



HANDLOOM EXPORT

— NEWS LETTER —

VOLUME NO.4



NOVEMBER 2023

ORGANISED BY
**CONSORTIUM OF TEXTILE
 EXPORT PROMOTION
 COUNCILS (EPCS)**



MEGA EVENT!

Showcasing India's Textile Prowess Globally



- **3,500 Exhibitors**
- **B2B & G2G**
- **40 Countries**
- **Biggest Textile Fair in the World***

Participation Fee

Category	Stall Type	Stall Size	Stall size & cost
Export turnover More than Rs.2 Crore for FY 2022-23	Standard booth*	18 sqm.	Rs. 1.5 lac + 18% GST
		24 sqm.	Rs. 2 lac + 18% GST
	Raw Space	24 sqm.	Rs. 2 lac + 18% GST
		36 sqm.	Rs. 3 lac + 18% GST
		54 sqm.	Rs. 4 lac + 18% GST
		100 sqm.	Rs. 8 lac + 18% GST
		200 sqm.	Rs. 16 lac + 18% GST
		312 sqm.	Rs. 24 lac + 18% GST
		402 sqm.	Rs. 32 lac + 18% GST
504 sqm.	Rs. 40 lac + 18% GST		
Category	Stall Type	Stall Size	Stall size & cost
Export turnover Less than Rs. 2 Crores** for FY 2022-23	Standard booth*	12 sqm.	Rs.75,000 + 18% GST
		18 sqm.	Rs.1,20,000 + 18% GST
# Additional charges applicable on total participation fee	2-side open stalls – 10% additional charges apply & 3-side open stalls – 20% additional charges apply		

*In terms of exhibition area

For Participation please contact

Fibres, Yarns & Fabrics, Apparel & Fashion, Technical Textiles, Handlooms, Floor coverings, Carpets, Stoles, Scarves, Shawls, Sarees, Hometextiles & Many More!

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HANDLOOM EXPORT

Newsletter of Handloom Export Promotion Council, November 2023

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Dear Members,

India successfully hosted the G20 summit on “One Earth, One Family, One Future” focussing sustainable development goals in all prospects, women empowerment, digital public infrastructure. I hope, the economic corridor announced on the sideline of the submit, would provide opportunity to increase trade and it is expected to be viable to connect India with Europe via Middle East at reduced logistics cost and delivery time.

As per the DGCI&S data, the Export of handloom products for the period April 2023 – July 2023 was Rs. 424.81crore. The export to UAE has increased by 78% and Brazil by 37% during the period April-July 2023 when compared with the same period of previous financial year. I hope, the declining trend in textile industry will expects recovery in the coming months.

As market promotion activities, Council has organised the participation of 22 member exporters in “WHO’s NEXT” Paris, France during 2nd to 4th, September 2023 under Market Access Initiative scheme of Ministry of Commerce & Industry, Govt. of India. In total, the exhibitors under the aegis of HEPC had about 500 trade visitors and reported spot order of Rs.5.35 crore and business enquiries of Rs.51.95 crore.

Council has also organised Hometextile & Design, Moscow, Russia between 19th to 21st September 2023 with participation of 17 member exporters. The event had 582 trade visitors and reported spot order worth of Rs. 6.26 crore and business enquiries of Rs.20.69 crore.

In order to support the exporters in preparing samples, HEPC has organized seminar on colour forecast and trends exclusively for the participants of Heimtextil 2024 at major clusters in Karur and Panipat. Council is in constant touch with the Indian missions abroad and organising meetings with fair authorities to maximise the marketing and publicity efforts.

The 54th Annual General Meeting of the Council held on 25.09.2023 at “The Residency Towers” in Chennai and appraised the marketing promotion activities undertaken by the Council and the new initiatives/proposed activities for the year 2023-24.

I would like to share that the Consortium of all Textile related Councils with the support of Ministry of Textiles, Govt. of India is going to organise a Mega International Textile Fair Bharat Tex 2024 from 26th to 29th February, 2024 at New Delhi and HEPC was allotted 4000 sq.mt.

Bharat Tex 2024, offering a unique opportunity to showcase your products to a diverse and highly targeted audience at minimum cost. Member exporters are requested to register for their space. I look forward to welcome you to this prestigious event to showcase our strength in the entire textile value chain to the global buyers.

Wishing you a very Happy Diwali 2023 and I pray that the festival of lights will bring you success in all your future endeavour.

With warm regards,

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'P. Gopalakrishnan'.

**P. Gopalakrishnan
Chairman**

Who's Next

Paris, France | 2-4, September 2023

About WHO'S NEXT

WHO'S NEXT is the leading fashion trade show in Europe organised twice a year in January and September at the Porte de Versailles in Paris. For more than 20 years, WHO'S NEXT has aimed to help designers succeed. From young designers to well-established brands, and from urban labels to craftsmen presenting the new collections of Ready-to-Wear, Accessories, Beauty and Lifestyle brands to fashion industry professionals, Who's Next is mainly aimed at buyers from all over the world. Agents, journalists, buying offices, stylists, schools and trend forecasters all meet at this leading industry event, to discover the new trends of the sector. Who's Next welcomes around 1,200 French and International brands to the Porte de Versailles Exhibition Center in Paris. With over 40,000 visitors in each edition, it is an unmissable meeting place for buyers and designers.

The event is organised by WSN Development.

- Since 2019, Who's Next has been hosting IMPACT, the event dedicated to committed brands and solutions.
- From September 2020, Who's Next welcomes TRAFFIC, the event dedicated to innovative solutions to develop the business of fashion brands and distributors.
- From September 2021, Who's Next welcomes BIJORHCA, the event dedicated to the jewellery market.

A true wholesale temple for nearly thirty years, WSN has been supporting brands and retailers and serving as a generator of business, desires, and ideas by fostering the meeting of professionals from around the world and stimulating their growth as creative entities. As the year 2024 will celebrate WSN's 30th anniversary as well as 60 years of Salon International de la Lingerie, this back-to-school edition held in September marked the inauguration of a new fashion calendar dictated by an increasing number of industry players - represented by Impact, Neonyt Paris, Bijorhca, Traffic. Around 1300 brands exhibited in the event which included 41% French brands and 59% International brands (In total the event had 33% new exhibitors). Among all the countries present, the top 5 were Spain (9%), Italy (9%), India (7%), Greece (5%). The event had a steady flow of visitors compared to September 2022 edition.

Of which 65% of the visitors visited from the France and the remaining 35% were International visitors from around 126 countries Top 5 countries visitors from outside France were Belgium (4%), Italy (3.9%), Spain (3.4%), Switzerland (1.5%), Germany (1.4%). 75% of the visitors had expressed their interest in visiting WHO'S NEXT, IMPACT, TRAFFIC, and 25% for BIJORHCA.

Council organised the participation of 22 member exporters in the September edition held in Paris during 2-4, September 2023. The event participation was organised by the Council availing Financial assistance under Market Access Initiative scheme of Ministry of Commerce & Industry, Govt. of India.

The participants were from New Delhi, Jaipur, Chennai, Kullu, Mumbai, Meerut, Noida, Kolkata, Gurgaon. The exhibitors displayed their products such as women's wear, handbags, Scarves, Stoles, Pashmina shawls, fashion accessories, throws, Beach wear, Hand embroidered Totes, clutches, belts, Headbands, recycled, and up-cycled made-ups etc.

The exhibitors under the aegis of the Council were mainly placed in the FROM area based on the product profile, some of the brands who participated in the event were placed in the IMPACT, Ready to Wear and Accessories section of the event.



The event was inaugurated by H.E. Mr. Jawed Ashraf, Ambassador of India in Paris by a ribbon cutting ceremony at the HEPC pavilion in the presence of Mr. N. Sreedhar, Executive Director, HEPC, the officials of Embassy of India and Indian exhibitors.



The visiting dignitary also released the exhibitor's catalogue brought out by HEPC exclusively for the event. Subsequently, the Ambassador interacted with the exhibitors by visiting their booths.

Our exhibitors reported that they had visitors not only from France and EU region but also from American, African and Middle East region . In total, the exhibitors under the aegis of HEPC had about 500 trade visitors and reported that they secured spot order of Rs.5.35 crore and business enquiries of Rs.51.95 crore. Most of the member exporters had shown interest to repeat their participation in the event. Besides HEPC, the participation was also organised by ISEPC & EPCH and there were many other exhibitors participated by taking space directly as well.

HEPC had put up a central promotional stall publicising India Handloom brand through wall posters, flyers, and also distributed exhibitor' catalogue exclusively brought out by the Council for the event.



Earlier on 1 September 2023, Mr. N. Sreedhar Executive Director along with Mr.P.Rangasamy, Joint Director (Export Promotion) visited the Embassy of India and had a meeting with H.E.Mr. Jawed Ashraf, Ambassador of India in India to brief about the Indian participation in the event.

HEPC's participation the event was represented by Mr.N.Sreedhar, Executive Director and Mr. P.Rangasamy, Joint Director (Export Promotion).

During the event, Mr.N.Sreedhar, Executive Director along with Mr.P.Rangasamy, Joint Director had a meeting with Ms. Sandrine Meziane, Head of International Development & Promotion and Ms. Romane Maze, International Development & Promotion Coordinator of WSN Development and discussed on various issues concerning the participation in the event and also future participation with the enhanced number of participants.



hometextile & design

Moscow, Russia | 19-21, September 2023

Hometextile & Design is the only specialized trade fair for home and contract textiles in Russia. Hometextile & Design is more than an exhibition: dozens of lectures, forums and workshops with the most up-to-date information for professional audience, including designers and architects, hoteliers and restaurateurs. This year Hometextile & Design (formerly Heimtextil Russia) was held in a new concept and was thematically divided into 3 large blocks namely Homedesign, Hometextile, Hometex collection. Home Design united the segments of interior and upholstery fabrics, window decoration, wallpaper, paints, carpets, designer furniture and home accessories.

Hometextile demonstrated the entire range of Russian-made home textiles: table textiles, bathroom textiles, children's textiles, bedroom textiles and sleeping systems. Hometex Collections presented a combined exposition in the Home Textile segment from Turkey, China, and India.



This edition of International Trade Fair for Interior Fabrics, Home Textiles decorating materials took place in Moscow on 19-21 September, 2023. Total 229 exhibitors from around 11 countries and buyers more than 15000 from all regions of Russia and the CIS countries visited three days event. Apart from India Pavilion, other countries like Turkey, China participated in Hometextile & Design 2023 under their respective national pavilion area.

For the past 20 stable years of its existence, Hometextile & Design gained a large network of professional visitors, and more than 15000 of textile specialists from all regions of Russia and the CIS countries visited all the exhibitors. These were wholesalers, large retail chains, agents, retailers, designers and decorators, as well as representatives of contract business.



Also, Hometextile & Design arranged extensive and diverse programme of accompanying events, involving all segments of the fair visitors about 45 speakers with 37 hours of business and educational program were conducted by the designers and decorators of interior and textile design. Special programme of events for representatives of contract business, including on-site guided tours with the industry experts. Match-making programme with retailers and wholesalers. Around 2800 visitors attended these programmes.



Council participated in Hometextile & Design with 17 member exporters under financial assistance from National Handloom Development Programme (NHDP) under Ministry of Textiles. The event was inaugurated by Ms Gina Uika, Deputy Chief Mission, Embassy of India, Russia by a ribbon cutting ceremony at the HEPC pavilion in the presence of Dr M. Sundar, Joint Director, HEPC, the officials of Embassy of India and Indian exhibitors. The visiting dignitary also released the exhibitor's catalogue brought out by HEPC exclusively for the event. Subsequently, the Ambassador interacted with the exhibitors by visiting their booths.



Council provided constructed booth with basic display accessories, including furniture and lighting. The display of products includes Table Linen, Kitchen Linen, Baby Products, Scarves, Bags, Men & Ladies garments (Women wear, beach wear, Night Wear, Shirts, etc) Stole, Shawl, etc. The exhibitors participated in the event under the aegis of the Council and the pavilion was mainly placed in the 7.3 area. HEPC had put up a central promotional stall publicising India Handloom brand through wall posters, flyers, and also distributed exhibitor catalogue exclusively brought out by the Council for the event.

It was observed that footfall of the buyers on the first day was good and got reasonable footfall. The buyers flow on second and third day with good visitor footfall. Few Member Exporters were very busy with regular buyer visits. Many of the participants informed that the arrangements made by HEPC was good and able to find few new buyers. The exhibitors under the aegis of HEPC had about 582 trade visitors and reported spot order of Rs. 6.26 crore and business enquiries of Rs.20.69 crore. Most of the member exporters had shown interest to repeat their participation in the event. Besides HEPC, the participation was also organised by Indian Chamber of commerce @Pavilion 7.5 area. The Council was represented by Dr. M. Sundar, Joint Director.



SEMINAR ON HEIMTEXTIL 2024 COLOR TRENDS & VISUAL MERCHANDISING, KARUR



Council organised a seminar on “Heimtextil Trends 2024 & Visual Merchandising” at Karur on 29 September 2023. Around 160 exporters have participated in this event. The welcome address was delivered by Shri N.Sreedhar, Executive Director, HEPC highlighting the importance of this seminar. The key note address was given by Shri P.Gopalakrishnan, Chairman, HEPC and appreciated the Council’s initiation to organise the seminar on Heimtextil Trend and Visual merchandising for the awareness of participants of Heimtextil in Karur and nearby areas. He also detailed about the importance of innovative product display in Heimtextil fair during their fair participation. Also requested members to set a target in exports and increase overall exports from Karur in upcoming years.



The presentation on “Heimtextil Color Trends 2024” was done by Associate Prof., Dr. Ravikumar R, National Institute of Fashion Technology (NIFT), Bengaluru. He detailed that the overarching theme for

the 24/25 season is “New Sensitivity”, which draws inspiration from the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) established by the United Nations. The SDGs have played a pivotal role in influencing businesses, policies, and legislation, ushering in various transformative epochs. That is really influenced by the the new Sensitivity and sensitivity approach. “Sensitivity” is associated with touch, sensation, and spirituality, but it is also about showing consideration, empathy, and respect. In this context, sensitivity means considering the impact when making a decision or creating a product. The colour palette of New Sensitivity is derived from natural pigments which are obtained from the earth and have a lower environmental footprint. The sensitive approach is maintained while creating a colour palette that is dynamic yet subtle. Inspiration for these hues has been drawn from the organic world, including the delicate hues of bread moulds, the vibrant pigments of bacterial growth, the soothing tones of algae, the rustic charm of hemp fabrics, and the timeless elegance of naturally dyed textiles. Also detailed about Bio engineered textiles and technological textiles.



Above session followed by the presentation on “Visual Merchandising” done by Associate Prof., Shri. Prashanth Kochuveetil, National Institute of Fashion Technology (NIFT), Bengaluru. He detailed about the arena principle’s Impact on strategic exhibition stand design. In the world of exhibitions, the design and presentation of exhibition stands play a pivotal role in attracting attendees and conveying a brand’s identity. One effective approach that has gained prominence is the integration of the Arena Principle of Visual Merchandising into strategic exhibition stand design. This principle emphasizes the layout, height of displays, and accessibility of products or information within the stand. By merging this principle with strategic exhibition stand design,



businesses can create captivating, informative, and sustainable displays that draw attendees into the booth and drive success. The above sessions followed by interactive session.



Subsequently, Shri P.Rangasamy, Joint Director, presented on list of fairs organised by Council and he requested the participants to avail the opportunity for the fair participation through Council.



Shri N.Nachimuthu, Past President, Karur Textile Manufacturers Exporters Association (KTMEA), attended as a special guest and guided the participants to increase their exports. During the seminar, the resource persons and other dignitaries were facilitated by the Chairman, HEPC. In the last session, "Vote of thanks" done by Shri Chandrasekaran, Past Chairman, HEPC and followed by press meet. Event was concluded with dinner.



OTHER EVENTS

Workshop on promotion of E-commerce exporters, Dak Ghar Niryat Kendra (DNK) and Booking of International articles



Department of Post in association with DGFT and HEPC conducted workshop on Promotion of E-commerce exporters, Dak Ghar Niryat Kendra (DNK) and the Booking of International articles on 28.08.2023 @Hotel MM Legacy, Kanchipuram and attended by around 120+ exporters in an around Chennai.

54th Annual General Meeting



54th Annual General Meeting of the council held on 25.09.2023 through Hybrid Mode at through Hybrid Mode at Hotel Residency Towers, Thyagaraya Nagar, Chennai 17.

Study Visit of the Department Related Parliamentary Standing Committee on Commerce



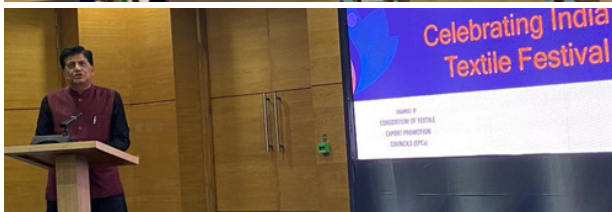
The study visit of the department related parliamentary standing committee on Commerce at Kannur held on 08.09.2023 at Taj Bekal Resort, Kappil Beach, Bekal to discuss with representatives of handloom manufacturers / producers / exporters Shri N.Sreedhar, Executive Director, HEPC has attended the meeting and made presentation on performance of handloom export sector and explained about various initiatives by the Office of the Development Commissioner for Handlooms for the promotion of handloom sector both in Domestic & international market and Council's activities for international market promotion. Earlier, Executive Director, HEPC honoured the parliamentary standing committee members.

Meeting with Development Commissioner for Handlooms



Shri P.Gopalakrishnan, Chairman, HEPC, Shri Lalit Kumar Goel, Vice Chairman, HEPC and Shri N.Sreedhar, Executive Director, HEPC had courtesy meeting with Dr. Beena, I.A.S, for taking charge as Development Commissioner for Handlooms, Ministry of Textiles followed by discussion with DC(HL) on the progress of HEPC and action plan to increase Handloom Export.

Bharat Tex 2024 - Curtain Raiser Event



Consortium of all Textile related Councils with the support of Ministry of Textiles, Govt. of India organising a Mega International Textile Fair Bharat Tex 2024 and its curtain raiser event presided by Shri Piyush Goyal, Minister of Textiles, Minister of Commerce and Industry and Minister of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution on 21.10.2023. Shri N. Sreedhar, Executive Director, HEPC participated in the curtain raiser event.

Secretary Textiles visit to Panipat



Shri Lalit Kumar Goel, Vice Chairman, HEPC along with other EC Members Shri Ashok Gupta, Shri Ramesh Verma & Shri Suresh Tayal welcomed Ms. Rachna Shah, IAS, Secretary, Ministry of Textiles during her industry visit to Panipat on 28.10.2023. Ms. Rachna Shah, IAS, Secretary, Ministry of Textiles and other Ministry officials visited M/s. Excellent Fabtex, factory of Mr. Ashok Gupta, Executive Member, HEPC, one of the largest Handloom factories in India producing floor coverings. She interacted with the Industry stakeholders during the factory visit.

Inauguration of the Trade Facilitation Centre and the Exhibition Hall



Shri. Santosh Sarangi, IAS, Director General of Foreign Trade inaugurated the Trade Facilitation Centre and the Exhibition Hall in O/o DGFT, Shastri Bhavan, Chennai. Shri N. Sreedhar, Executive Director participated in the Inauguration program.



In the world of exhibitions, the design and presentation of exhibition stands play a pivotal role in attracting attendees and conveying a brand's identity. One effective approach that has gained prominence is the integration of the Arena Principle of Visual Merchandising into strategic exhibition stand design. This principle emphasizes the layout, height of displays, and accessibility of products or information within the stand. By merging this principle with strategic exhibition stand design, businesses can create captivating, informative, and sustainable displays that draw attendees into the booth and drive success.

Understanding the Arena Principle

The Arena Principle is a visual merchandising technique that relates to product layout and presentation within a retail or exhibition space. It focuses on arranging products or information at varying heights within the display to create an engaging and accessible showcase. This arrangement allows attendees to easily see and interact with displays or information presented at different levels, providing a comprehensive and inviting experience.

The Arena Principle in Exhibition Stand Design

Incorporating the Arena Principle into exhibition stand design involves positioning products or information strategically at various heights within the booth. This approach ensures that attendees, as they navigate the exhibition floor, can easily see and engage with what's on display without the need to stretch or strain. It's about creating an 'arena' effect within the stand, where products or information are showcased like performers on a stage, each with its own moment in the spotlight.

Strategic Steps for Effective Exhibition Stand Design

To effectively combine the Arena Principle with strategic exhibition stand design, it's essential to follow a set of key steps:

Step 1: Understanding the Context

Begin by understanding the context in which your exhibition stand will be placed. This step is very crucial as it sets the foundation for the entire design process. Consider factors such as the location of your stand within the exhibition hall, your target audience, competitors stands, and any

Elevating Exhibitions

The Arena Principle's Impact on Strategic Exhibition Stand Design

specific themes or events associated with the exhibition.

Step 2: Choosing the Right Structure

Selecting the right structure for your exhibition stand is vital in attracting potential attendees. Choose a design style that resonates with your brand and target audience. It should be visually appealing and effectively convey your message. Consider the size and layout, ensuring that it encourages easy navigation and engagement. Incorporate interactive elements such as product displays, touchscreens, or demonstration areas to engage attendees.

Step 3: Allocating the Right Space

The allocation of space within your exhibition stand is a critical factor in the overall design. Ensure that the space allocated is factored into the design, allowing for a smooth flow of attendees. Allocate space for specific purposes, such as product displays, meetings, and networking areas. Ensure accessibility for all attendees, including those with disabilities.

Step 4: Selecting the Right Elements

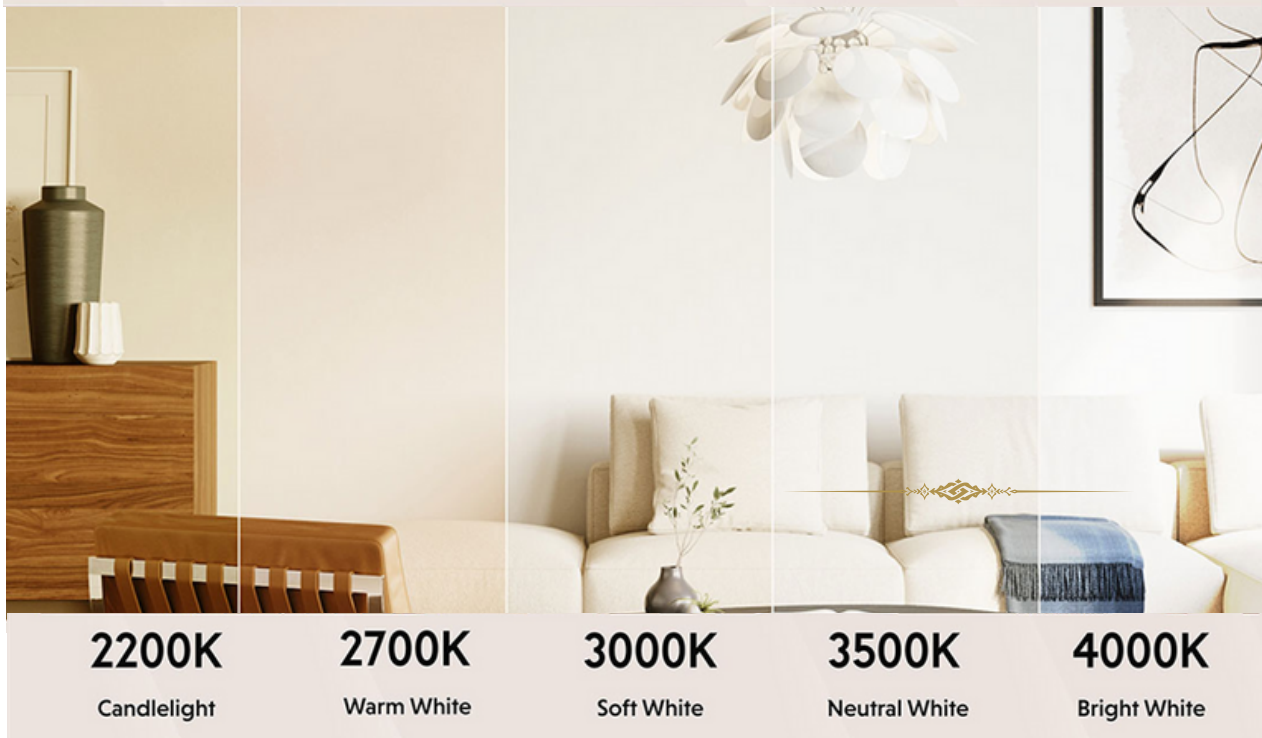
The selection of elements within your exhibition stand design is where the Arena Principle comes into play. To effectively integrate this principle:

Graphics and Signage: Use high-quality graphics and signage that convey your message clearly and concisely. Showcase certifications, eco-friendly labels, or any sustainability initiatives prominently.

Lighting: Choose energy-efficient lighting solutions that enhance the ambiance of your stand while minimizing energy consumption. Experiment with different lighting effects to create a captivating atmosphere.

In an exhibition of home textiles, carefully selecting the appropriate color temperature can greatly influence the ambiance and how the textiles are perceived. For instance, warmer color temperatures (2000K-3000K) might create a cozy, homey feel, while cooler temperatures (3100K-4500K) can enhance the visibility and detailing of the displayed textiles. The choice of color temperature should align with the desired atmosphere and functionality of the exhibition space.

Kelvin Color Temperature Comparison for Lighting



Furniture and Seating: If your stand includes a lounge or seating area, opt for furniture made from sustainable materials like bamboo or reclaimed wood. Ensure that cushions and upholstery are crafted from eco-friendly fabrics.

Product Presentation: Display products in a way that emphasizes their key features or benefits. Utilize the height variation provided by the Arena Principle to create visual interest and guide attendees' attention.

Benefits of Combining the Arena Principle with Strategic Design

By combining the Arena Principle with strategic exhibition stand design, businesses can reap several benefits:

- 1. Enhanced Visibility:** The height variation and strategic placement of displays or information make your stand more visible and captivating to attendees.
- 2. Improved Engagement:** When attendees can easily see and interact with your offerings, they are more likely to engage with your brand and products or information.
- 3. Efficient Navigation:** A well-designed exhibition stand simplifies attendee navigation, helping them find relevant information or products effortlessly.

4. Aesthetic Appeal: The combination of strategic design and the Arena Principle creates a visually appealing and memorable exhibition stand.

5. Sustainability Focus: By incorporating eco-friendly materials and sustainable practices into your stand, you demonstrate a commitment to sustainability, which resonates with environmentally conscious attendees.

Conclusion: Elevating Exhibitions through Strategic Stand Design and the Arena Principle

In an era where the attendee experience and sustainability are paramount, the integration of the Arena Principle of Visual Merchandising with strategic exhibition stand design offers a competitive edge. It allows businesses to create immersive, engaging, and sustainable displays that captivate attendees while effectively conveying their message and values. By following the strategic steps outlined and embracing the Arena Principle, businesses can transform their exhibition stands into inviting arenas that draw attendees in, making their exhibition experience both enjoyable and memorable.

Source:



Prashanth CK

Assoc. Professor, Campus Coordinator -
Department of Design Space,
NIFT Bengaluru.



Tips

for doing business with European apparel buyers

Identifying and finding the right type of buyer is only the first step in doing business. The biggest challenge is convincing potential buyers to do business with you. This requires a clear understanding of European business culture and buyer expectations. This report will help you understand what is needed to gain a competitive edge, to successfully approach a potential buyer and how you can develop a long-lasting business relationship with them.

In 2020, the fashion industry struggled as a result of the coronavirus pandemic. According to the Boston Consulting Group, it saw a one-third drop in revenue, losing a total of €525 billion. European buyers also adjusted their requirements during the pandemic. They now look for short term business based on low order quantities, fast delivery and extended payment terms. If you can offer these, there is opportunity for you to grow your business.

You can accommodate buyers while protecting your own business in several ways:

- Source from fabric suppliers that can manufacture fabric faster to improve your lead time and responsiveness.
- Source from fabric suppliers that can offer you stock service.
- Keep stock fabrics (prepaid by the buyer).
- Change your manufacturing setup to create the ability to manufacture small orders.
- Consider setting up a sample room close to your target market or use digital tools such as 3D-sampling to speed up the approval process.

Connect with buyers both personally and professionally

When doing business with European apparel buyers, connecting with them personally is just as important as talking business. Most buyers are looking for long-term business relationships because switching buyers too often results in extra costs and uncertainty. When you present yourself for the first time to a potential buyer, introduce your company and yourself first. After your introduction, talk about products and prices. Try to understand your prospective buyer's cultural and personal background and make them understand yours.

Approaching potential buyers directly works best. The most cost and time efficient way is calling the company you have identified as an interesting prospect or sending them a personal message via internet. You can do this by email or using a LinkedIn message. When a prospective buyer is interested and the situation allows it, try to arrange a meeting, for instance, at an event you are both attending. Exposure in popular European trade media helps build authority and makes it easy for prospects to find you.

More and more European brands and retailers are taking measures to filter out 'new supplier calls'. This is because many European companies get too many calls and emails from companies that want to supply them. So if you want to connect with new buyers, you need to be more creative. Look at a buyer's LinkedIn posts to research their interests and to find out if they are planning to attend any events. These can be a good opportunity to directly approach buyers in a more casual environment.

Advertise your unique selling points

If you want to turn leads into buyers, it is very important that you advertise your company's unique selling points (USPs). Good quality, competitive pricing and on-time delivery are not USPs. They are non-negotiable requirements. Unique selling points are qualities of your product or organisation that make you stand out in the crowd of suppliers, such as:

- Unique Designs;
- Special Skills and Associated Machinery;
- The ability to create Complicated Styles;
- Ultra-High Product Quality;
- A focus on Innovative Production Techniques;
- Flexibility with Low Minimum Order Quantities;
- Low Pricing (High Volume);
- Extra-Fast Delivery;
- High Service Levels;
- A Transparent Supply Chain; a good corporate Social Responsibility Strategy.

It is becoming ever more important to focus on the sustainability performance of your company. Clearly advertise the standards and certifications that you adhere to, what measures you have taken

to ensure and promote worker rights and what you are doing to minimise your environmental impact. This includes having good insight in your supply chain and being able to measure and report about impacts.

- What specific requirements, challenges and ambitions does my prospect have?
- What information can be found on my prospect's website?
- What kind of collections do I see?
- What is my prospect's main target group?
- Which certifications does my prospect require?
- What are my prospect's company values?

Read trade media, such as FashionUnited, Just-Style and The Business of Fashion to learn about trends and challenges your buyer might face. When making first contact, show that you have understood these issues by adjusting your story to your buyer's specific needs.

You are selling your company just as much as you are selling your product. A potential buyer needs to be convinced that your factory is reliable and will comply with all their legal and non-legal requirements. If your factory cannot comply, your prospect will not start business with you, even if your products and prices are exactly what he or she is looking for. It works to describe your factory on your website and on promotional material. Make sure to include professional pictures and quotes from your management team and employees.

The European Union is introducing new regulations to promote a circular economy. That is why a specific buyer requirement worth looking into is the use of circular solutions. So try to find companies in your country that are actively focusing on recycling, or circular innovations you can use.

Example of a company advertising its USPs on its corporate website

Desta Garment PLC is an Ethiopian manufacturer of different types of sportswear and fashion items for the export market. Notice on their website how the company introduces its values and organisation first (instead of its products)

Find out what your USPs are. Ask both your current buyers and your employees what they appreciate in your company. A good way to guide your thinking process is to do a SWOT analysis. Never approach potential buyers with a generic offer. Always investigate their needs and ambitions and adjust your story accordingly.

Make a nice presentation of your company and your products in PDF or Microsoft PowerPoint including professional photographs and clear descriptions of your products. Get inspiration from the following manufacturers, which do a very good job of showing their USPs: Hawthorn (low MOQ), Crystal Group (company story first, product later), Kanoria Africa (sustainable production).

Manage expectations, including your own

The key to a successful business relationship is a clear mutual understanding of expectations between buyers and suppliers. Many factories that have never done business with European buyers have unrealistic expectations of the European market. They think FOB prices and order quantities are high, but the opposite is often true. European companies usually have high standards for quality and compliance, so always investigate if a potential buyer is a good match for you. Before trying to establish a business relationship, first check their price and quality levels and compliance requirements.

Although it may be tempting to overstate your capabilities to attract a buyer's interest, this is never a good strategy. Some manufacturers still introduce themselves in emails or on LinkedIn as 'the best manufacturer' in their country, claiming they can make 'any product'. This never works. If you really were the best, the buyer would have already heard of you. It is also highly unlikely that you actually have the capacity to make any high quality apparel item at a reasonable price. So instead, promote the products that you specialise in.

Manage your buyer's long-term expectations. When dealing with new buyers, it can be smart to accept a relatively complicated first order with lower minimum order quantities than you normally would. Buyers will want to test whether your products meet their expectations before committing to large orders.

Do not offer unrealistically low prices to win over new buyers only to raise prices later on. Most European buyers are experienced traders and have a very good idea of the prices that manufacturers can offer.

Manufacturers that do not have experience exporting to Europe can sometimes be unpleasantly surprised by the large differences between the FOB prices they receive and the prices that items are eventually sold for to the

European consumers (the retail prices). An apparel item that is sold by a factory for less than \$20 may be sold to European end consumers for €100 or more.

Only use true references on your website. It is easy for buyers to investigate if you have really produced for certain brands and retailers, especially if their price range and market segment don't match your company's capabilities.

Present your products in a logical manner

When you first advertise your products to buyers, don't present every product in your collection, but advertise your skills and associated machinery. Show detailed pictures on your website or other promotional material of representative styles and include information on the materials you can work with. Show technical details regarding stitching and seaming techniques, prints and washings. Later, when your buyer has placed an order with you, he or she will use a 'tech pack' with all the technical specifications needed to make the item.

Invest in good product photography. Check, for example how Zalando does it. Apparel items should always be photographed in the same manner. Never present an expensive item in a cheap manner. Build an easily accessible archive of product photos, including salesman samples, collection samples and production samples. This way you can always provide new buyers with examples of styles you have made in the past. Don't forget to include the bill of materials (BOM) in your archive. This is the costing sheet for all the materials needed for a certain style. This way you can estimate a price fast.

Offer a substantiated price quotation

Most European buyers know very well which costs are involved in making and delivering a certain product. Show that you know, too, when you make a price quotation. This will improve your negotiating position and make it easier to negotiate a deal that is satisfactory for both you and your buyer.

Although there are no standard discounts, promotions or other incentives in the apparel industry, some buyers may request discount percentages, such as 'no claim', 'marketing costs' and 'end-of-year bonus'. Expect requests for discount percentages between 1% and 5% per discount. Do not forget that you need to include such special discounts in your costing.

Margin

There are no standard gross profit margins for garment manufacturers. This does not mean you can always calculate any gross profit margin you like. Try to keep your margin realistic. Expect anything between 12% for a big order for a value retailer, to 45% for a small order of 100 pieces for a small brand. Try to calculate at least 20% on the FOB (Free on Board) price for any order that covers your minimum order quantity (MOQ).

Aim low

Although buyer requirements regarding quality, flexibility and sustainability have become stricter in recent years, most buyers still expect a (very) low price. It is important that your price-quality ratio is right and that your price range is as competitive as possible. Try to develop a customer pricing strategy. It is okay to offer products (a little) below your regular profit margin to create interest and open doors. When you have passed the registration process, develop a strategy that will enable you to build a profitable and sustainable business relationship with your buyer.

What to include in a costing sheet

When making a price quotation, at least the following costs should be included: CM (working hours for 'cut and make'), fabrics, size breakdown, labels, buttons, badges, embroidery, printing, sewing thread, interlining, padding, hang tags, safety tags, polybag, carton box, export carton, and and wastage. Other factors that influence costing are quantity, quality, delivery date, and payment terms. Don't forget to address each of these issues in your quotation, or you might end up quoting too low and losing money.

Most buyers will ask for FOB delivery. This means that you need to produce the end product and use a nominated supplier for shipment. It is important to check the shipping costs and delivery times of these suppliers before you send the buyer your price quotation. Nominated suppliers are often more expensive than your own.

Circular supply chains

Be prepared for a new cost structure if a buyer wants a circular supply chain. This means that the buyer will collect used clothes and send them back to you. You then need to get maximum value from the returned goods, for example by selling them at a local second-hand market or by recycling them into new yarns and fabrics. The higher the value

you can get, the more attractive you will be to buyers.

Always mention that your buyer will face an upcharge in case the order quantity is below the quantity mentioned in your quotation. Never forget to include the cost of salesmen samples (SMS) in your quotation. Some (bigger) buyers may ask for 100 samples per style for free. That can mean significant costs. In case your buyer requires SMS and is not willing to compensate you for the cost of preparing and delivering them, calculate 1,5 to 2x FOB for the samples.

Sometimes buyers will specify a requested quality with only minimal information, such as '100% cotton'. In such cases, ask for details such as yarn count, weight and finishing. If your buyer can't specify their requests, then select an existing quality from your collection that is similar to the requested quality. Ensure the physical requirements that buyers ask for products are realistic. Some buyers may ask for things such as a pilling standard of 5 for a 100% Kashmir style, which is just not feasible.

Always mention that your quotation is valid for a limited-time period. This is to prevent the risk of higher costs for you when you start production because the currency exchange rate or fabric price has changed. Investigate the price level of your buyer and investigate the price level in the market for similar products.

Be prepared to make a good impression when meeting potential buyers

Studying your potential buyers, analysing your USPs and preparing nice promotional material is only half the work. The other half is making a professional impression when meeting buyers. This can be online in a personal meeting, at an online trade mission or fair or, if the situation allows it, at a physical trade fair, at a matchmaking event or during a personal visit. One of the biggest mistakes manufacturers make when meeting buyers is to first throw a large selection of samples on the table. Remember: Always try to connect on a personal level first. Then tell about your company's history, values and ambitions and don't forget to pay attention to your CSR-performance and strategy. You are trying to sell your company more than you are trying to sell your products.

Meeting online

As a result of the travel restrictions during the coronavirus pandemic, many buyers have discovered

that business can also be done online. If you meet with a new buyer for the first time online, it is extra important to prepare a professional and creative presentation. Invest in professional photography, videos, presentations and make sure you have a professional (virtual) background when talking or presenting on webcam.

Your country's image counts

Some production countries have a bad reputation in Europe because of political instability, human rights violations, corruption or travel safety. In such cases, you should try to adjust your company policy to mitigate these perceptions. Study your country's score for ease of doing business, level of corruption, safety risks and CSR risks, and try to adjust your company policy to address possible issues. When participating in an event where you can meet potential buyers, such as an online matchmaking event, a trade mission or a physical trade fair, create a list of potential buyers and inform them about your participation. Do the same for current buyers. Research the target group, prepare a nice-looking presentation, or a booth in the case of a trade fair (hire a professional designer), create a special collection using unique designs and qualities and advertise your USPs clearly.

When you participate in a trade fair and potential buyers are passing your booth, make them feel welcome. Stand up and ask how you can help them. Don't eat in your booth and don't stare at your phone. When you are talking to a potential buyer, put your phone on silent mode.

Advertise your CSR-standards in your booth, by hanging up posters showing the logos of the standards and certifications that you have. This is very common at trade fairs in Europe. When wrapping up a conversation, confirm the agreements that you have made during the conversation. Never say goodbye before you both agree on the follow-up.

Follow up on appointments that you have made with a potential buyer within 24 hours. Send promotional materials, samples or answers that they have asked for. If you don't have any materials, samples or answers yet, at least manage expectations. Thank your buyer or prospect for the chance to connect and tell them when they can expect to hear from you again.

Stay in contact with your buyer regularly

If you want to grab — and hold — the attention of

your buyer or prospect, you need to be proactive, punctual, polite and clear. This means, for example, that you must be prompt and honest in answering emails, provide clear information, be reachable to your customers, notify them of changes, delays or problems, and stay informed about their business by following their developments, asking questions and trying to understand their challenges. Try to see your buyer face to face at least once every season.

Keep buyers happy by finding out their expectations, then try to exceed them

It is not very common in the fashion industry to share evaluations between buyers and suppliers. By doing this, you can stand out of the crowd. Define a set of key performance indicators (KPIs) and measure them throughout the year. For example: 'How much time do I spend on this buyer? What is the ratio between samples and actual orders? How many rejections do I get? How many claims? What is my revenue?'

Your buyer will have KPIs for you too, although he or she may not share them with you. Buyers will measure things like: 'How many orders has this supplier delivered on-time? How many quality complaints do I have? How is the design input and the fabric sourcing? What is the price level compared to my other suppliers? How are the items selling in the shop?' By measuring your performance and asking for a yearly evaluation meeting, you can find out your buyers' implicit requirements, prevent issues and work to exceed expectations.

Ask your buyers what they precisely expect regarding product quality, rejections (acceptable quality level), price level, delivery speed, flexibility, product design, fabric sourcing, communication, service level, transparency and CSR. Avoid building and maintaining a relationship only with your buyer's sourcing manager. Try to get in contact with the management team as well. Sourcing managers tend to regularly change jobs.

When you have a good relationship with management, you don't have to start all over with the new sourcing manager. If your sourcing manager changes jobs, stay in contact. They may introduce you to a new buyer.

Focus and expand your business

Many manufacturers make the mistake of doing business with many different buyers in different niches and price segments. Having too many different buyers complicates business and will hamper your growth.

With every buyer comes a different communication process, different materials, machines, machine settings and skills and different CSR requirements. Your employees won't specialise themselves when they always work on different styles. This hampers efficiency. Focus on the buyers that can make your business grow.

Regularly analyse your buyer portfolio. A rule of thumb is that your top-three buyers should represent 80% of your total turnover. The remaining 20% can be a mix of many different buyers. At the same time, prevent your company from becoming too dependent on one buyer. Always make sure your buyer portfolio enables you to move in case of changing business or price pressure. This prevents too much dependency on one department or one contact person.

Measure the profitability for every individual buyer every season. Be ready to change your business conditions or even say goodbye to certain buyers to keep your portfolio healthy. When you are working successfully for a department within a buying company, the women's fashion department, for example, it makes sense to approach other departments in the same company, such as men's or children's fashion.

Source:



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