with multiple opportunities to reach numerous aims simultaneously. Thus, it is possible to promote a company, have a lively dialogue with customers, research the business branch and find out new trends, sell the products or services and improve the company's image by demonstrating those achievements that are useful for the customers. Thorough planning and a rational approach facilitate achieving the above mentioned objectives. The key focus in the study was on planning.

The thesis answered the research question "*How to plan the participation in an international trade show in order to generate sales leads and increase brand awareness?*", explaining in detail the phases of the planning process, the marketing communication the case company built, the role of trade shows, the way the project is managed and scheduled.

The objectives of the thesis were achieved as the thesis includes a description of the various factors of success from measurable objectives to promotional efforts before the event. In order to make the planning process efficient, the project results were discussed, measured and the recommendations were given for future improvements.

Discussions with the case company employees, managers and stand visitors and observations made at every project stage facilitated providing detailed and primary information.

The thesis has a significant practical meaning as it not only concentrates on the planning process but also presents how the planned actions can be implemented and what the final results and recommendations for the next trade show are. As a result, the preparation and participation in the trade show gave the necessary experience and was the basis for writing a manual, which is a significant advantage for any company. The trade show planning manual saves time and money and includes a precise action sequence and work description.

Planning is a continuous process, which can be improved and adjusted with the changing business environment. However, the main rule is to make the process

integrated, meaning that every resource, tool and method should be directed to the achievement of a common aim.

Figures

Figure 1. Venues and indoor exhibition space in 2010, p. 13

Figure 2. Stand types, p. 26

Figure 3. Stand areas, p. 27

Figure 4. Marine Façade stand areas, p. 45

Charts

Chart 1. The importance of specific communication tools and media, p.15

Chart 2. The model of trade show planning and decision-making process, p. 37

Chart 3. Trade show schedule, p. 42

References

CLIN. The Cruise Industry. <http://www.cruise-norway.no/viewfile.aspx?id=3824>. Accessed on 10 January 2014.

Creative Training Solutions. Measuring and Evaluating Results. <http://www.creativetraining.com/train/docs/MeasuringResults.pdf>. Accessed on 28 October 2013.

Kahaner, L. 1998. Competitive Intelligence: How To Gather Analyze And Use Information. New York: Touchstone.

Kijewski, V., Yoon, E., Young, G. 1992. Trade Shows: How Managers Pick Their Winners. ISBM Report. <http://isbm.smeal.psu.edu/library/working-paper-articles/1993-working-papers/15-1993-trade-shows.pdf>. Accessed on 12 August 2013.

Lilien, G.L. & Grewal, R. 2012. Handbook on Business to Business Marketing. UK: Edward Elgar Publishing Limited.

Mahajan, J.P. 2010. Business Organisation and Management. Mumbai: Himalaya Publishing House.

Miller, S. 1999. How to Get the Most out of Trade Shows. The USA: NTC Group.

Morrow, S. L. 2002. The Art of the Show. Dallas: IAEM Foundation Inc.

Neven, P. & Kanitz, S. 2011. Successful Participation in Trade Fairs. Germany: AUMA
<http://www.auma.de/en/DownloadsPublications/PublicationDownloads/SuccessfulParticipation.pdf>. Accessed on 20 August 2013.

Passenger Port Saint-Peterburg Marine Façade. 2013. <http://www.portspb.ru/en/port-facilities>. Accessed on 4 July 2013.

Pelsmacker, P., Geuens, M., Van den Bergh J. 2007. Marketing Communications: A European Perspective. England: Pearson Education Limited.

Richman, L. 2002. Project management step-by-step. New York: AMACOM.

Rodríguez, S. D. 2008. How to successfully participate in International Trade Shows. Miami, Fl.: IICA. Directorate of Agribusiness Development.

Saget, A. 2006. The Event Marketing Handbook: Beyond Logistics & Planning. Chicago: Dearborn Trade Publishing.

Sanders, D. 2013. Trade Show, Fair or Exhibition? (part 1). Trade show public relations. <http://www.trade-show-pr.com/2013/02/22/trade-show-fair-or-exhibition-part-1/>. Accessed on 10 October 2013.

Seatrade. 2013. <http://www.seatrade-europe.com/>. Accessed on 26 July 2013.

Solberg, S. K. 2013. Exhibit Marketing and Trade Show Intelligence. Berlin Heidelberg: Springer.

Sternkopf, S. M. 2005. English in Marketing: International Communication Strategies. Berlin: Frank & Timme.

Stevens, R. P. 2005. Trade show and event marketing: plan, promote and profit. New York: Thomson Texere.

UFI 2010. The role of exhibitions in the marketing mix. https://www.bvv.cz/ufi-seminar/01_PDF/UFI_course.pdf. Accessed on 28 August 2013.

Zimmerman, A. & Blythe, J. 2013. Business to Business Marketing Management: A Global Perspective. New York: Routledge.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Interview questions for the Marine Façade managers

Appendix 2: Questions for stand visitors

Appendix 3: Questions for post-show discussion session

Appendix 1: Interview Questions for the Marine Façade Managers

1. What are the participation objectives? What is the desired future state?
2. What are the main selection criteria of trade shows?
3. How do you imagine the look of the Marine Façade stand? What is the main theme for design?
4. What is the planned budget? What is the minimum / maximum limit?
5. How the responsibilities will be divided and the project will be managed?
6. Please, specify the pre-show marketing program.

Appendix 2: Questions for the Stand Visitors

1. How did you find out the Seatrade Europe trade show?
2. What are your participation objectives?
3. How do you evaluate the Marine Façade booth?
 - a. Are the signs are visible and easy to read? Do you like the stand amenities? What would you change?
4. How did you find the Marine Façade booth?
5. Did you see the Marine Façade advertisement in the Seatrade magazine / receive the invitation?

Appendix 3: Questions for the Post-show Discussion Session

1. Do you think the training organized for the company's staff before the trade show was enough? Did you finally face any challenges while presenting information to the stand visitors?
2. Did you obtain enough time for tasks' execution?
3. How do you evaluate:
 - a. the booth design?
 - b. the design and descriptiveness of the printed materials?
 - c. the booth facilities?What would you change or add?
4. Do you think that the pre-show marketing campaign was effective? What should be changed?
5. Do you think we should participate in this show again? Why?