

DOING BUSINESS AT SHOWCASE

A Guide to Maximising the Potential of your Presence at the Show.

The purpose of this publication is to examine Showcase - how it works and how to make the most of it. We have words of wisdom from some existing exhibitors and past winners of awards. We will also let you know how to get a stand at Showcase (if you are not already exhibiting) and how to tackle the assessment process if you choose to apply for a selected area. And finally, we offer some suggestions for ensuring that you maximise the amount of business you do at Showcase.

The benefits of exhibiting at Showcase - what's in it for you...

- Increased sales / profits
- Access to over 9,000 Irish and International buyers
- Opportunity to meet buyers face to face and develop solid relationships
- Opportunity to create leads for post-show sales
- Opportunity to conduct invaluable market research – and to see what your competitors are offering
- Opportunity to raise your profile, make an impact with the media and strengthen your brand name
- And that's just for starters

If you are already exhibiting at Showcase this publication may act as a gentle reminder of the keystones of a successful show - or indeed a reassurance that you are on the right track.

If you are preparing for your first show, hoping to exhibit in the future or just curious to see what's involved it should give you a clear idea of the areas to be considered and the next steps involved.

SECTION 1: INFORMATION ON SHOWCASE

Getting a Stand...

There is a longstanding rumour that it is impossible to get a stand at Showcase, that there is no point in even making an enquiry and once on the waiting list you remain there indefinitely!

Let us tell you, this is NOT the case! We want you to exhibit at Showcase and so do the many buyers that attend Showcase each year desperately seeking new product.

The Village or Selected Area in the Main Hall

The Village is located just inside the entrance to the Main Hall of the RDS. There are approximately 70 stands in this location and they are specially promoted for their quality and design innovation. All work exhibited here is assessed by an international panel of experts and standards are very high. The Village is currently under re-development and will take a new format, and may have a new name from 2005 onwards.

The main purpose of having a selected or juried area is to attract buyers to the show - by promoting exhibitors who have been selected for the quality of their work. To be assessed for this area you need to be registered with the Crafts Council of Ireland - and keep an eye on Stopress which always highlights details on upcoming opportunities and developments.

New Faces

New Faces at Showcase are craft enterprises registered with the Crafts Council of Ireland who have been selected by an international jury and are exhibiting at Showcase for the first time.

All New Faces are located in the CCoI Village or selected area and exhibitors are promoted both before and during the fair. Since the introduction of CCoI 'New Faces' in 1997, forty-nine new craft businesses have exhibited at Showcase in this way.

For the first time at Showcase 2004, the Crafts Council offered 4 FREE New Faces stands to those eligible to apply. Subject to success and demand, these stands may be offered again in subsequent years.

The Assessments/Selection Process

In March/April of each year, details for assessments,

including assessment dates, criteria and stand availability are advertised in Stopress. To receive this publication you must be registered.

Application Forms are available from the Crafts Council offices and these should be read very carefully (they contain a lot of information!).

The main things to remember are:

- Send in your Intention to Submit form quickly.
- Choose your work wisely.
- Do not be disheartened if you do not get through first time.
- Take on board what the Assessment Panel advise.
- If you do not get through the assessment, there are other stands at the Fair.

Other Stands

If your Village and New Faces application is unsuccessful or you choose not to submit for selection, but you want to exhibit you should contact the Crafts Council of Ireland, in writing stating your interest in booking a stand in another area of the Fair. We will then add your name to the waiting lists and work towards securing your booking.

The Crafts Council of Ireland have tried, where possible, to keep the Concert Hall area for CCoI registered craftspeople. This is to ensure that craftspeople are exhibiting together where possible. New plans and developments are in place to strengthen the representation of craft at the fair.

INDEX - formerly the New Product Awards

We cannot stress enough the importance of New Product to Buyers. Research tells us time and again that Buyers will seek out stands with genuine New Product on display. Therefore it pays to ensure you have new product and that you display it prominently as such.

In order to encourage exhibitors to produce new product, Showcase Ireland Events Ltd introduced the New Product Awards at Showcase 2001, which evolved into INDEX in 2004. INDEX is open to all exhibitors and the top 100 New Products will be displayed at the front of the Main Hall. One overall New Product Award winner from the INDEX 100 will be chosen.

This is an ideal way to bring the spotlight on new product - so make sure you enter.

Group Stands

Many of the City and County Enterprise Boards and Rural Development Companies have come together to present groups of craftspeople on one large stand. Each have their own criteria for participation. Contact your local development agencies to see if they provide this service.

An award for the Best CEB / Group Stand is awarded each year by the Crafts Council of Ireland - and former winners include Donegal County Enterprise Board (2003) and Leitrim Design House (2002 and 2001).

SECTION 2: DOES SHOWCASE MEET YOUR NEEDS?

Are you ready for Showcase?

Showcase is a great opportunity to meet new buyers, increase your sales, grow your business and much, much more. However, you do need to weigh up whether:

- (a) this is the direction you want your business to take, and
- (b) is your business ready for the commitment involved in exhibiting at the show

Ask yourself some questions:

- Do you feel your craft enterprise is ready to avail of what Showcase has to offer?
- Do you want to increase your sales and can you fulfil the orders?
- Do you want to expand your business?
- Do you want to know what you need to do in order to achieve this?

If your answer is yes, read on!

Below are some of the issues you need to consider:

Market Research

- What kind of products are being exhibited at Showcase?
- What are the new products that appear from year to year?
- How are products being displayed?
- What kind of price structures do exhibitors use?
- What location in the RDS would be your ideal position?



lifes little... animals



carry my house
wherever I go,
In France they call
me L'escargot.

STERLING SILVER

lifes little... animals



For me nine lives is
not enough,
I thrive on cream and that
Sort of Stuff.

STERLING SILVER

lifes little... animals



I'm the boss if I'm
not mistaken,
Feed me well and I'll
bring home the bacon.

STERLING SILVER

- Do you know what retail outlets you want to sell into?
- Is there other information you could get by talking to exhibitors at the show before you take a stand?

Current Sales

- Are you currently selling product?
- Is your business sufficiently developed?
- Have you been building a customer base through your current sales? Do you, for example, hand out a business card with your product?

Product range / Production capacity

- Do you have a suitable product range?
- Are you able to reproduce your work over and over without any problems?
- Do you know your limits in terms of production capacity?
- Are you prepared to turn down orders or close your order books once you have reached capacity?

Stand

- Have you thought about what kind of stand you will need to display your products?
- Have you researched the cost of designing and building the stand?
- Is your stand flexible enough to use at other shows and adaptable in size?

Marketing

- Have you thought about your needs in terms of promotional literature?
- You will need materials such as postcards with images of your work, a brochure or catalogue, business cards and possibly swing tags. Have you researched the cost of the design and print of these? Do you need to include the cost of professional product photography?
- Do you have a list of current and potential new customers to invite to your stand?
- Are you going to enter New Faces or Index (formerly the New Product Awards?)

Pricing / Order Forms

- Have you thought about your terms of payment?
- Have you thought about export clients? How will you handle shipping? Do you accept payment in foreign currencies? Will you have price lists in currencies other than euro?
- Do you have suitable order forms? Do you need to get them printed or can you do them yourself?

Staff

- How many people will it take to man your stand?
- Can you manage on your own or will you need extra help?
- Do you need help to set up the stand?
- Do you have someone to cover for you during lunch?
- How will you manage if a number of buyers arrive on your stand at the same time?

Costs to be considered

- Stand space
- Stand design & build
- Promotional materials – design & print, advertising
- Transport of stand and products
- Accommodation & parking
- Food & drink

Expectations

- Are you realistic about what you can achieve in year one?
- If you've been to Showcase before have you learnt from your experience?
- Have you the commitment to make your expectations become reality?

If you've got your head around all the above... you're ready for Showcase! If not - don't worry, like any other element of developing your business all you need is a little knowledge and time.

The main thing is to allow yourself the time to prepare well in advance and to be realistic in your expectations.



SECTION 3: WHERE TO GO FOR HELP

Look out for help - there is plenty available if you know where to look.

For business advice and support go to:

- The Business Development Department of the Crafts Council of Ireland,
- The Crafts Council of Ireland web site (www.ccoi.ie)
- The Crafts Council of Ireland stand at Showcase - inside the main entrance
- Various Crafts Council of Ireland publications such as Making an Exhibition for Yourself, the Business Information Guide and the Opportunities pages of Stopress for announcements of various seminars and workshops relevant to shows and events
- Your local County Enterprise Board, LEADER company or Partnership company for training opportunities, business support and grant aid (see a full list in the CCoI Business Information Guide)
- Other exhibitors - their experience and advice can be invaluable!

And remember - use every opportunity for self promotion! Pre and post show PR and publicity are invaluable for raising your profile and maximising your impact.

SECTION 4: EXHIBITORS TIPS

Below is a selection of comments, advice and recommendations from a variety of CCoI registered craftspeople who have attended Showcase in the past. Their honest and first-hand experiences offer an invaluable insight in doing business at Showcase:

Quotes from Showcase 2003 Award Winners:

Mary Barry:

Winner of Fashion and Accessories Award for 2003:

"I think that the New Product Awards at Showcase are a wonderful idea. It was extremely gratifying to win the Fashion & Accessories Award for 2003.

I have been in business for several years and have made efforts to keep my products up to date, modern and eye catching. Winning this award proved that it was well worth the effort.

Because of the promotion of the winning products at Showcase 2003, it drew the attention of buyers to my stand and brought about a substantial increase in orders".

Len Lipitch & Sabine Lenz, Enibas:

Winner of Best New Volume Product & Best Overall New Product Award for 2003:

"We were delighted to get the award. It meant a great deal to the business. The publicity was very far reaching and the orders from Showcase itself were given a great boost by the entire PR at the show.

We have used the beautiful trophies as a publicity display as well as the press images of the award presentation and all this has helped to improve the profile of "Life's Little Animals" as well as adding a great deal of prestige to our existing business."

John McCombe, Turnip House Knitwear:

Winner of Celtic Showcase New Product Award for 2003:

"We were amazed and delighted when we won the New Product Award! We have been in business since 1987 and had been working hard to create new product to reinvigorate and rejuvenate ourselves.

We felt that in 2002 both personally and commercially we were at a bit of a low, so to achieve recognition in this way was a great personal boost and a commercial one too! We found our profile much increased at Showcase - many people came to our stand specially to see us because of the award, this led to a very busy time for us and more orders.

We found that existing customers were ordering the winning product and increasing on their order of our 'old' products. We had new customers who had only heard of us through the award publicity asking "is this your first time here?" (We've had a stand at Showcase since 1988!)

We also have orders from a new sector to us - interiors - opening up new avenues. To summarize the award has been of huge personal, strategic and financial benefit and will positively influence our business for some years to come".

SECTION 5: CONTACT DETAILS

Showcase - who owns it...

In a nutshell, Showcase is owned by Showcase Ireland Events Ltd. - which is a company owned by the Crafts Council of Ireland and Expo Events Ltd. Showcase was initially set up by the Crafts Council of Ireland in 1975, in order to meet the needs of Irish craftspeople and buyers alike.

Over the years it has grown to become Ireland's largest International Craft, Gift, Fashion & Interiors Fair with over 9,000 trade buyers and 650 exhibitors.

Who Does What....

Organising, managing and promoting showcase is a combined effort:

- Showcase Ireland Events Limited are the event organisers
- Crafts Council of Ireland represent the interests of all craftspeople at the show
- Enterprise Ireland market the show to international buyers from all over the world

Catherine Jordan:

Showcase Co-ordinator for the Crafts Council of Ireland

Phone/Fax: 01 294 2574 / 087 221 5287

E-mail: showcase@indigo.ie

- CCol Stand, meetings & events at Showcase
- All CCol Visitors badges, pre-reg. badges, CCol invitations and badges
- Best Enterprise Board Stand & Product Display Award
- Student & College Visits to Showcase
- Showcase Party for all CCol exhibitors

CCol Communications Team:

Nicola Whelan - nicola@ccoi.ie

Caroline O'Riordan - caroline@ccoi.ie

Mary O'Shea - maryo@ccoi.ie

Emma Briscoe - emma@ccoi.ie

Breda Kennedy - breda@ccoi.ie

Phone: 056 7761804

- Crafts Council of Ireland Stand requirements
- All CCol Showcase requirements
- All CCol PR and information requirements
- Manning the Information Desk and Media Resource on the CCol stand
- Handling all CCol enquiries, information requests etc.
- Demonstrating services such as Image Bank and the CCol web site

CCol Business Development Team:

Emer Ferran - emer@ccoi.ie

Mary Whelan - maryw@ccoi.ie

Phone: 056 7761804

- Liaison with CCol registered craftspeople
- CEB group stand awards
- Enquiries from CCol Registered craftspeople booking a stand at Showcase

CCol Product & Market Development Team:

Cornelia McCarthy - cornelia@ccoi.ie

Helen Lynch - helen@ccoi.ie

Phone: 042 9320269

- Liaison with buyers, agents and associations
- Liaison with Enterprise Ireland representatives

CCol Finance Team:

Mary Blanchfield - mary@ccoi.ie

Julie Jackman - julie@ccoi.ie

- Organising CCol Stand subsidies

Showcase Ireland Events Team:

Bernadette Fagan, Showcase Administrator

Phone: 01 295 8185 or 086 285 6208

E-mail: Bernadette.Fagan@expo-events.com

- Liaison between Showcase Ireland and the CCol
- All stand bookings at Showcase
- All catalogue / directory entries
- All stand signage including fascia boards
- Liaison between all service contractors and exhibitors
- All meeting room bookings at Showcase

Pauline Kennedy:

Phone: 01 295 8185

- All buyers invitations
- All pre-reg. badges
- Liaison between buyers and Showcase Ireland
- Liaison between Showcase Ireland & all Enterprise Ireland offices
- Showcase catalogue circulation
- Showcase Security

Anne Andrews:

Phone: 01 295 8185

- All Showcase Account Enquiries