



Better Stands

Procurement Guide for Exhibitors

March 2024

What does this quick guide cover?



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Introduction to the guide

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This guide is aimed at exhibitors who have elected to purchase a space only raw space stand for an upcoming event. With so many stand contractors to choose from, it is not always easy to know which is the right one to design and build your exhibition stand.

It is important to understand all the various processes and costs that are involved in delivering a stand at a show and this understanding will give you a better idea of which contractor best suits your needs. Some research will be necessary to find the right contractor but this guide we hope will provide you with hints and tips on how to procure an exhibition stand contractor.





How to get
started?

How to get started?

Details you will need to hand when briefing your contractor:



- What you want the stand to achieve – is it brand presence, lots of meetings, profile new product etc
- The budget for your stand build - does this include all services including electricity, lighting, graphics, or just the stand build itself?
- A copy of the event floor plan
- A copy of the event regulations - pay particular attention to rules on height limits, walling regulations for open sides and prohibited materials
- Dimensions of the stand you booked
- The number of open sides and orientation of stand

Determine if you wish to rent your stand or purchase it



Purchasing a stand means you must consider storage costs between events. Purchasing can be cost effective if you plan to exhibit at multiple events a year or have a very particular style you want to use year on year and the stand can be stored safely and cost effectively. It also ensures your stand is reused.

N.B. there are lots of stand build systems that allow multiple configurations using the same kit, so reuse does not have to mean using the same design over and over. Think of Lego but for stand design.

Rental means you put the emphasis on the contractor to design a stand to fit your needs but with reusable components that they can then utilise with other clients. Many contractors have modular rebuild stand systems, that you can provide your own graphics and brand to for the duration of the event. Contractors may even have, or be part of a network of component libraries around the country or internationally which means it's easy to build a stand designed in one place but using components sourced locally to the event.



Where to find a suitable exhibition contractor?



Many countries have stand contractor associations, as a starting point we would strongly recommend that you source your contractor using their members. There are lots of other options available but your chances of having a hassle-free exhibiting experience are greatly increased when using a professional exhibition stand build specialist that takes the time to join associations.

Often association membership comes with its own set of accreditations, code of conducts and service quality charter that considers areas such as Health and Safety, Sustainability and similar management system practices as well as the appropriate public liability insurances. This can greatly reduce the burden on you when planning your exhibition presence.

Members embody the highest codes of customer service and excellence and the associations are engaged in the continual promotion and development of the highest level of professional industry standards.

A membership badge can be seen as a mark of quality and accountability and ensures that all materials used will meet required industry regulations and that the work carried out will meet all standards regarding health & safety, sustainability, and environmental responsibility.

For more information visit
www.essa.uk.com, <https://www.ifesnet.com/> or
www.iaee.com



Key questions to
ask your
contractor

What do you want your stand to achieve and how will your contractor help you achieve those strategic aims?



Consider why you decided to exhibit at our event and how the stand you build can help you with those strategic aims.

- Are you there to raise your brand profile?
- Is it to highlight a new product?
- Do you need a stand that can show videos and has more digital elements?
- Will your stand be used as a meeting space?

Reflect on these key questions and work with your stand contractor to build something that showcases your priorities.



Is every stage and service in the process carried out in-house?



Check to see that all work is undertaken directly by the contractor and they do not sub-contract any elements out. If work is sub-contracted then you do not know who will be designing, printing, manufacturing or building your stand.

The use of sub-contractors can impact on the price quoted as it may appear lower initially, but additional charges could be included later. Make sure you know exactly what is included in the cost and read the small print for extras. Also, a low price can also mean the use of prohibited materials and ultimately a poor-quality finish to the stand.



What companies have they worked for previously and are they in demand?



Ask to see examples of stands they have designed and installed for previous customers. Testimonials and reviews on quality, finish, customer service, time management and budget control give good indications of how reputable a contractor is and you should always check independent review sites for these such as Trust Pilot.

There should be evidence of a steady flow of projects for new and existing customers and you should check for variety and uniqueness in designs to ensure that stands are always customised to suit individual client needs.



What are their wider credentials?

When deciding on a stand contractor you should select one that can offer a versatile selection of reusable stands options. These can be wooden, aluminium, plastic, cardboard or other systems.

Reusable stands are better for reducing your own waste and therefore your environmental impact. They can also reduce health and safety risks, have smoother, more efficient construction and dismantling phases, promote higher quality look and feel and are usually cost saving.

A reusable stand will also promote your brand in a positive light by highlighting your sustainability credentials. Is the contract familiar with the **Better Stands** campaign, as that will lead to a more sustainable solution.



How do you define a Better Stand?

We classify all stands into 4 categories – Disposable, Bronze, Silver or Gold – depending on the particular elements that are reused or recycled.

All elements of a particular category must be shown to be reused or recycled in order to achieve that classification. If a stand does not meet all the elements in the Bronze level then it is classed as disposable.



Category		Items	Fully disposable	Better Stands Bronze	Better Stands Silver	Better Stands Gold
Reused	1	Stand structure and walls	✗	✓	✓	✓
	2	Platform or raised flooring	✗	✓	✓	✓
	3	Furniture and equipment	✗	✓	✓	✓
	4	Lighting	✗	✓	✓	✓
	5	Fascia and overhead signage	✗	✗	✓	✓
	6	Rigged structure	✗	✗	✓	✓
	7	Ceiling	✗	✗	✓	✓
	8	Display facilities	✗	✗	✓	✓
Reused or recycled	9	Floor covering	✗	✗	✗	✓
	10	Graphics and decorative items	✗	✗	✗	✓

How to manage costs?



Investment, planning and budgeting are essential. Otherwise it can quickly become an expensive lesson in the importance of research and preparation. The below factors should be carefully considered:

1. Fix your budget and communicate this honestly to your contractor
2. Alongside the proposed design, request a detailed quote with full itemised cost breakdown
3. Items listed should include (where relevant) design, build, audio visual, electrics, flooring, furniture, graphics, internet, labour, lighting, permits, rigging, transportation, water and waste and any other special features requested
4. Be clear on which items are purchased and which are hired



Where are they located?

Regardless of where the exhibition takes place, it's often best to hire a local contractor closer to the venue, or someone with local partners and resource.

This will have a huge impact on your overall spend, as logistics and accommodation can be costly. The greater the distance your stand needs to be transported the higher your costs will be, not to mention other factors you may need to contend with such as delayed deliveries due to road conditions, higher carbon footprint and so on.





Better Stands Programme

What is Better Stands?



Disposable stands are designed to be used only once, they have a significant impact on the environment, in addition to increasing health and safety risks onsite. **Better Stands** is a programme aimed to ensure that all core elements of exhibitor stands are reusable. Help us to reduce the environmental impact of the events by committing to the Better Stands guidelines and show that your company values being part of sustainable and socially responsible events.

What's in it for exhibitors?

- A better quality, more attractive stand
- Smoother, more efficient build up and breakdown periods
- Lower, more predictable work hours
- Reduced waste and other costs
- Promotion of the sustainable credentials of your brand



What do I need to do?



Make your commitment to Better Stands and contribute to a more sustainable event:

1. Read the Better Stands framework later in this document
2. Aim for your stand to reach at least a **bronze** level, meaning the stand structure and walls, platform, furniture, equipment and lighting are all reused, and of course you can aim for higher if you wish
3. Share these guidelines with your contractor before they begin designing your stand and ask how they can help
4. Ensure that the submitted stand design clearly communicates how you will meet the Better Stands guidelines



What do I need to do?



	Category	Items	In progress	 Better Stands Bronze	 Better Stands Silver	 Better Stands Gold
Reused	1 Stand structure and walls	Structure or framework of the stand, walls, panels for meeting rooms, backdrop	×	✓	✓	✓
	2 Platform or raised flooring	Structure of flooring (excluding surface covering, e.g. carpet)	×	✓	✓	✓
	3 Furniture and equipment	Showcases, counters, chairs, tables, sofa, coffee table, flyer stand, LED walls, TV, AV equipment etc.	×	✓	✓	✓
	4 Lighting	All kinds of lighting in the stand and within showcases	×	✓	✓	✓
	5 Fascia and overhead signage	Overhead signage or branding, fascia, company logo on top of the stand structure	×	×	✓	✓
	6 Rigged structure	Any rigged structure including lighting gantries or other structural elements	×	×	✓	✓
	7 Ceiling	Any form of ceiling e.g. fabric ceilings, solid ceilings for lighting or stand support	×	×	✓	✓
	8 Display facilities	Built-in or detachable product display cabinets, lightboxes etc.	×	×	✓	✓
Reused or recycled	9 Floor covering	Carpet, floor tiles, HDF coverings, lino etc.	×	×	×	✓
	10 Graphics and decorative items	Stand graphics that are wall-mounted or floor-standing (not overhead) and any other decorative items such as plants and flowers, models and ornaments	×	×	×	✓



For more information and guidance on Better Stands consult your event's Exhibitor Manual.
We would love to hear your feedback or suggestions.

Please don't hesitate to contact us at sustainability@clarionevents.com

