



WHITE PAPER

MASTERING THE EXHIBITION JOURNEY

How Top Venues Are Using Technology to Succeed
Including insight into RAI Amsterdam's approach

THE CUSTOMER JOURNEY IN THE EXHIBITION INDUSTRY

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WHAT IS THE CUSTOMER JOURNEY?

The “customer journey” is a marketing term that is often used for digital activities, mainly due to the fact that online activities can be tracked and measured in a much more detailed way than offline. However, touchpoints between companies and clients along the customer journey are important for online and offline activities, for example phone, e-mail, or word-of-mouth communication.

The customer journey should not be seen as a single marketing model. It connects different departments in a strategic manner and follows the idea of creating customer-centric processes.

Why is the customer journey so important for any business? The various touchpoints throughout a customer journey are meaningful indicators for customer satisfaction. At the same time, they can be considered powerful ways to shape the relationship with the client.

The customer journey is about putting yourself in your customers’ shoes to create a more personalized experience. Attention to detail is key.

“

The customer journey spans a variety of touchpoints by which the customer moves from awareness to engagement and purchase. Successful brands focus on developing a seamless experience that ensures each touchpoint interconnects and contributes to the overall journey.

- Forrester

”



The Role of Customer Satisfaction

Customer satisfaction is essential for any successful business. Happy clients are easier to work with and are more willing to provide important feedback that can help a company to improve their services or products.

Furthermore, satisfied and loyal customers tend to pay in a timely manner, ultimately supporting a company’s financial health.

Acquiring new business is much easier with a happy and loyal client base. Customers can provide testimonials and help with reference marketing or recommend products to business partners.

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CUSTOMER JOURNEY MAPPING



“Customer journey mapping” is the action of outlining a customer journey and analyzing weaknesses in order to optimize the customer experience. Many marketing experts recommend a segmentation of customers before analyzing individual touchpoints. The customers do not always follow a fixed customer journey. Sometimes they take a step back or skip particular touchpoints within the journey.

Customer segmentation: Each customer segment has specific touchpoints that result in individual customer journeys. Customers’ needs and expectations may vary depending on specific situations and touchpoints.

Examples from the exhibition industry:

1. **SITUATION:** Whether someone attends a show as a visitor or whether someone exhibits at a show to represent their company will result in different expectations and needs.
2. **TOUCHPOINT:** A loyal exhibitor may expect efficiency and fast processing from a stand order in a web shop. However, the same exhibitor may expect a warm welcome and a personal face-to-face conversation with the exhibition’s account manager on the show floor.

Personas

To create personalized experiences, you need to know what your individual target groups want. Depending on the marketing segmentation and the different requirements, the touchpoints can be very different from segment to segment.

Creating **personas** is a common and helpful way of collecting clients’ needs and understanding individual target groups. The personas represent different customer personalities. They have individual names and stories that reflect their behavior and attributes, including their motivation and pain points.

An example from the exhibition industry:

For an exhibition company, it is extremely important to distinguish between visitors and exhibitors. These different target groups have unique requirements and their personas can vary substantially.

“

Personas are fictional, yet believable archetypes you can develop to represent your target customers.

- [Beyond The Arc Blog](#)

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CUSTOMER JOURNEY MAPPING

To make sure you know what your customers want, you should keep the interaction alive throughout the year.

Consider surveys, interviews and groups or discussions on social media to learn more about their expectations.

Website visits and online behavior may give you additional insight and provide further indications of their needs.

Touchpoint Analysis: There's a variety of different touchpoints between the company/service provider and the customer. Going through them and putting yourself in the customer's shoes will help you understand what can be improved.

Some examples:

- Communication: Print ads, mailings, website, social media.
- Experience: Experiencing a service or having a phone conversation with an employee.
- Physical: Site inspections, hands-on workshops or other multi-sensual experiences.
- Digital: Digital tickets, online orders, apps, social media, self-service portals.
- Exclusive: VIP lounges or other exclusive service offers can even go as far as serving as a unique selling proposition for a company.

These additional questions will help you further evaluate the touchpoints and find out how to optimize them:

Is the touchpoint personal or impersonal?
Which touchpoints are indispensable?
Which ones are unnecessary?
Which touchpoint has the greatest effect on customer behavior?

“

If marketing has one goal, it's to reach consumers at the moments that most influence their decisions.

- McKinsey

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THE CUSTOMER JOURNEY IN THE EXHIBITION INDUSTRY

Customer journeys are defined by the type of customers they refer to. Especially in the exhibition industry, these could be **exhibitors or visitors** – two different target groups that need to be addressed in a very different manner by exhibition organizers. For our purpose, we'll be focusing on exhibitors.

If we talk about exhibitors from an organizer's perspective, there is no such thing as one "typical" exhibitor. Individual exhibitors are, for example, defined by:

- a) The type of exhibition - B2B or B2C
- b) Their origin - international or national
- c) Their industry
- d) Their company and marketing goals
- e) Their budget

According to UFI, approximately 39% of all European trade shows are targeted at B2B audiences, 28% at consumers and 33% at both target groups.

The Exhibitor Journey

The **exhibitor journey** is especially characterized by expectations towards the following areas:

- **Communication:** Internet, signage or catalogs
- **Transportation:** Hotel services or freight forwarders
- **Experiences:** Exhibitor parties, VIP events or welcome receptions
- **Catering:** Food and drinks of any kind
- **Stand services:** Cleaning, security, electricity, water, internet connection & Wi-Fi
- **Advertising:** Press conferences or online advertisements
- **Stand design:** Construction, equipment and decoration
- **Other services:** Restrooms, post offices or cash withdrawal

The **exhibitor journey** begins a long time before the show takes place. Your exhibitors want to prepare their show participation in the best possible way. They often have particular goals for a trade show and all of their efforts will be aligned with these goals.

They inform themselves, they book a stand and they order all necessary items for the exhibition stand or booth. They make appointments with existing and potential clients and they will consider different options to increase visibility on the show floor or online. The list is long!

And even when the show is over, the exhibitor journey doesn't end. Exhibitions and events continue to live online: on social media, on apps and on event websites.

For **exhibition organizers**, this list creates **endless touchpoints with customers**, both online and offline. **Lots of touchpoints = lots of opportunities to create long-lasting customer relationships!**

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A NEW GENERATION OF CUSTOMERS



“Mobile is the new normal” – we hear this statement across numerous industries around the globe. From **Generation Y** – the so-called “**Millennials**” – to **Generation Z** to whatever we may call our new generations in the future, the way customers behave is changing.

For the exhibition industry, this has a greater impact than ever. Exhibitors’ preferences change and with the new digital natives, organizers need to rethink their strategies.

Dutch behavioral researcher, Tessa van Asselt, sums up millennials’ expectations as follows:

“The millennials are marked by conflicts and do not build up trust so readily, they are optimistic realists and have grown up in the knowledge that they can achieve anything they want to. Millennials are constantly online, engaging in discourse with others in their networks.

93 percent take their smartphones to bed with them. The millennials’ expectation of brands and products is that they should make the world a somewhat better place.

Millennials want to actively participate and not just listen. They want to be given skills and knowledge, and share this with others. They are searching for experiences and adventures instead of for possessions and wish to be surprised as they search.”

Exhibitions continue to be important and valuable to marketing strategies. They engage, they encourage participation and they provide memorable experiences.

And they have the best possible strategic advantage towards digital offerings:

They provide real, human, face-to-face experiences.

The Center for Exhibition Industry Research (CEIR) recently found that 98 % of young exhibitors see a unique value in trade shows that cannot be fulfilled by other marketing channels.

- UFI Live (Angela Herberholz)

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A NEW GENERATION OF CUSTOMERS

How to handle the “new kids”

- **Visual culture:** Reduce copy. Communicate through images.
- **Going paperless:** Be digital if you can. Paper is not sustainable and it is old-fashioned.
- **Personalization:** For the “me”-centric culture of Gen Y, personalized offers and messages are not just nice to have, but essential.
- **Online conversations:** Find out what your customers want by engaging with them on social media. The younger the target group, the higher the affinity to video-based media, such as Snapchat or YouTube.
- **Trusted sources:** Offer relevant content and useful tips on your website and on social media. Become a trusted, reliable source of information that they can consult at any time.
- **Self-service:** Flexibility matters. Whether we talk about preparing the exhibition or watching video tutorials for first-timers - they want to do it when they have time, preferably on their mobile devices. This is especially important for learning opportunities. They need to be available around the clock (video tutorials, e-books, etc.) so they can watch or read them when they want





AN EXHIBITOR'S CUSTOMER JOURNEY

Elevating the exhibitor experience

Looking at the example of a typical B2B exhibitor that travels to an exhibition venue from abroad, there are a variety of offline and online touchpoints throughout the customer journey.

How can the exhibition organizer influence these touchpoints and elevate the exhibitor's experience?

It is helpful to take a look at each step along the journey and analyze the customer activity. Critically evaluating both the effectiveness and the experience of the individual touchpoints will help to shape the entire journey. The goal should be to make touchpoints even more effective and user-friendly for the exhibitors.

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The following graphic pictures the process of an exhibitor's journey in a simplified way:

Before the Exhibition				
Steps	Passive information search	Active information search	Registration	Preparation of show attendance
Customer Activity	Sees ads or hears about exhibition	Evaluation and consideration of exhibition	- Registration - Prints badge	- Schedules appointments - Organizes travel - Chooses social program
Touchpoint	- Exhibition website - Ads	- Exhibition website - Exhibitor brochure - Sales team or call center	- Online form - E-mail with badge	- Hotel, airline and train services - Exhibition website
During the Exhibition				
Steps	Arrival	At the exhibition		
Customer Activity	Finding entrance and maybe parking spot	- Meetings - Aquisition	Social program	Catering
Touchpoint	- Signage - Registration check-in, badge scan - Welcome by hostess or exhibition staff	- Exhibition app - Activities such as guided stand tours or receptions - Signage	- Exhibition app - Signage - Exhibition website - Event staff	- Quality of food and beverages - Competency of service staff - Atmosphere (standing or sitting, comfortable chairs...)
After the Exhibition				
Steps	Results of the exhibition		Event 365	
Customer Activity	Evaluation of results and success	Evaluation of exhibition experience	- Content consumption on social media, knowledge sharing - Evaluation of participation in the following year	
Touchpoint	Exhibitor satisfaction survey	Word-of-mouth, further recommendation through social media or other platforms	- Exhibition app - Social media - Blog - Exhibition website - Online content / educational courses	

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THE ROLE OF TECHNOLOGY

The ongoing **digitization of the event and exhibition industry** redefines the customers' role in many ways.

Customers **inform themselves** about products, they **rate and discuss them** on the internet, and thanks to fast and easy communication, **word-of-mouth** has a greater impact than ever.

Digitization allows companies to automate marketing and sales processes and, at the same time, deliver **customer-centric experiences**. Consequently, **technology** plays an important role when it comes to shaping the customer experience in the digital age.



“ After all, digitization is not solely a matter of technology. Never before have we had such good opportunities to orient ourselves to the needs of our exhibitors and visitors and to use digitization to optimally shape the points of contact between our customers and our trade fairs and services.

- Gerald Böse, Chairman of the European Chapter at UFI and President and Chief Executive Officer of Koelnmesse GmbH, posted on [UFI Live Blog](#)

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Technology is an impactful efficiency driver, especially when we think about automation.

Online shopping is faster and more convenient than phone or mail orders. It can be done at any time.

And, repeated manual data entry can be avoided. Data can be captured immediately and orders can be processed in no time, ultimately leading to increased customer satisfaction.

Automating routine tasks allows your people to focus on human interaction

Automation of “easy” and basic services or products, such as electricity, allows salespeople to find more time to take care of complex sales that require further explanation.

Altogether, sales and service teams can find more time to be there for their customers, to talk to them and to dedicate their energy to tasks that require a human touch.

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THE ROLE OF TECHNOLOGY



Self-service

Digitization allows exhibition organizers to create more value for their clients and to provide **self-service** at any time of the day. This new way of offering services allows exhibitors to be more flexible with their trade show preparation and to manage their stand whenever they want to – and on whichever device they prefer. Thanks to control mechanisms, when exhibitors fill out forms, errors can be minimized.

Personalization

Modern marketing is largely about understanding customers' individual needs. Companies are trying to move away from generic messaging and empty phrases, but instead looking for ways to personalize customer experiences. Examples of typical personalization in classic marketing include personal references in mailings or custom-tailored news and areas on websites.

The “digital age of exhibitions” allows us to learn more about our customers and to take **personalization** one step further. The huge amounts of data that can be collected thanks to technology creates new opportunities to personalize customer experiences.

A personalized service remembers what a customer did, suggests complimentary items and consequently saves them a lot of valuable time. Basically, the entire service takes into consideration the buyer's persona and requirements.

How to personalize the exhibitor's experience

An example: An international exhibitor is likely to need accommodations and assistance with public transit as well as airport transfers. Depending on the length of stay, the exhibitor might also be interested in touristic offers.

To provide a more personal experience, you could address the exhibitor on your portal through a web banner with further recommendations

- on travel options
- on complimentary services, such as hostesses
- on city tours that can be booked through the local tourist office

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ENHANCING THE EXPERIENCE WITH INTEGRATION

Why is integration so important? The successful digitization of the exhibition industry cannot work without integration. To streamline digital processes and to provide a smooth, unified experience to your clients, all aspects of a trade show need to be connected.

Customer satisfaction is the result of a perfect combination of well-thought-out touchpoints throughout the customer journey.

From quick responses and efficient processes to beautifully designed websites, the exhibitor experience does not start on the show floor, but from the very first moment the exhibitors get in touch with the event.

Integration of all touchpoints helps to create a seamless, memorable experience and to provide outstanding customer service.

The exhibitor's journey often starts with the very first visit to the exhibition website and ideally continues throughout the year. To facilitate the exhibitor's trade show participation, some of the most successful exhibition venues have created online exhibitor platforms that allow customers to prepare their exhibition and order everything they need for the event online. That includes furniture, electricity and other tangible items as well as services such as stand security.

Integration of services allows exhibition organizers and venues to capture all data in one system.

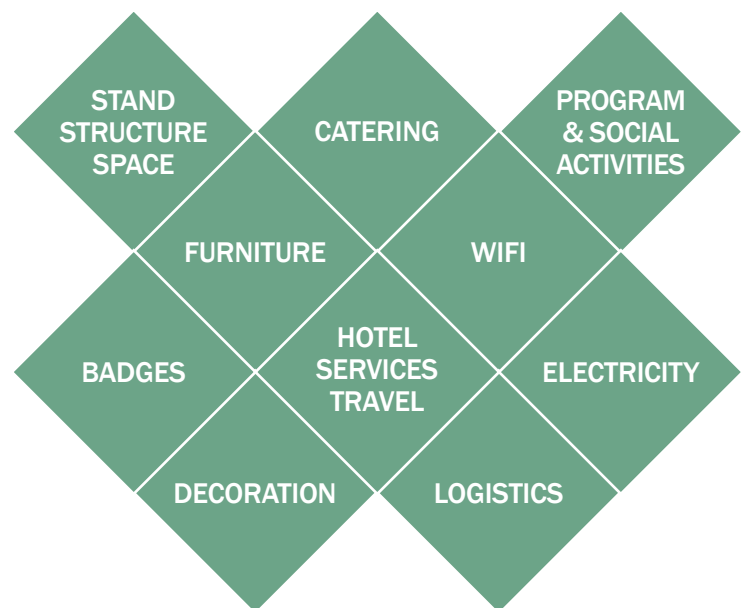
This comes with a number of benefits:

Happy staff:

- Less time to enter data
- Efficient processing of orders
- Clean and easily created contracts, orders and invoices
- Upselling potential

Happy clients:

- One-stop-shop
- Efficient online orders
- 24/7 availability
- Visualization of orders
- Automatic reminders



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ENHANCING THE EXPERIENCE WITH INTEGRATION

Let's have a closer look at the overall experience you are offering to your exhibitors.

How is the exhibitor experience defined?

The exhibitor experience is closely connected to the generic understanding of a user's experience, often referred to as "UX" in digital marketing and web development.

A great user experience is a requirement for any successful digital business. It generates opportunities to measure and track behavior - and these metrics help you understand your customers' needs. It is a wonderful tool to shape the touchpoints and hence improve the customer journey.

Digital Is Measurable

Looking at the exhibitor's customer journey, there are online and offline activities. Customer touchpoints may be digital, but can also happen at the event or on the phone.

Digital touchpoints are especially valuable because digital is measurable. There's a variety of web analytics that marketing professionals regularly keep an eye on in order to find out what their customers want.

As a large part of the exhibitor journey is happening online – on your website, on your exhibition portal or even on social media – you can use marketing metrics to analyze and shape the exhibitor experience.

With the power of data, the actual **Return on Investment of an event** can be demonstrated very accurately; exhibition organizers can equip their salespeople with stronger [selling](#) points than ever.

“ User experience encompasses all aspects of the end-user's interaction with the company, its services, and its products.

- Nielsen Norman Group

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Some examples of valuable indicators:

- Page Impressions
- Time Spent On Page
- Bounce Rate

These are great indicators for you to evaluate whether your offerings are helpful to your clients. A high bounce rate might be seen as an opportunity to improve the content on your show's website, for example.

Embrace analytics - and measure your customers' behavior to create even better experiences for them.

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ENHANCING THE EXPERIENCE WITH INTEGRATION

You should put a good portion of your time and energy into how to design and shape the user – or in your case – the exhibitor experience.

There are various factors throughout the exhibitor journey that can have an impact on the way exhibitors perceive the event experience, both online and offline.

If we look at digital touchpoints, the exhibition website and the exhibitor platform where customers can order items and services, the following three aspects really matter:

Design:

- Attractive, user-friendly & beautiful
- Responsive with the same positive experience on any device
- Clearly visible information, especially deadlines

Information:

- Valuable, relevant information that demonstrates the potential Return on Investment of the exhibition, guaranteed business leads or people your exhibitors will be able to meet
- Directions and information on the exhibition location
- Content from sessions and workshops

Accessibility:

- Regardless of user devices, the information should be accessible
- Avoid heavy images that take ages to load





A SERVICE CENTER FOR YOUR EXHIBITORS

One of the most annoying things for exhibitors is when they have to log into different portals to plan their exhibition. Applying for an exhibition stand, ordering electric services, catering, internet and stand staff: Each service comes with a different provider. Bundling these services and offering them through one web shop makes exhibitors' lives a lot easier and can have a significant, positive impact on the exhibitor experience. To give exhibitors the freedom of ordering everything by themselves is a great leap towards excellent self-service. It is crucial to create a great user experience and ensure the web shop is accessible whenever exhibitors want.

7 Tips To Create The Perfect Online Service Tool For Your Exhibitors:

- **Personalize it.** Suggestions based on the exhibitors' persona, profile and complementary products save your customers time. They round off the perfect service experience and help the exhibitor get the maximum benefit out of trade show participation.
- **Make it intuitive.** Let's put it this way - abstract is not user-friendly. The look & feel of your exhibitor service center has a major impact on the user experience. Customers should not remember the actual function, but the experience they had when using your portal.
- **Visualize items & services.** Nothing beats visual. Images of products and services show customers what they can expect and inspire them to buy. They make your service center more trustworthy. Make sure the images look good, but are not too big.
- **Use responsive design.** Customers may use the portal from their tablets while traveling or from their computers at home. In any case, the user experience should be great on any device. People may access the portal while traveling, so fast loading times are essential. Avoid large images or any other content that is heavy in size and takes too long to download.
- **Make it interactive.** Interactive floor plans will enhance both exhibitor and visitor experience, to facilitate navigation and to improve identification of interesting exhibitors.
- **Integrate it with your back office.** Back office integration with client data allows exhibition organizers to avoid double data-entry and therefore produce clean orders and invoices for their exhibitors. A one-stop-shop enables exhibitors to manage their show participation in the most efficient way possible.
- **Make it available 24/7.** Give your exhibitors the possibility to order items and services around the clock. They will appreciate the flexibility.

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CASE STUDY: A UNIFIED EXHIBITOR SYSTEM

HOW THE DUTCH VENUE, RAI, CREATED A ONE-STOP-SHOP FOR EXHIBITORS

About

As one of the most prestigious convention and exhibition centers in Europe, the **RAI Amsterdam** in the Netherlands hosts a variety of trade fairs and exhibitions, including a number of self-organized shows. RAI and the city of Amsterdam are technology and marketing leaders in many ways. The successful and innovative MICE destination has managed to integrate various aspects of the on-going **digitization** within their strategy, from marketing to integrated business tourism services and exhibition management.

European exhibition venue **RAI Amsterdam** created an online service platform for their exhibitors to improve customer service and streamline communication with them. To prepare the project, RAI surveyed their exhibitors in order to find out what could be improved in regard to their old web shop. Marketing aspects as well as technical finesse were taken into consideration and put into practice with the creation of this exceptional exhibitor platform. The online portal maps important digital touchpoints of the exhibitor journey. It offers massive potential for time savings both on the exhibitor's and venue's side giving exhibition sales and service teams more time with their customers.



ATTENTION



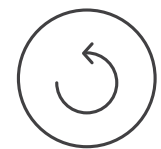
SELECTION



PURCHASE



SERVICE

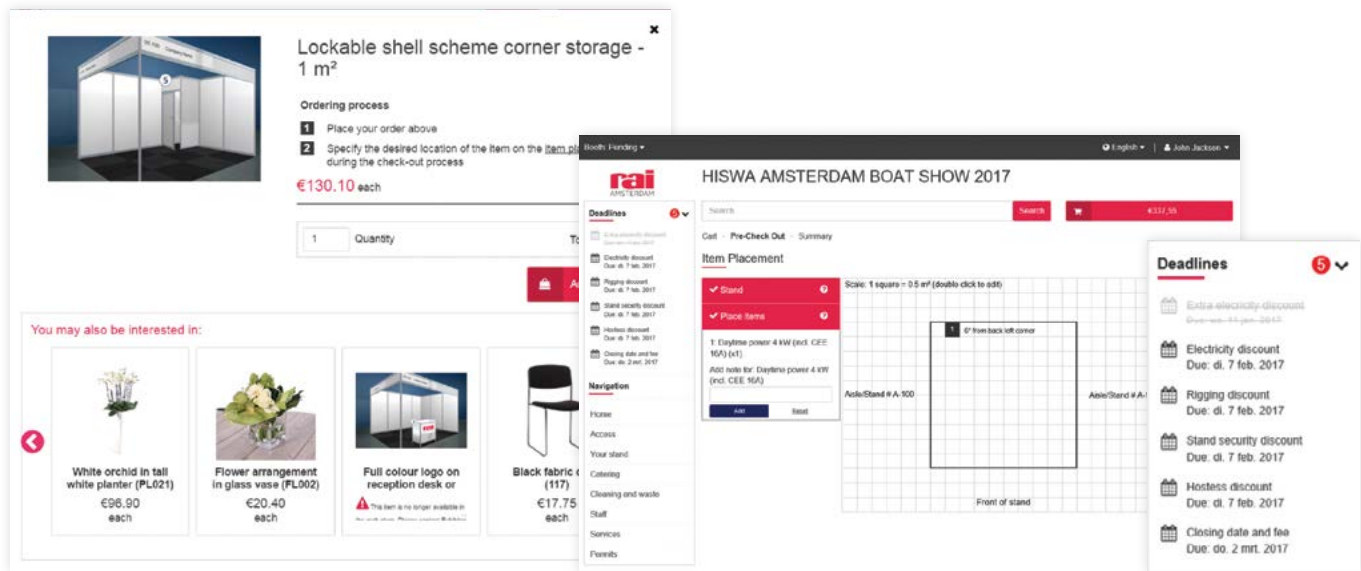


RETENTION

DIGITAL TOUCHPOINTS

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CASE STUDY: RAI AMSTERDAM



About Sales Automation

Sales automation can be especially beneficial for services and items that are needed in any case and that do not need further explanation. Giving the customer the possibility to order anytime results in big time gains on both ends.

So is the human aspect of sales and service becoming redundant? On the contrary: **Emotional intelligence is becoming more important as sales staff finds more time to speak to clients face-to-face.**

ADVANTAGES FOR EXHIBITORS

- Integration of services
- Cost savings & efficiency when preparing the exhibition
- Professional & successful exhibition
- Higher value and ROI from a show

About One-Stop-Shops

A one-stop-shop is extremely helpful for exhibitors as it combines all relevant aspects of trade show participation and supports the exhibitors in reaching their individual goals. Many touchpoints with the customer can be directly influenced with a service center. The goal is to optimize the exhibitor's return on investment regarding the show, thanks to solutions and services that meet their needs exactly.

RAI's online exhibitor platform combines all important areas of exhibitor management. Users do not have to log in to different websites and can order everything from one portal: stand orders and exhibition space, WIFI, electricity and water, furniture, decoration or additional services such as logistics or hotel bookings. Clear, high-quality images are used to great effect in helping clients get a much better idea of the available services and items.

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CASE STUDY: RAI AMSTERDAM

About Exhibitor Personas

Creating exhibitor personas turned out to be crucial in RAI's ability to understand the individual needs of exhibitors. Depending on the show and type of exhibitor, different profiles with different needs were identified and understood on a deeper level.

What do exhibitor personas look like?

Example: International exhibitor of a B2B exhibition organized by RAI

What is important to this persona?

- Travel and accommodation are indispensable. Therefore, integrated hotel services and potentially tourism-related offers are of interest
- Catering and stand personnel are attractive ways to save costs for transport and travel

Offers:

- The exhibitor can be supported with dedicated offers for furniture, catering or hostesses
- Linking to offers for public transportation and airport transfer can be helpful

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FUTURE VISION: DIGITIZATION & TECHNOLOGY

In 2015, UFI's Community Manager Barry Siskind made an important statement about the future of exhibitions on the UFI Live Blog:

"The combined impact of technology and demographics will have considerable influence on exhibitions in the future."

Compared to other industries, the exhibition and events industry is rather hesitant when it comes to embracing the **"Digital Age."** However, the trend is visible and slowly disrupting the events and exhibition industry.

In 2015, UFI's CEO Kai Hattendorf wrote a forward-looking article about the **Digital Age of trade shows.**

"In principle, every successful trade fair makes use of the three elements of trading platform, exhibition area for brands, products and services, and a sector-based meeting point to exchange trends and expertise. Each of these three components can now be comprehensively digitalized. For example, by having an app to complement the traditional exhibitor catalogue, with a digital navigation system which guides visitors through the trade fair halls and by enabling exhibitors to communicate in social communities or via match-making platforms."

"Digital" is not threatening "Face-to-Face"

"Digital" in regard to the exhibition industry is often associated with virtual events and the fear that they might replace real events someday. The truth is: A virtual trade show can never offer the **true value of people getting together at a face-to-face event.**

However, "digital" can be beneficial to "face-to-face." By bringing an exhibition to the online world, larger audiences can be reached, ultimately supporting the entire marketing and sales process. The real value of digital offerings does not lie in replacing events, but in completing them.

The creation of **hybrid events** opened up new ways of offering a face-to-face event, but making parts of it accessible to people that are not present at the live event, for example by streaming keynote sessions.

With **Facebook** and **YouTube** starting to offer professional streaming services, two of the most successful social media platforms made a significant contribution to this successful event model.

What is a Hybrid Event?

A Hybrid Event virtually connects attendees that are located in different places. Sometimes organizers stream presentations to make them accessible to attendees that want to follow from a mobile device or computer.

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FUTURE VISION: DIGITIZATION & TECHNOLOGY

Technology impacting the exhibition industry

Thanks to Virtual Reality, anyone can discover products that are not physically present on the show floor. VR glasses allow show attendees to get a realistic overview of a product. In the future, this technology might become even more complex: interpretation of facial expressions, haptic elements and content that is modeled on video games. Since Facebook bought the VR glasses provider Oculus, it is foreseeable that virtual reality will be integrated into communication at some stage.

As we look into our magic crystal balls, we can expect a great impact from the **Internet of Things and NFC technology** on venues and shows. Objects with sensors could automatically send information to smartphones, for example, so anyone who enters the exhibition floor or a booth would receive a notification. This concept could also help to improve analytics on visitor traffic. Some venues and exhibition companies already use NFC technology for their badging systems. This is especially helpful since many smartphones have an integrated NFC reader. Besides facilitating the registration process, data can be directly transferred into mailing lists or even replace business cards.

“

Alongside the real trade fair site, the physical venue, there must also be the “digital venue.

- Kai Hattendorf, UFI

”

What is the Internet of Things?

Machines, cars or other things communicating with each other and with their environment, exchanging data, saving it and reacting to events in the real world by taking concrete actions or providing services - automatically or triggered by a human being.

Event 365 - The Customer Journey Does Not End After The Event

An event that is available 365 days a year has the potential to reach many more clients than a 2-3 day event. And, it has the power to retain clients – if it provides true, continuous value.

Make your event digital - keep the momentum. You need to know what your audiences want to hear about and that you have the ability to provide interesting content to “feed” their appetite for information.

- Provide images or videos after the event & encourage people to share them
- Provide relevant content that people can download throughout the year
- Blog Posts
- Videos
- Infographics
- Webinars
- Whitepapers
- Engage with your audiences on social media
- Consider Tweet Chats
- Create a unique event hashtag for year-round use

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FUTURE VISION: COLLABORATION

With new target groups, on-going digitization and political instabilities, the new age of exhibitions depends on innovative, out-of-the-box ideas. Exhibition professionals need to find new business models to create more value for exhibitors and ensure their offerings match their clients' needs.

What is innovation? How can exhibition companies be innovative?

Innovative partnerships redefine the buyer and seller dialogue in the exhibition industry and create new business opportunities for organizers. The idea of online services complementing the benefits of face-to-face is a winning strategy when it comes to selling trade shows in the Digital Age.

“

It's not only about reflecting the digital transformation of industry in one's own company. It's also about future growth through new, digital business.

- Kai Hattendorf, UFI

”

Live vs. Digital? A new era of strategic business relationships has begun

Alibaba & UBM. Following the idea of a new trading experience that combines the online and offline world, the trade company Alibaba & the international exhibition organizer UBM joined forces in 2015 to start a strategic alliance. This collaboration is a game-changing event in the exhibition industry. With the two companies' customer bases complementing each other's businesses, this partnership will create new match-making possibilities.

“

One of the challenges of the trade exhibition industry is continuing the buyer and seller dialogue and experience throughout the year.

- Jime Essink, President and CEO of UBM Asia Ltd

”

Zalando & Bread and Butter. After the bankruptcy of the fashion show Bread and Butter, the online retailer Zalando invested in the trade show to initiate a joint-venture and change the event format by opening the show to consumers. The cooperation creates important new business opportunities for both parties: Products presented at the fashion show can be bought online. Some designers create exclusive shoes and clothes for Zalando. A prime example of a live experience complementing digital offers!

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