

Exhibitors' Satisfaction at Dubai World Trade Centre

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Abstract:

Dubai World Trade Centre is multi business organization that established in 1979 with 3000 employees. It is a place where multi business organization gathered once a year for one week to promote and sell their service or products. The people who run the exhibition come close to 3000 employees. DWTC deals with properties and businesses some of which include Dubai International Convention and Exhibition Centre, the Convention Tower office building, on-site accommodation at the Novotel and Ibis hotels, and service accommodation at the Dubai International Hotel Apartments which include three apartment buildings. The vision of Dubai World Trade Centre is to make Dubai the world's leading destination for all major exhibitions, conferences and events. DWTC has evolved from being the forerunner of the fast-growing exhibitions industry, into a multi-dimensional business catalyst, focusing on venues, events and real estate management. The main objective of this study is to focus on exhibitors' satisfaction at Dubai World Trade Centre. The paper covers the following questions: who the exhibitors are? Why they choose Dubai to exhibit their services/products? Does Dubai authority furnish and provide space, infrastructure, hospitality and amusements for the exhibitors? What kind of benefits (money, publicity or both) they gain from exhibiting in Dubai? Do they respect the culture of Dubai in terms of the things they exhibit and the behaviour of their team? Did they face any problem with shop lifting or the law? Did they have any problem with entering or exiting Dubai? Did they receive the help needed from the front-end exhibition desk? Would they come back next year to participate in such activity? The project is divided into the research's hypothesis, literature review about the exhibition, organization's profile, the research methodology plus data collecting & analysis and finally recommendations. Microsoft Excel will be the tool in analyzing the data.

Key Words: *Exhibition, Satisfaction, World Trade Center, Convention, Accommodation.*

I. INTRODUCTION

The core business of Dubai World Trade Centre is holding exhibitions and the main reason to establish Dubai World Trade Centre is to give good image about Dubai, and attract foreign investments. To achieve that, a process is needed to evaluate every step that takes place to improve the quality of the services provided. We are talking about millions of dollars this investment would bring to the Emirate of Dubai.

By analysing this process, Dubai World Trade Centre will be able to improve their services as well as they will attract more exhibitors to hold their business in Dubai World Trade Centre for the following year.

II. OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the study are:

- * Finding out the major weaknesses facing the exhibitions' processes.
- * Exploring the opportunities to develop continuous processes
- * Discovering the level of exhibitors' satisfaction.
- * Measuring the efficiency and the effectiveness of such investment in Dubai.

Study Problem

The vision of Dubai World Trade Centre is "making Dubai the world's leading destination for all major exhibitions, conferences and events". DWTC has evolved from being the forerunner of the fast-growing exhibitions industry, into a multi-dimensional business catalyst, focusing on Venues, Events and Real Estate Management.

As it been mentioned before DWTC has several businesses to control and develop starting from venue, event management, hospitality to real estate. DWTC is service organization which has different operations than other exhibitions' organizations as their priority is making Dubai the first place to hold any exhibition in the world rather than being profitable.

Hypothesis

Ho: The exhibitors are not satisfied with the Dubai World Trade Center.

III. HISTORY OF EXHIBITIONS

The definition of an exhibition is a “public display of items in a chosen place” (WEC Exhibitions - History of Exhibitions 2005).

Exhibitions have been around for a very long time, dating back as far as the ancient civilizations of Egypt, the Phoenicians, the Greeks, the Chinese and the Romans, where tradesmen would travel to see and meet local makers of cloth, dye and silverware in market squares and bazaars.

It also had been mentioned that after extensive archaeological excavations on the east Mediterranean coast, the first exhibition center, dating back 2,500 years was believed to be located in the United Arab Emirates.

Over time, as trade expanded from the east Mediterranean across to the west and into the north of Europe, new markets evolved and new distribution routes were essential to meet the growing requests for new and interesting products and services. A century ago this led to the industrial revolution and changed the way business was conducted. Tradesmen no longer offered one product for sale; they offered a range of products and started selling large quantities to traders in local communities.

In the mid to late 1800's exhibitions had extended to consumers and were considered social outings with many exhibitions focusing on one theme. In Victorian England in 1851 the 'Great Exhibition' was held at the Crystal Palace in Hyde Park, London, and became the world's first international exhibition. The exhibition showcased the 'Works of Industry of All Nations'.

Today, exhibitions are still one of the most lively and effective sales and marketing tools in existence. They offer a unique mixture of information, communication and entertainment and are the only medium that allows the use of all five senses in an atmosphere of face-to-face contact. (Exhibitions - History of Exhibitions 2005).

Benefits of Exhibitions

The objective of holding exhibitions is that they are highly cost-effective business tool. They are wealth generators in their own right. In new and emerging markets, they are a major stimulus for industrial and commercial development. They help technology transfer, boost regional and national industry and stimulate foreign investment in industry and infrastructure. Exhibitions have a major impact on local hotels, restaurants and transportation. Moreover, they create jobs and raise the Emirate profile. Exhibitions have advantages, which other forms of marketing and promotions cannot offer. They provide the opportunity for large numbers of buyers and sellers in an industry to come into direct contact with each other in one place at the same time. Products of interest to the buyers can be viewed at the time that discussion is taking place, allowing the opportunity to handle, examine and compare with other products. (Zee interactive learning System in 2008)

Exhibitions are the most effective mediums for establishing and maintaining customer relations. In an increasingly digital age, they are the only media where buyer, seller and product physically come together. They provide a highly flexible environment in which a wide range of sales and marketing objectives can be achieved, from generating sales leads and launching new products, to building brand image, maintaining customer relations and appointing new agents. Whilst an advert, direct mailing or web page may say a product is the fastest, quietest, smallest or most advanced on the market, at an exhibition, buyers can see, taste, touch and try the product. Nothing beats the impact of a live demonstration. The people can reach a large proportion of the market in a short space of time. Whether the exhibitors are looking to raise his/her company profile, change market perceptions or generate sales leads, he/she can achieve more in four days at an exhibition than he/she might otherwise achieve in months. (Ed Reed 2005).

Type of Exhibitions

Trade and industrial fairs; travelling exhibitions for a group or one company; hotel, universities and school exhibitions; and the most common are the consumer and public exhibitions. Consumer shows are intended mainly to attract the public. They are staged in many ways and fall into several categories:

- Public exhibitions
- Garden festivals
- Agricultural and flower shows
- Department store exhibitions and promotions
- Shopping arcade or leisure complex events
- Local events such as carnivals and fetes

What exhibitors really want?

Exhibitors want to create experiences and develop face-to-face brand preference. Companies need new ways to showcase themselves, produce experiences, and create customer preference through trade shows. Exhibitors want an environment that's more conducive to what they're trying to do and deliver. To improve traffic flow, training sessions have to be given to individual exhibitors to get more visitors. Creating main streets to allow more people to move to other parts of the exhibition hall and adding pavilions to cluster booths into common interest areas. Exhibitors also want from the exhibit organizers to reduce the cost of using their booth.

Importance of the Study

This research has a high degree of importance as it will reveal the relationship between the cultural factors and employee's performance, and it will solve the problems associated with this study if a significant influence is evident.

IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Population of the Study:

The population of the study is the exhibitors of DWTC 2016 located in the Emirate of Dubai. The total number of booths were 76 from different nationalities. Each booth presents different merchandise or service.

Sample of the Study:

The sample of this study included (38) exhibitors chosen randomly among all 76 exhibitors at Dubai World Trade Center. With the help of the Front-end Exhibition Desk at DWTC, the distributed questionnaires were returned after four days. The returned filled questionnaires from exhibitors were 38 out of 76 and the valid ones that were good for analysis were 33.

Sources of Information:

The information gathered in this paper is categorized mainly as secondary sources and primary ones. The secondary information was gathered from journals, Exhibition Magazines, books, and search engines.

Primary sources were gathered from distributing a questionnaire that was designed and articulated by a group of specialists in the field of culture to answer the paragraphs of the questionnaire.

Validity of Tools Measurements:

In the context of this subject Cronbach's Alpha is used as an index of reliability. Cronbach's alpha determines the internal consistency or average correlation of items in the questionnaire to gauge its reliability, as it is considered very important to know whether the same set of items would elicit the same responses if the same questions are recast and re-administered to the same respondents. Measures derived from questionnaire are declared to be reliable only when they provide stable and reliable responses over a repeated administration of the questionnaire (Cronbach's Alpha factor should be > 70% to get valid and reliable results).

According to DWTC database, Dubai had 50 conferences, 70 events and 67 exhibitions in 2016. This research had been done in April 2016 and in that month 14 exhibitions had taken place. The questionnaire included 24 statements that cover all aspects of the exhibition.

Likert Scale had been used to analyze answers. Scale include the following ranks:

- 1= Strongly Disagree
- 2=Disagree
- 3= Neutral
- 4=Agree
- 5=strongly agree

Scope & Limitations

The scope of this study was Dubai World Trade Center which is local firms that deals with outsider customers (outside UAE) more than insiders in order to spread Dubai name.

In addition, I have problem during the exhibition as most of the exhibitors were busy and not able to fill in the questionnaire which makes me wait until the last day of each exhibition in order to have the chance with the exhibitor. Another problem was that exhibitors were not responsible about communication with DWTC, so they had not been able to provide accurate feedback.

Data Analysis

The data had been analysis by using Microsoft excel software depending on the mean to evaluate the process effectiveness.

As the survey was in random basis there are different level of people been asked the below graphs will show the background of the people how have done the survey:

- Most of the exhibitors were non-local which made the percentage of expatriates bigger than local.
- The exhibitors have from 1 year experience to above 10 years which made the survey have different views.
- The exhibitors are from different ages which will impact the survey by the knowledge they have and how they look to the process.
- As the time were limited and the sample were randomly chosen the percentage of gender weren't equal but it have little different.
- The exhibitors were from different education background, which we impact the questionnaire fairly.

The result of survey 33 exhibitors was as the following:

Num	ID	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10	Q11	Q12	Q13	Q14	Q15	Q16	Q17	Q18	Q19	Q20	Q21	Q22	Q23	Q24
1	A1	4	4	5	5	2	4	5	5	2	5	3	4	2	2	3	4	5	1	4	1	5	4	4	2
2	A2	5	4	4	5	2	4	4	4	1	4	3	2	3	2	4	3	5	3	3	5	5	3	3	3
3	A3	4	3	4	4	4	3	4	4	2	5	3	2	1	2	3	4	4	3	2	2	2	4	4	5
4	A4	5	5	5	4	1	3	5	3	2	5	4	4	3	4	5	4		2	2	3	2	4	4	4
5	A5	5	4	4	3	4	5	4	3	2	5	1	4	3	1	4	4	4	3	4	2	4	3	3	3
6	A6	5	5	1	3	1	4	3	5	5	3	2	5	2	2	4	5	1	3	1	4	3	5	5	4
7	A7	4	4	5	5	2	4	5	4	4	5	2	1	3	1	5	4	5	5	2	4	5	4	4	4
8	A8	4	5	4	4	1	5	4	4	2	4	4	4	1	2	4	5	1	4	1	2	4	4	5	5
9	A9	4	3	2	4	2	4	3	5	3	5	4	2	2	2	3	4	4	4	2	4	3	5	4	4
10	A10	5	3	4	5	2	3	4	4	3	3	3	4	4	2	5	4	2	5	2	3	4	4	3	5
11	A11	5	4	2	4	2	5	4	3	5	4	2	3	3	5	5	4	5	4	2	1	4	3	3	4
12	A12	4	3	3	3	5	5	5	5	4	3	1	4	2	4	3	4	3	3	5	2	5	5	3	4
13	A13	3	5	3	5	4	3	4	4	4	4	4	2	4	2	5	5	4	5	4	3	4	4	4	2
14	A14	4	4	4	4	2	5	5	3	5	4	2	3	3	4	4	4	2	4	2	2	5	3	4	2
15	A15	4	2	3	3	4	4	4	5	4	3	3	4	4	5	2	2	3	3	4	4	4	5	5	5
16	A16	5	3	2	5	2	5	4	4	3	2	2	2	2	4	2	3	4	4	5	2	5	2	3	4
17	A17	4	2	4	4	2	3	4	5	5	2	1	5	2	5	2	5	2	5	4	2	4	2	3	2
18	A18	5	3	5	5	2	4	4	3	4	3	3	4	4	4	2	4	4	5	5	1	5	2	4	4
19	A19	4	2	2	3	2	1	4	4	4	2	2	4	1	4	1	3	4	4	4	2	3	2	3	4
20	A20	4	3	4	4	1	2	2	3	4	2	1	4	3	4	2	5	2	5	4	1	4	3	3	5
21	A21	4	5	2	5	4	2	5	2	5	2	2	4	2	4	4	4	2	3	4	2	5	4	4	4
22	A22	4	5	4	5	3	2	4	2	3	2	3	2	1	4	2	4	4	4	5	1	4	3	3	4
23	A23	4	4	2	3	2	5	5	2	5	3	2	5	2	2	5	5	2	3	4	2	4	2	5	3
24	A24	2	3	4	5	4	4	4	2	4	4	4	4	1	4	2	4	2	5	4	2	5	2	4	5
25	A25	5	4	2	4	2	2	1	1	2	4	2	4	2	1	4	1	5	5	4	2	4	5	4	4
26	A26	4	4	4	5	1	4	2	4	4	5	2	3	4	2	4	2	4	3	5	4	3	4	5	3
27	A27	5	3	5	3	4	5	4	3	5	4	2	5	1	2	5	2	4	5	4	2	5	4	5	5
28	A28	4	5	4	2	2	4	2	5	4	3	1	5	2	2	4	2	4	4	3	2	5	4	4	4
29	A29	3	4	4	4	2	5	4	4	4	5	2	4	4	3	3	5	5	2	5	4	3	4	3	5
30	A30	4	5	4	3	2	4	2	5	4	4	2	5	2	4	5	4	4	2	4	2	5	5	4	3
31	A31	5	3	4	3	4	3	4	3	4	3	4	4	4	2	4	2	5	2	3	1	4	4	3	2
32	A32	4	4	5	2	2	2	5	4	5	4	2	4	2	3	3	4	4	2	4	2	2	2	3	3
33	A33	4	5	4	3	2	5	5	5	4	5	1	4	3	4	4	5	4	2	5	4	2	3	4	4
	Mean	4	4	4	4	2	4	4	4	4	4	2	4	2	3	4	4	4	4	4	2	4	4	4	4

V. CONCLUSION

This paper, after statistical analysis, came to a conclusion that exhibitors were satisfied with DWTC to a certain extent. There were some services offered by the exhibit organizers short of being called excellent. There were problems with the parking services as well as with the reception area.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

This paper recommends the following:

Most of the exhibitors were not satisfied with the parking services. At the same time of exhibition show, there were two other shows in the same area “the Bride show and Photo show” therefore there weren’t any parking areas for the exhibitors and the public. For exhibitors to park their cars they have to walk a long way to reach their booths. We recommend DWTC to solve the problem of parking and put it in their agenda for the future.

Exhibitors were not satisfied with the road signs leading to the DWTC. Some of them spent some time and lost their way trying to reach the Exhibit. Clear signs in visible areas are recommended.

Exhibitors were not satisfied with the reception people. It had been observed that the reception area was crowded, which reflect either the reception staff were not able to handle the visitors and the exhibitors, or registration to enter the halls were complicated and long with it came the waiting time. We recommend staff training to be able to handle the pressure or to make the online registration more effective to make the process easier.

VII. FUTURE RESEARCH

Dubai World Trade Center has many different kinds of exhibitions spreading all year long and I was able to cover only one kind (merchandize/service) exhibition. I suggest other researchers would cover other exhibitions with a different time frame in Dubai to check the reliability and validity of this research.

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