

SALES EVENTS ABC

International sales events and trade conventions provide an excellent opportunity to meet large groups of potential buyers in person and to network with key players in the industry. These events include a high number of contacts with buyers from specific fields, but your time with them is often limited. This is why you should prepare your presentation with care.

This guide helps you choose the right events and target groups for your business, both at home and abroad, and prepare for and perform in sales events.



Visit Finland



GENERAL RULES FOR VF SALES EVENTS

Preparation is key to get the most out of the resources invested into any event – both time and money.

Visit Finland always strives to make the setting right for our sales events, so the participants can focus on sales and promotion. However, the outcome also depends on your own efforts.

As a rule, participants take care of their own expenses for travel and accommodation. Book your trip well in advance and check whether the event has a dress code.

Meetings are scheduled by the participants themselves or by the event organisers. Remember, you can also always book more meetings on your own.

Enrolment will have a deadline. Remember to sign up in time!

Always follow the instructions from event organisers and co-ordinators as well as schedules for bookings and delivery of materials. If your materials are not delivered in time, you might not get the most out of your efforts.

If your details (brand name, representative, arrival etc.) have changed after signup, notify the event organiser or co-ordinator.

Remember to bring some small, business-appropriate gifts with you.



STEPS BEFORE THE EVENT

Study the event programme carefully in advance to be prepared for all business opportunities and to avoid missing out on any interesting presentations or events.

Set your goals: a certain number of new contacts, tending to customer relationships, observing your competition, mapping trends, seeking out business partners, etc.

Prepare your materials with care: make sure you have electronic brochures and product descriptions and clear products/packages/offers that are ready to be sold. Regional or generic brochures should only be used as background information.

If you have a PowerPoint presentation, keep it up to date. Target your presentation directly to your customers and use high-quality images that represent your services well.

Read up on your customers in advance, check the attendee records, search information online and figure out potential partners: check their background, position in the distribution chain, sales trends, if they already sell your products and so on. Talk to your sales and booking personnel for any insights or messages.

Also see what other Finnish companies are presenting at the event. In addition to promoting your own products, you're also promoting your whole region, so make sure you know it well.

Learn the timetables for international travel commerce as well as the holiday seasons in your target region. Consider your customer's culture and its special features and needs.

Put together a customer-specific offer and/or customer-specific packages.

Define the merits of your products in accordance with your potential partner's catalogue.

Create an elevator pitch and prepare a presentation with bullet points. Keep your message short and sharp. Use images and videos for illustration. Practise until your presentation is fluid and professional. Think how you can modify it for different audiences. For negotiations, bring business cards, presentation materials, business gifts and your pitch on a storage device. Do not rely on Internet access.

Make sure your website is in order, as potential customers may look up information from your site.

Set your own goals before the negotiation, but also express that you are willing to listen and that your word is your bond.



TIPS FOR SALES NEGOTIATIONS

Arrive on time and be present until the event ends. While the last day may seem slow, some customers might not make it there on any other day. Big deals have been made at the last minute – you just need to be there with a smile on your face and your pitch ready.

Always strive for a good first impression by being prepared (see above).

- **Listen to your customer and allow time for questions.**
- **Present your unique selling points (USP). Explain what sets you apart.**
- **Tailor your message to the customer before you.**
- **Show that you are ready to work together to improve sales.**

If you have already done business together, thank them and ask for feedback. Tell about new improvements and don't be afraid to ask about declining orders. Capitalise on the chance to get feedback for product development and quality improvements.

Provide your brochures in electronic format.

End the negotiations with a recap of agreed next steps and try to set a date for follow-up meetings.

Stay at your booth the whole time to attract walk-in customers. Be active, seize all opportunities.

If you don't have a lot of planned meetings, be bold and approach potential customers yourself. The reception desk or the aisle by your booth are good places to start. An inspired, proactive approach is often rewarded, and you may find a new customer either for yourself or for a co-presenter at the event.

Co-operation is often mutually rewarding, so be helpful with your customers as well as your colleagues. The whole industry eventually profits from having more travellers, business events and congresses in Finland. A sale closed by your rival may also benefit you in some way.

Capitalise on side events, coffee breaks and official dinners, as they are great for exchanging information and networking.





AFTER THE EVENT

Aftercare is as important as the event itself. Send messages to your contacts immediately after the event to thank them and pick up where you left off in your meeting. Tend to your most prized contacts first.

Keep your word: be in contact and send more material if promised. Keep your customers in the loop and make use of different channels – Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, etc. Be patient, it might take a while to close a deal.

Update your whole sales team about new customers as well. See how you managed to reach your goals and what can be improved for next time.

MARKET-SPECIFIC CONSIDERATIONS

Asia

Present your business card with both hands.

At the very least, have your most important product materials localised.

If you don't speak the language and can't rely on a colleague for help, hiring an interpreter is recommended, especially in China. This will avoid many misunderstandings. Do learn a few words in your customers' language, such as "good morning", "good afternoon" and "thank you".

Europe

Differences in purchase behaviour (e.g. Germany vs. other European countries): although online channels are becoming more prominent on all markets, remember that Germans still prefer traditional channels and dislike using credit cards to make orders online.

EVENT-SPECIFIC CONSIDERATIONS

International workshops

Prepare a succinct presentation and try to set yourself apart.

When you decide to take part in an event abroad, it makes sense to commit to attending for several years, as your reputation grows year by year.

If your schedule allows it, add some regional sales visits to your trip.

Domestic workshops

In general, most tips for international sales negotiations apply to domestic negotiations as well (see page 4).

Personal sales visits

Target your offer specifically to your customer. Remember, the number of visits is not important, meeting the right people is.

Have your materials ready on a USB drive: your sales folder or manual – sales kit: brochure, product fact sheet, presentation about your business with photos. Also be prepared to provide promotional materials, such as posters, tabletop displays and so on (you can send these later).

Finding the right contacts requires patience, networks, detective work and presence at the market (such as conventions and sales events). Due to data protection regulations, Visit Finland cannot share any personal contact details.

Networking events

Networking events are more casual affairs that are geared towards creating contacts and getting to know people in the industry. A considered and crafted elevator pitch is very handy in these circles. Do note that you also need to make small talk about subjects your customers are interested in. This is a great opportunity to increase awareness about Finland and to learn about potential customers' personal or business-related interests.



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