



Delivering the goods

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*Research from **Vivid Interface** reveals 'finding newness at shows' is the main driver and motivator for visitors attending a show.*

SINCE VIVID FIRST RESEARCHED a trade show in 1994 we have monitored how both consumer exhibitions and trade shows have performed in delivering for visitors and exhibitors.

On balance, this industry works in providing a marketplace for buyers to meet sellers. Some shows work extremely well in delivering to both visitors and exhibitors, but in our experience all shows work for those who are involved with them.

Shows like World Travel Market, Hospitality and IFE always score particularly highly because they understand the markets they serve, and they change to reflect market dynamics.

If we take a look at how visitors rate them for how important they are to 'the planning of purchasing/business', and also compare their scores to the industry average, we find across the shows we research we can see just how good they are. The average scores are based on a five point scale (where five = very important and one = very unimportant).



Consumer shows also perform well. If we look at three consumer shows performing at the high end we can see how well they perform against the very high industry average. The scores for the overall rating of the show are calculated on a five point scale (where five = excellent and one = very poor).



Trade shows work for a variety of reasons, but it is mostly to do with three main event components:

1. They enable visitors to find new products and services and for exhibitors to find new customers to sell to.
2. They enable visitors to keep up-to-date with what is new in the markets in which they operate. This means that visitors who are at the forefront of their markets are meeting with the leading suppliers to their markets. I like to call this a 'celebration of success', as successful companies visit and successful companies exhibit.
3. They enable the industry to meet with each other, to swap ideas, to catch up, to buy from and sell to each other and to find new jobs.

I do not remember a trade show where something other than 'newness' was the main driver or motivator behind the reason for visiting, and success in finding newness contributing significantly to the visitors rating of the show.

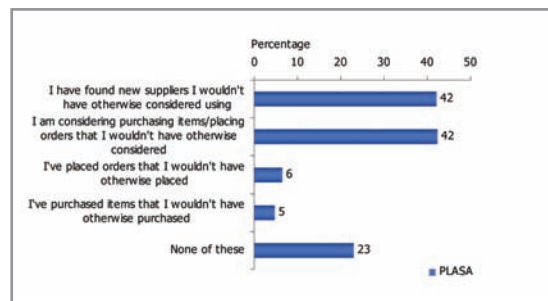
A couple of years ago, while working with Maddy Marston and Lisa Ellis at Clarion, we introduced a new line of questioning into our research to see if we could identify if shows were delivering newness, delivering new relationships and enabling visitors to find new products that they may not have otherwise found.

The main question for this is:

Has your visit to (show name) influenced you to make any purchasing decisions or enabled you to find a new supplier that you may not otherwise have found?

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The response from the PLASA 06 visitors was in my view remarkable:



Feature

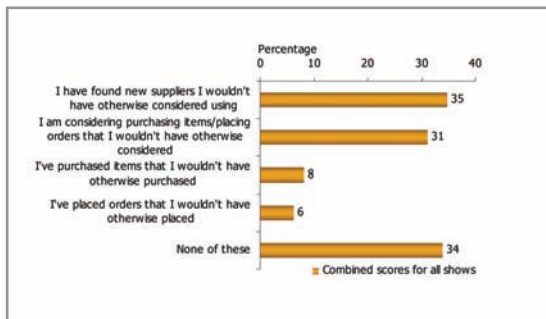
This is saying that 77 percent of the visitors to PLASA 06 were influenced by the show in some way that they had not considered before visiting. Forty two percent of the visitors to PLASA 06 found a new supplier that they otherwise may not have found. This means that those companies that were not exhibiting were not in there making these new connections and not placing their products in front of the 80 percent of people at the show who had buying or specifying responsibility. PLASA Event director Nicky Rowland said to me that this information has been very powerful in selling to exhibitors, and I am not surprised.

We cannot put this into context against other media, but instinctively I think we can all say that this indicates that PLASA can be a very, very good investment for suppliers to that industry.

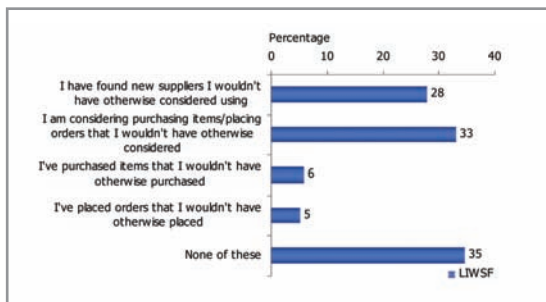
The figures for actually making a purchase or placing an order that they may not otherwise have considered may seem low, but most trade shows are not about purchasing and order placing at the event, and so I think they are encouragingly high.

If we now look at some other events we can see again how powerful events can be in delivering new customers to exhibitors.

First of all let's look at the average for shows we have researched:



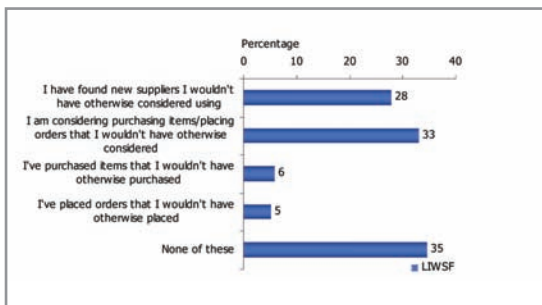
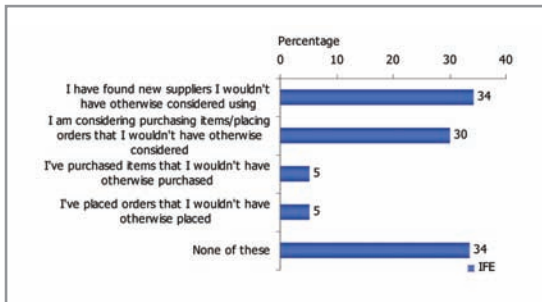
BTF, the Reed travel show at the NEC has the highest individual score so far for any event we have researched:



World Travel Market is a major success scoring well on all

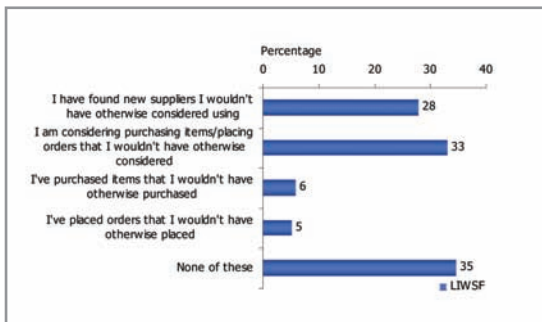
fronts, and here 43 per cent of show visitors found a new supplier that they wouldn't have otherwise considered using. This is such a powerful statistic for selling.

Looking at food and drink markets with IFE and LIWSF:



Again very impressive scores, and the other Fresh RM shows have a similar result.

Finally, we can look at the results for one consumer show. I have not included consumer events with low ticket items but the London Guitar Show sells guitars, software and other kit with some very high prices. Here the results are pretty much the same, though as we would expect the level of on-site purchasing is higher than for a trade event.



So with around 70 percent of visitors being influenced in a way that they had not considered before attending proves that with the right offer and the right exhibiting spirit (see August's *Exhibition News*) events are the place to be and really are a celebration of success.