



Exhibitions & Roadshows

What are ... Exhibitions & Roadshows?

These are events (along with open days) that provide an opportunity for members of the public to see information such as plans, maps, photographs, audio/visual displays as well as ask questions of people who are knowledgeable of the particular subject.

They are a method of taking services out to the community and are used to obtain information on initiatives and to meet staff or as a means of launching something new, seeking opinions on new forms of delivery, or eliciting feedback.

Why use this technique?

They allow your audience to attend and obtain information without having to commit to anything – people are able to come and go as they please. They also enable staff and users to meet and discuss issues. It also demonstrates your willingness to go out to your community.

When should you use it?

This technique should be used when:

- Looking to involve a particular community or group
- Seeking to break down barriers
- Introducing a new idea that is best presented visually
- Providing the public with an opportunity to meet “the staff”
- Obtaining views

What type of information does it produce?

This can be both qualitative and quantitative. Although care has to be taken about how the qualitative feedback is collected, much of it can end up being purely anecdotal unless a method is set up to collect it such as a comments form. Quantitative data can be collected but to be valid it has to be proven to be representative, otherwise this data has to be treated with care. Often attendance figures are all that are collected.

What are the advantages?

- It provides ad hoc instant feedback
- It generates comments and suggestions
- It can break down barriers
- It is an opportunity to market a service
- It takes the issue into a particular community/area

What are the disadvantages?

- Attendees may not be representative
- They may result in no statistical information of any note
- They may be viewed as a marketing whitewash (not seen as proper consultation as you are telling rather than listening).
- They may involve a prescriptive agenda dictated by the presentation content

What are the costs?

- The overall costs will depend on the complexity and size of the roadshow.
- You will have to fund the design, preparation and production of the presentation
- You may need to hire a venue and account for staff time. The use of Council venues would minimise costs.

What are the practicalities?

- Be clear about what it is hoped will be achieved from the roadshow
- Choose a suitable venue(s) e.g. shopping centres, leisure facilities
- Ensure staff are clear about their roles
- Give thought to how peoples' views and opinions will be collected and analysed
- Provide training for staff (if required)
- Plan all aspects of the process thoroughly and in good time
- Advertise dates, times and locations as widely as possible in order to reach the maximum number of people.
- Publicity for road shows should be timely, planned carefully (See the [How to carry out a consultation step by step guide](#) for more information).