

# BETTER STANDS PROCUREMENT GUIDE FOR EXHIBITORS

June 2025





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# WHAT DOES THIS QUICK GUIDE COVER?

- 1** HOW TO GET STARTED
- 2** RENTING OR PURCHASING YOUR STAND
- 3** WHERE TO FIND A SUITABLE EXHIBITION SERVICE PROVIDER
- 4** KEY QUESTIONS TO ASK YOUR SERVICE PROVIDER
- 5** ABOUT BETTER STANDS

What's in it for me?

What do I need to do?

What are the guidelines?



# 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 service providers 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 service provider best suits your needs. Some research will be necessary to find the right service provider but this guide we hope will provide you with hints and tips on how to procure an exhibition stand service provider.

# HOW TO GET STARTED?



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## DETAILS YOU WILL NEED TO HAND WHEN BRIEFING YOUR SERVICE PROVIDER:



- 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 service provider to design a stand to fit your needs but with reusable components that they can then utilise with other clients. Many service providers have modular rebuild stand systems, that you can provide your own graphics and brand to for the duration of the event. service providers 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 SERVICE PROVIDER?

Many countries have stand service provider associations, as a starting point we would strongly recommend that you source your service provider using their members. 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.

As an industry-wide programme, we accept service providers as members of Better Stands. Any official member of the Better Stands programme undergoes training on the 10-point framework, so service providers that are registered members will have the greatest understanding of how to help you reach Bronze, Silver or Gold.

You can find a list of service providers that are members of the Better Stands programme [here](#).

For more information visit [www.essa.uk.com](http://www.essa.uk.com), <https://www.ifesnet.com/> or [www.iaee.com](http://www.iaee.com)

# KEY QUESTIONS TO ASK YOUR SERVICE PROVIDER



# WHAT DO YOU WANT YOUR STAND TO ACHIEVE AND HOW WILL YOUR SERVICE PROVIDER 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 service provider to build something that showcases your priorities.



## IS EVERY STAGE AND SERVICE IN THE PROCESS CARRIED OUT IN-HOUSE?

Please be aware that subcontracting is commonplace in the events industry. If work is sub-contracted then you may not know who will be designing, printing, manufacturing or building your stand.

The use of sub-service providers 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 service provider 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.

You can also ask if they have built any Better Stands Bronze, Silver or Gold builds before.

# WHAT ARE THEIR WIDER CREDENTIALS?

When deciding on a stand service provider you should select one that can offer a versatile selection of reusable and/ or recyclable 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. Service Providers who have gone through the Better Stands application process should be able to offer a versatile selection of reusable stands options.



## 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 service provider
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 service provider 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?



Better Stands is a collaboration across the events and exhibition industry to transition to the use of reusable stands.

The Better Stands Framework celebrates the use of reusable stands, inspiring change through awareness and engagement.

By working together towards the use of reusable stands, Better Stands delivers better efficiency, better experience, better safety and better sustainability for all.

## WHAT'S IN IT FOR EXHIBITORS?

- Reusable stands are some of the most modern and exciting designs, retaining creative optionality while being safer, cheaper and reducing waste
- Better Stands offers exhibitors the chance to stand out against their peers, particularly where certification and recognition programmes are in place
- Better Stands helps exhibitors reach sustainability targets



# 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 service provider before they begin designing your stand and ask how they can help
4. Consider if you want to your service provider to get your stand pre-assessed. For more information see this [slide](#).
5. Ensure that the submitted stand design clearly communicates how you will meet the Better Stands guidelines

# BETTER STANDS FRAMEWORK



The 10 key elements of a stand are assessed for reuse. This determines its categorization of Single use, Bronze, Silver or Gold.



		CATEGORY	ITEMS	SINGLE USE	BETTER STANDS BRONZE by NZCE	BETTER STANDS SILVER by NZCE	BETTER STANDS GOLD by NZCE
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 / 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	×	×	×	✓

# WHAT IS THE PRE-EVENT ASSESSMENT?



After you have committed to Better Stands you have to options to choose from

## PRE-EVENT ASSESSMENT

### Step 1:

Pick a Better Stands member as your service provider (find out about them on the [website](#))

### Step 2:

Plan your trade fair appearance with a trained service provider and create a stand that is in line with the framework

### Step 3:

Get your approval by a third-party assessment body via the portal (your service provider will know all about it)

### Step 4:

Showcase your achievements by displaying your Better Stands rating at the event

## ONSITE ASSESSMENT

### Step 1:

Exhibit at a trade fair organised by an event organiser who conducts on-site assessments.

### Step 2:

Make procurement decisions that are in line with the framework

### Step 3:

Your stand will be assessed onsite

### Step 4:

Your Better Stands rating and certificate can be promoted after the event via your website, social media, sales collateral etc.



# THANK YOU

For any questions, please email [info@betterstands.org](mailto:info@betterstands.org) and a member of the team will get back to you.

