

GULFOOD PREVIEW: Stand out from the crowd



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Gulfood 2009 was a big hit with visitors and

exhibitors alike.

As anyone who is anything to do with the region's F&B scene must be aware by now, Gulfood 2010 is fast approaching — promising to be bigger and better than ever.

The arguments for exhibitors to appear at Gulfood are numerous and convincing: it is the Middle East's biggest F&B trade show, attracting industry players and purchasers from around the region and offering a prime opportunity for suppliers and service providers to showcase their product lines to a discerning audience.

But once an exhibitor has taken stand space at this giant of a show, how can they ensure their products stand out in the vast crowd?

Here, some of the top companies exhibiting at this year's show share their secrets for trade-show success...

Do your homework

As Friedrich Ingredients founder Reinhard Friedrich points out, a little effort in the run up to an event can go a long way.

"We visit our customers from the region many times per year, making sure that we are not forgotten when Gulfood comes round. On top of that, we prepare email newsletters to our customers telling them we'll be there, and offer pre-show registration and information on our website," he explains.

At A Ronai, managing director Gavin Dodd explains that the firm will focus on advertising in trade titles for the Middle East, to ensure old and new

customers alike are aware that the company is once again exhibiting at the show.

“We will also once again be running six cookery demonstrations a day with celebrity TV chef Brian Turner,” Dodd reveals.

Tea Tang (Pvt) Ltd manager for the value added division Suresh Rajendram agrees pre-event advertising is key to show success.

“Increase public awareness by proper advertising of the products and company prior to trade fair, and you will be achieving great advanced PR with the customers,” he appoints out.

Render Image will be sending out “a strong newsletter campaign to all our prospective clients worldwide”, according to software development manager Luca Salomoni.

“Then during the fair, we ask all our partners, the manufactures, to show our logo and our pamphlets inside their booth,” he adds.

Location, location, location

Another key element of drawing visitors to a stand is where your stand is located; a strong physical presence is undoubtedly important, as Commodities International Inc. managing director for Atlanta Tony Burnes agrees.

“We will be in the USA pavilion, which is a very good location and we will have a clearly marked booth with our company name and photo’s of our products,” he says.

Similarly, Charbonneaux-Brabant area manager for the MENA region Bertrand Langue comments: “To improve our presence we decided to be part of the Sopexa Pavillon, which features a lot of French companies. For people who want to visit

our stand, they just have to look for Sopexa is and they will easily find us!”

Meanwhile Meat and Livestock Australia (MLA) regional manager for the MENA region Lachlan Bowtell also sees the advantage of appearing on a country’s stand.

“The presence of over 320 Australian companies under the banner and signage of Australian meat will ensure we have a big impact at the show,” he asserts.

First-time exhibitor Chocolat Frey is getting a boost by participating as part of the Swiss Pavillion, which the company’s key account manager for export Michael Schwarz points out is “very well known”. And will give Chocolate Frey a strong start-point for its first Gulfood experience.

Meanwhile, Bakemart will have “an impressive and attractive stand situated in a prime location”, according to managing director T K Khaleel.

“We have taken great care to ensure visibility and accessibility,” he notes.

“We propose to have a great display of our products and to provide samples for our visitors and guests. Our team of professionals will be available though out the exhibition to attend to all visitors and guests who shall visit our stand.”

Al Ghurair Foods is also trying to make a big impact, explains PR and communications manager Sameera Fernandes.

“Our 144 square-metre stand showcases an extensive range of highly nutritious and healthy products under our flagship brand Jenan and also a few other private labels,” she notes.

Spiroflow Ltd, part of the British Pavilion, we will have a large 4m exhibit on its stand, to grab attention of passers-by, while saffron supplier Safinter will make the most of its prominent stand in the Spanish Pavilion via “attractive displays, well-trained hostesses and all senior decision-makers present to meet and greet visitors”, explains sales and marketing manager Surinder Mendirata.

Mahesh Agri Exim Pvt Ltd is taking a solo approach to its location, as executive director Mahesh Thakker explains: “We have booked an independent stall at the exhibition site and will add appropriate publicity of our products by way of eye-catching display and visual advertisements.”

Stall them

Of course, a time-honoured trade show trick is to draw the passers-by in with a truly jaw-dropping stand, or at least a display taking place on your stand. MKN PR manager Anja Halbauer notes that it is important to have a stand that fits well with your brand.

“Based on our general philosophy, the MKN exhibition stand will be very valuable,” she says.

“MKN produces professional high class cooking technology and will therefore support its corporate identity with a premium stand.”

Rafi International will feature a multi-floor stand laden with new products, says commercial manager Varqa Kanani.

Some are going even further to ensure a doubly-strong impact.

“Rational International will exhibit this year with two stands,” explains director — market communication Carina Rister. “This show is the ideal platform to bring the unique benefit message of our SelfCooking Center to thousands of interested guests.”

At the Convothem stand, things will quickly heat up, according to area sales manager — Middle East Gerhard Eichhorn.

“Apart from a very appealing stand design, Convothem is doing live cooking demonstrations during the show. Visitors are being attracted and convinced by what Convothem combi-steamers can do,” he explains.

Meanwhile Dudson export sales manager Sharon Black says space and simplicity is the key: “Dudson will stand out from the crowd with its open-plan stand creating an interactive and functional space where customers can see all the Dudson products clearly laid out, first hand.”

Agus commercial assistant Pawel Korniluk agrees: “We would like to build interesting, eye attractive but simple stand.

“The most important factor is very good lighting the whole stand. The whole design should be connected with our target product line: milk powders ingredients.

Other are making the most of live tasting sessions to woo the crowds.

Magic Seasoning Blends vice president — sales John McBride reveals: “At the Magic Seasoning Blends stand, food will be prepared and served continuously. That, along with handouts of sample sachets of the best selling products, should insure a stand that will prove to be popular among attendees!”

Willemse & van Engelen Bakkerijmachines will be demonstrating its spray-machinery at the company booth, while Follett Corporation’s stand will show a live demonstration of its sanitary ice-moving technology.

Baqer Mohebi Est head — HORECA division S Padmanabhan reveals that this year, the company will have an international team of demonstrators on the stand along with a live theatre, “fully equipped to showcase a range of innovative bakery, confectionery and chocolate products with a warm smile”. Then there are suppliers who go for a totally unique approach: Beech Ovens will be screening a video of its company history at the stand, including never-before-seen footage of the evolution of the Beech Oven design, explains sales and marketing co-ordinator Helen Kenniff.

Meanwhile Nonions international business development, marketing and sales manager Ashwin Ruchani reveals: “We have a unique style of stand presentation, which is a real crowd-puller: an onion-shaped stand displaying our wide range of “Nonions” packs!”

And Emirates Snack Foods will once again work with its novel concept successfully introduced a couple of years ago, the ‘Cafe Culinaire’, presenting its products in a real gourmet restaurant and bar, next door to the Salon Culinaire.

“At our ‘Cafe Culinaire’ we will serve breakfast, lunch and hot and cold beverages and we invite our clients to savour our F&B offerings, prepared fresh on our stand by our company’s chefs,” says managing director Ron Pilnik.

Put your best product forward

Other firms still are relying on their products to do the talking.

Oleificio Coppini Angelo Srl export department’s Chiara Del Grosso notes: “Each time we take part to a trade fair we ask ourselves how we will be able to stand out.

“We try to have peculiar products others do not have, such as the single packets of extra virgin olive oil, but we know that, in the end, what really matters is the quality we offer.”

D&S Exports will feature “state-of-the-art products” on its display, including ventless and hoodless fryers.

Schaerer (Middle East) will be launching its new Coffee Vito machines, showcasing its = new design for a 100-cup-per-hour range.

“Our stand will also have Latte Art and competition standard demonstrations by Kurt Bauer (Swiss Barista champion for 2005) with new coffee,” adds general manager Kevin Hibbett.

Meanwhile Alfocan is relying on its unusual product line to make the brand stand out to visitors.

“Offering such a specific, gourmet-style product as 100 % natural, wild-caught freshwater crayfish will definitely represent an eye-catching novelty at this year’s edition,” says the firm’s sales and marketing specialist Klaus Baumann.

Similarly, The Anglesey Sea Salt Co director Alison Lea-Wilson comments: “As far as we know, we are the only gourmet finishing salt makers to exhibit at the show.”

And Laxmi’s Delights founder and chief executive Laxmi Hiremath agrees:

“There are no other flaxseed spreads on the market — ours are the only kind. This is an original concept, so I am confident that our product will stand out.”

Al Alwani & Memoni Dates Processing Factory general manager Mustafa Iqbal says the company will push its dates and date products with careful on-stand presentation, emphasising the products’ nutritional value.

China Mist Brands will have a sampling of its whole range of iced teas at its stand, while Pere Ocean will introduce its Fruitty Vitaminised Drink, and Aalst Chocolate will go all out with a chocolate fountain demonstration live at the stall, offering product sampling for exhibition visitors.

Meanwhile the Lamb Weston will also be offering tasty samples of new treats.

“To coincide with our Sweet Potato Fries launch, we will be giving away a Sweet Potato iPod each day of the show!” reveals management assistant — export Jacomien Korstanje.

Of course, as United Juice Companies chief operating officer and partner Marc Craen notes, it can be a challenge for “smaller companies trying to match marketing budgets with the multi-nationals”.

But he adds: “We will have company founders on the stand who live and breathe the product — and of course we will have plenty of samples of the juice for everyone to taste!”