BUSINESS PLAN · INDIA

Exhibition & Trade-Show Organiser

Owning and growing a sector trade show as compounding intellectual property

EVENTS

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1. Executive Summary

This plan sets out an **Exhibition & Trade-Show Organiser** in India — a business that **creates and owns a trade show as intellectual property**, sells exhibition space to exhibitors, monetises sponsorship, conference delegates & visitor services, and grows the show's equity edition after edition. It is a two-sided marketplace: it sells *qualified visitors* to exhibitors, and it sells *access to exhibitors* to visitors.

India's manufacturing, engineering, food, textile, healthcare, construction & consumer sectors all run on trade shows — for buyers they compress a year of sourcing into three days, and for sellers a show is often the single highest-yield lead channel of the year. An exhibition organiser is a **show-IP business**: it identifies an underserved sector, launches a show, and then compounds it. It is sales-, marketing-, visitor-quality- & rebooking-driven: square metres sold, rate per sqm, sponsorship depth, visitor quality & on-site rebooking determine success.

> **How this plan measures revenue — and why it differs from the other Events plans.** An event management firm or wedding planner is an *agent*: it spends a client's budget and keeps a fee, so its plan must report NET revenue. An exhibition organiser is a **principal** — it owns the show, carries the venue and production risk on its own balance sheet, and keeps whatever is left. So here, **gross revenue genuinely is revenue**, and venue/production costs sit in the P&L as costs. The distinction is not cosmetic: it is what makes this the highest-risk and highest-operating-leverage model in the vertical.

The first edition usually loses money. That is the honest shape of this business and this plan models it rather than hiding it: Year 1 shows a **₹33 lakh loss**. Venue and marketing costs are largely fixed the moment the show is committed, while exhibitor confidence — and therefore rate and occupancy — only builds once a first edition has visibly worked. Editions two and three are where the economics turn, hard. This plan models an exhibition organiser requiring **₹1.5 crore** (₹90 lakh promoter + ₹60 lakh term/WC finance), moving from **₹2.25 crore revenue and a ₹33 lakh loss** in Year 1 to **₹6.85 crore revenue and ₹1.21 crore profit** by Year 3. *(Exhibition organiser; sqm × rate + sponsorship + delegates, show-IP-driven, high operating leverage — figures illustrative.)*

2. Business Description, Vision & Legal Structure

Concept: An exhibition & trade-show organiser - launching and owning a sector trade show, selling exhibition space, sponsorship, conference delegates & visitor services, and building the show as a compounding asset.

Vision: To own the definitive meeting place for our sector in India - the edition every serious buyer and seller attends.

Mission: Deliver exhibitors measurable business outcomes and visitors a genuinely useful sourcing experience - so both come back and bring others.

Legal structure options

- **Private Limited** — strongly recommended. The show is an *asset*: trademarks, exhibitor databases & brand equity need to sit in a company that can hold IP, raise capital, take on partners and eventually be sold.
- **LLP** — workable for a single-show start, but weaker for external investment and IP-led valuation.

> **Regulatory anchor:** organising is lightly-licensed as a business but heavily permitted per edition — venue contracts, police/local-body permission, **fire NOC & occupancy/crowd-safety clearance for large halls**, temporary-structure & electrical safety for stand build, FSSAI-licensed F&B partners, PPL/IPRS licensing for any music, and public-liability & event-cancellation insurance. Where overseas exhibitors participate: visa support documentation, customs/ATA-Carnet handling for exhibits & import rules for samples. Critically, **the show name should be trademarked early** — the brand is the balance-

> sheet asset. Sqm sold, rate realisation, visitor quality, sponsorship depth & rebooking determine success.

3. Promoter & Ownership

Led by a promoter with exhibition, trade-media, industry-association or B2B-sales experience — and, decisively, *credibility inside the chosen sector*. Shows are launched off industry standing: association endorsement and a handful of anchor exhibitors committing early are what convert a concept into a viable first edition. The team includes exhibition space-sales executives, marketing & visitor-promotion, operations/production, conference/content, admin & accounts. Sector credibility, sales capability, visitor-marketing skill & operational reliability are the differentiators. Ownership, equity & any association/media partner are editable inputs.

4. Market Analysis — India

India's exhibition industry is growing on the back of manufacturing expansion, import-substitution & export push, improving venue infrastructure (new large-format expo centres in Delhi-NCR, Mumbai, Bengaluru, Chennai & Greater Noida) and the return of physical trade after the pandemic disruption. Demand is sector-, sourcing- & export-driven. The market rewards visitor quality, sector authority, timing & exhibitor ROI; it is **calendar-, venue- & confidence-sensitive**.

Demand drivers

- **Manufacturing & MSME growth** — sellers needing efficient access to distributors & industrial buyers.
- **Import substitution & export promotion** — sourcing shows connecting Indian suppliers to domestic and overseas buyers.
- **Venue infrastructure** — new large-format expo centres unlocking bigger, better-run shows.
- **Trade-show ROI vs. digital** — for high-consideration B2B products, face-to-face still converts better than any digital channel.
- **Sector fragmentation** — many Indian industries still lack a definitive annual meeting place, which is precisely the launch opportunity.

Market sizing (illustrative framing)

Layer	Definition	Indicative scale
TAM	Organised exhibitions & trade shows in India	Large, growing
SAM	Target sector's exhibitable supplier base & marketing spend	Serviceable
SOM (Yr 1–3)	Sqm sold & sponsorship per edition	Scaling per edition

Target segments

- **Exhibitors** — manufacturers, distributors, technology & service providers in the sector (the paying customer).
- **Sponsors** — large brands and category leaders buying visibility above space.
- **Visitors/buyers** — the product being sold to exhibitors; quality matters far more than headcount.
- **Delegates** — conference/summit attendees where a paid content track runs alongside.

5. Competition & Competitive Advantage

Landscape: global organisers operating in India, established national organisers, industry associations running their own shows, regional/state-level shows & digital B2B marketplaces. Competition is unusual here: two shows in the same sector *and* the same quarter can both fail, because exhibitors and buyers will not do the sector twice. The real contest is over **owning the sector's date**.

The business's edge

- **Sector authority & association endorsement** — legitimacy is what fills the first edition.
- **Visitor quality** — verified, decision-making buyers; exhibitors renew on leads, not footfall counts.
- **Calendar position** — owning the right date in the sector's buying cycle, defended across editions.
- **Exhibitor ROI evidence** — documented leads/business closed, which powers rebooking and rate increases.
- **Show IP & database** — the trademark, the exhibitor relationships and the buyer database compound and are genuinely saleable.

6. Revenue Model

Revenue line	Model	Basis
Exhibition space (bare / shell-scheme)	Sqm sold × rate per sqm	Core (~70%)
Sponsorship & branding packages	Per package / tiered	High-margin
Conference / summit delegates	Per delegate / pass	Content
Exhibitor services (stand build, power, furniture)	Margin on services	Ancillary
Show directory, advertising & matchmaking	Per listing / per ad	Ancillary
Co-located & award events	Per event / sponsorship	Extension

> Revenue is **sqm sold × rate + sponsorship + delegates + services**. Economics = revenue − (venue + production + marketing + team); the venue and marketing costs are *committed before a single square metre is sold*, which is what creates both the first-edition loss and the extraordinary operating leverage afterwards. **Every incremental square metre sold beyond break-even drops through at close to full margin** — the hall is already booked and the marketing already spent. Sponsorship is the highest-margin line of all, carrying almost no incremental cost.

7. Go-to-Market — Exhibitors & Visitors

This is a two-sided problem and both sides must be solved in the same cycle.

Selling to exhibitors

- **Anchor exhibitors first** — a few category leaders committing early makes the show credible to everyone else.
- **Association endorsement** & sector-body partnership for legitimacy.
- **Direct space-sales** team working the sector's supplier database.
- **On-site rebooking** for the next edition while ROI is visible — the single most valuable sales moment of the year.

Attracting quality visitors

- **Targeted buyer invitation** — trade databases, association members, industry media, not mass footfall.
- **Hosted-buyer programme** — travel/stay support for high-value buyers; expensive, and the best money the show spends.
- **Conference content** drawing senior decision-makers.
- **Pre-scheduled matchmaking** between buyers and exhibitors — converts attendance into documented meetings.

Sales approach

Pick an underserved sector with a fragmented supplier base → secure association endorsement & anchor exhibitors → sell space against a credible visitor promise → over-invest in *buyer quality* for edition one → document exhibitor ROI meticulously → rebook on-site at the show → raise rate and floor area in edition two → add sponsorship depth, conference & co-located events. The compounding logic is the whole business: a show that demonstrably worked sells itself next year, at a higher rate, to a larger floor.

8. Operations Plan (show production & delivery)

- **Show planning:** sector research, date selection against the industry calendar, venue booking (often 12–18 months ahead), floor plan & pricing grid.
- **Space sales:** pipeline, floor-plan management, contracts, staged payment milestones, allocation.
- **Visitor marketing:** database building, targeted campaigns, trade media, registration platform, hosted buyers.
- **Production & build:** venue liaison, shell-scheme contractor, power/utilities, signage, safety & compliance for stand build.
- **On-site:** registration & badging, exhibitor servicing, conference delivery, matchmaking, rebooking desk.
- **Post-show:** exhibitor ROI reporting, visitor analytics, settlement, database enrichment, next-edition launch.

Show cycle

Stage	Timeline	Metric
Concept & venue booking	T−15 to T−12 months	Date secured
Anchor exhibitors & endorsement	T−12 to T−9	Anchors signed
Space sales drive	T−9 to T−2	Sqm sold / rate
Visitor marketing	T−6 to T−0	Pre-registrations
Build & delivery	T−1 week to show	Safe, on-time build
Rebook & report	On-site to T+2 months	Rebooking %

9. Regulatory, Licences & Compliance (India)

- **Business & IP:** company registration & GST; MSME/Udyam; **trademark the show name and logo early** — the brand is the asset, and disputes over show names are common.
- **Venue & permissions:** venue contract, police/local-body permission, **fire NOC, occupancy limits & crowd-safety clearance**, temporary-structure & electrical safety certification for stand build.
- **F&B & music:** FSSAI-licensed catering partners; PPL/IPRS licensing where music is played.

- **Overseas participation:** visa support letters, customs/ATA-Carnet handling for exhibits, import rules for samples & giveaways.
- **Data:** visitor/exhibitor data handling & consent for marketing — the database is a core asset and must be lawfully built.
- **Insurance:** public-liability and — importantly for this model — **event-cancellation insurance**, given the size of committed venue costs.
- **Contracts & tax:** exhibitor terms with staged payments & cancellation clauses; venue cancellation terms; TDS on contractor payments; GST on space & sponsorship.

10. Organisation & Manpower Plan

Role	Yr 1	Yr 2	Yr 3
Promoter / show director	1	1	2
Exhibition space-sales executives	4	7	9
Marketing & visitor promotion	2	4	5
Operations & show production	2	4	5
Conference / content	1	2	3
Admin & accounts	2	3	4
Total	**12**	**21**	**28**

Space-sales is deliberately the largest function — in exhibitions, the sales team *is* the revenue engine, and headcount there is the main lever on sqm sold. On-site crew, registration staff & stand-build contractors are hired per edition.

11. Implementation Timeline & Milestones

Phase	Timeline	Milestone
Setup	Month 0–3	Company, trademark, sector research, venue & date booked, association tie-up
Build edition 1	Month 3–12	Anchors & space sales, visitor marketing; ₹2.25cr revenue, ₹33L loss (investment year)
Edition 2	Year 2	Rebooking, larger floor & rate, sponsorship depth; ₹4.65cr, ₹38L profit
Edition 3 & extension	Year 3	₹6.85cr revenue, ₹1.21cr profit; co-located events; show equity established

12. Financial Plan (Illustrative)

All figures are illustrative model assumptions for an Indian context, shown so the promoter can replace them with live rates. They are not projections of guaranteed results. ***Unlike the agency models in this vertical, revenue here is gross and legitimate — the organiser is a principal, owning the show and carrying venue/production cost as its own expense.*** *Sqm sold, rate realisation, sponsorship depth, visitor quality & rebooking are the levers.*

12.1 Project cost & means of finance

Capital requirement	₹
Show launch marketing & brand building	40,00,000

Venue advance & booking deposits	35,00,000
Working capital (venue/production float + salaries runway)	30,00,000
Sales & delegate team setup, office fit-out & IT	25,00,000
Show production kit, registration/visitor tech & CRM	20,00,000
Total project cost	**1,50,00,000**
Promoter contribution	90,00,000
Term loan / WC finance	60,00,000

12.2 Projected Profit & Loss (3 years)

Particulars	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Exhibition space (sqm × rate)	1,60,00,000	3,20,00,000	4,50,00,000
Sponsorship & branding	40,00,000	90,00,000	1,50,00,000
Conference delegates & visitor monetisation	15,00,000	35,00,000	55,00,000
Exhibitor services, directory & advertising	10,00,000	20,00,000	30,00,000
Total revenue	**2,25,00,000**	**4,65,00,000**	**6,85,00,000**
Venue hire, production & stand build	1,20,00,000	2,20,00,000	3,00,00,000
Marketing, visitor promotion & hosted buyers	45,00,000	70,00,000	90,00,000
Team salaries	55,00,000	85,00,000	1,10,00,000
Overheads, travel & admin	20,00,000	32,00,000	42,00,000
Depreciation, interest & other	18,00,000	20,00,000	22,00,000
Total expenses	**2,58,00,000**	**4,27,00,000**	**5,64,00,000**
Net profit / (loss) before tax	**(33,00,000)**	**38,00,000**	**1,21,00,000**
Net margin	(14.7%)	8.2%	17.7%

> **Read the Year-1 loss as designed, not as failure.** Launching a show means committing venue, marketing and team cost against a floor that is only partly sold, to an exhibitor base that has no evidence the show works yet. Almost every successful trade show in India lost money on its first edition. What matters is whether edition one *delivers for exhibitors* — because that is what makes editions two and three profitable. A plan that showed a first-edition profit would be the less credible document.

12.3 Unit economics & break-even

- **Sqm × rate is the engine:** space is ~70% of revenue. At, say, ₹8,000–9,000 per sqm net realisation, roughly 1,800–2,000 sqm sold carries Year 1. Occupancy of the booked hall is the number to watch weekly.
- **Operating leverage is extreme:** venue, marketing & team are fixed once the show is committed. Below break-even occupancy the loss deepens fast; above it, **incremental sqm drops through at close to full margin**. This is why Year 3 revenue grows ~47% while profit grows ~218%.

- **Sponsorship is pure margin:** it carries almost no incremental delivery cost, so growing sponsorship from 18% to 22% of revenue moves profit disproportionately. It is also the line most dependent on the show's perceived authority.
- **Rebooking is the compounding mechanism:** a 60–70% on-site rebooking rate means the next edition starts more than half sold, which de-risks the venue commitment and permits a rate increase. Rebooking %, not revenue, is the truest health metric of a show.
- **Break-even:** at the occupancy/rate level covering venue, marketing, team & finance — a level typically reached in edition two. Margins then expand with rate, floor area, sponsorship depth & co-located events.

12.4 Projected Cash Flow — Year 1 (quarterly, illustrative)

Exhibitors pay in staged advances across the sales cycle, while venue and production costs concentrate around the show — so cash builds through the year and is then largely consumed at delivery. Q4 below is the show quarter.

Particulars (₹)	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Opening balance	30,00,000	15,00,000	30,00,000	50,00,000
Collections (space advances, sponsorship, delegates)	25,00,000	60,00,000	90,00,000	45,00,000
Venue, production, marketing, team & operating	40,00,000	45,00,000	70,00,000	80,00,000
Closing balance	**15,00,000**	**30,00,000**	**50,00,000**	**15,00,000**

> **The venue commitment is the defining financial risk of this model.** The hall is booked and largely non-refundable 12–18 months before the show, against a floor that is unsold at the time of commitment. If sales disappoint, the cost does not shrink. Three disciplines contain this: staged exhibitor payment milestones that pull cash in ahead of production spend; a venue contract with the best cancellation/postponement terms obtainable; and **event-cancellation insurance**, which is not optional at this level of committed cost. The 2020–21 period, when physical exhibitions stopped entirely, is the reference case — organisers carrying uninsured venue commitments did not survive it.

12.5 Key Performance Indicators to Monitor

- **Sales:** sqm sold vs. target; rate per sqm realised; hall occupancy %; sales pipeline cover; anchor exhibitors signed.
- **Show health: on-site rebooking % for next edition** (the single best indicator); exhibitor satisfaction; repeat-exhibitor share.
- **Visitors:** pre-registered vs. attended; *qualified buyer* share (not raw footfall); matchmaking meetings held; hosted-buyer conversion.
- **Finance:** revenue per sqm; sponsorship as % of revenue; venue cost as % of revenue; advance collected before venue commitment; contribution per edition.

13. Funding Requirement & Bankability

Total ask: **₹60 lakh term/WC finance** against ₹90 lakh promoter contribution — for launch marketing, venue advances, show technology & working capital through the first, loss-making edition. Fundability rests on the booked venue & date, signed anchor exhibitors, association endorsement, the space-sales order book & the promoter's sector standing. **Lenders must be told plainly that Year 1 is a planned loss** — this is a business that invests in an asset (the show) before it earns, and a proposal that pretends otherwise should be distrusted. The credit story is the *contracted exhibitor book plus the second-edition rebooking*, not machinery: there is little to hypothecate beyond show technology and the trademark. Accordingly the promoter contribution is deliberately high at 60% of project cost, and the modest ticket suits MSME/CGTMSE routes. From Year 2 the model turns cash-generative with high operating leverage, reaching ₹1.21 crore profit in Year 3. A further consideration for the promoter: an established show is a **saleable asset** — exhibition portfolios are routinely acquired at meaningful multiples by larger organisers, which is the real long-term return in this business.

13.1 Funding utilisation

Use of funds	₹	% of total
Show launch marketing & brand building	40,00,000	26.7%
Venue advance & booking deposits	35,00,000	23.3%
Working capital (venue/production float + salaries)	30,00,000	20.0%
Sales & delegate team setup, office fit-out & IT	25,00,000	16.7%
Show production kit, registration/visitor tech & CRM	20,00,000	13.3%
Total	**1,50,00,000**	**100%**

14. Risk Analysis & Mitigation

Risk	Mitigation
Committed venue cost against an unsold floor	Staged exhibitor advances ahead of production spend; best obtainable venue cancellation terms; **event-cancellation insurance**; phased hall booking where possible
Demand shock halting physical events (2020–21 precedent)	Cancellation insurance, lean fixed cost, hybrid/digital edition capability, cash reserve
First edition fails to deliver exhibitor ROI	Over-invest in buyer quality & hosted buyers for edition one; matchmaking; document leads; under-promise on footfall
Competing show launching on the same sector/date	Secure the calendar date & association endorsement early; lock anchor exhibitors on multi-edition terms; trademark the show
Venue availability & cost inflation	Multi-edition venue agreements; alternative venue shortlist; early booking
Low rebooking after edition one	On-site rebooking desk with incentives, ROI reporting, exhibitor account management year-round
Anchor exhibitor or sponsor withdrawal	Diversify anchors, staged contracts with commitment deposits, broad sponsorship base
Safety incident / crowd or build failure	Fire NOC, occupancy limits, certified stand-build contractors, crowd plan, public-liability insurance
Show-name / IP dispute	Trademark registration at launch; clear ownership if an association partner is involved

15. SWOT Analysis

Strengths

Owns a compounding IP asset; extreme operating leverage above break-even; sponsorship is near-pure margin; advance-funded cash cycle; database & brand are durable and saleable; principal economics, not agency fees.

Weaknesses

Large committed venue cost before revenue is secured; first edition loss-making by nature; capital-intensive relative to other events models; annual — one bad edition damages a whole year; thin hypothecable asset base; sales-team dependent.

Opportunities	Threats
Under-served sectors lacking a definitive show; new expo infrastructure; export/sourcing shows with overseas buyers; co-located events, conferences & awards; hybrid/digital extensions; year-round community & media monetisation; eventual sale of the show portfolio.	Gathering restrictions & travel disruption; competing or association-run shows; venue cost inflation & availability; digital B2B marketplaces substituting discovery; economic downturn cutting exhibitor marketing budgets first.

16. Recommended AiSevak Tools for This Business

This exhibition organiser would use AiSevak's Events vertical tools in operations:

- **Show economics:** sqm-sold vs. occupancy & rate-realisation tracking, per-edition contribution & break-even-occupancy tools.
- **Sales & exhibitors:** space-sales pipeline, staged-payment & advance tracking, rebooking & sponsorship-package tools, GST & contract tools (with Media vertical).
- **Practice:** Business Plan, break-even and operating-leverage tools to model the show across editions.

17. Key Assumptions & Notes

- Exhibition organiser: a SHOW-IP business that OWNS the trade show - revenue = sqm sold × rate (~70%) + sponsorship + conference delegates + exhibitor services. A two-sided marketplace: qualified visitors are sold to exhibitors, exhibitor access is sold to visitors.
- **Unlike the agency models in this vertical (event-management-firm, wedding-planner), the organiser is a PRINCIPAL, not an agent** - it carries venue/production risk on its own balance sheet, so gross revenue is legitimately revenue and venue cost is a P&L expense. No net-revenue restatement is needed or appropriate here.
- **Year 1 is modelled as a ₹33 lakh LOSS deliberately** - venue & marketing are committed before the floor is sold and before exhibitors have evidence the show works. Most successful Indian trade shows lost money on edition one; a plan showing a first-edition profit would be less credible.
- Operating leverage is extreme: fixed venue/marketing/team means incremental sqm above break-even drops through at near-full margin (Y3 revenue +47% but profit +218%). Sponsorship carries almost no incremental cost.
- **On-site rebooking % is the truest health metric** - 60-70% rebooking means the next edition starts more than half sold, de-risking the venue commitment and permitting a rate increase.
- The committed, largely non-refundable venue booking 12-18 months ahead is the defining risk - contained by staged exhibitor advances, venue cancellation terms and EVENT-CANCELLATION INSURANCE (2020-21 is the reference case).
- Pvt Ltd recommended (the show is an IP asset); TRADEMARK the show name at launch; fire NOC/occupancy/crowd-safety, stand-build electrical & structural safety, FSSAI F&B partners, PPL-IPRS, visa/ATA-Carnet for overseas exhibitors, lawful visitor-database consent.
- Figures illustrative, exclude GST; an established show is a saleable asset - exhibition portfolios are routinely acquired by larger organisers, which is the promoter's real long-term return.

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